

REPENT- ANCE:

**Preparing The
Way Of The
Lord**

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March 15, 2015

Sermon in a sentence: Thank God for the power of repentance, that allows His Holy Spirit to cleanse us and fill us.

Congregational Reading: Mark 1:1-8 NKJV

Scriptures: Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:7-14; Psalm 51

Mark 1:1-8 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in the Prophets: *"Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You."*³ *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"* ⁴ John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵ Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸ I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

We know very well that it is not a good for us to sin and violate the law of God. And we know that sin leads to death. We also know that we sin because we are still in the flesh, and our flesh loves to sin! Even though the wages of sin is so terrible, most people do not give it a second thought, and continue to sin with impunity.

Some of us, however, have been privileged to hear the word of God that has opened us up to His mind and thought. Through His word, we have learned how utterly repulsive sin is to Him, and how He hates the ways in which we hurt each other and defy His law.

When we actually begin to see sin through His eyes, and understand the incredible lengths to which He has gone to eliminate it, our feelings toward sin and God begin to change. Our love and appreciation for God begins to grow and our own personal desire and propensity to sin begins to wane. Our mind is changing. We are repenting!

There are two key components to the ways the words 'repent' and 'repentance' are used in scripture. One aspect deals with our change of heart and mind toward God, and the other deals with our sorrow and disdain for the sins we have committed, which leads us to ask for His forgiveness.

King David committed a series of sins against Uriah and Bathsheba that were atrocious, by any standard. Yet he exemplifies the situation that many of us face. We know what is right, but we deliberately do what we know is wrong. When it seems to suit our fancy, we can justify just about anything we want to do, knowing full well we are in the wrong.

However, with David, repentance took place when he actually saw his sin through God's eyes. That is the crucial step. We have to start seeing sin through God's eyes!

Through God's eyes (2 Sam. 12:1-13), David saw how utterly repulsive his actions were in the sight of God. In fact, David was so incensed against the perpetrator of the crime the prophet Nathan brought to him, he pronounced the death penalty on the horrible criminal. It was so easy

for him to see arrogance, selfishness, theft, abuse of power and gross injustice in someone else, when, in fact, *he* was “the man”!

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John the Baptist was sent by God to fulfill Isaiah’s prophesy that a “forerunner” would come to prepare the way for the Messiah. How exactly would he do this? By preaching repentance. This is how we prepare the way of the Lord!

John gave the people some very practical help in understanding what repentance looks like:

Luke 3:7-14 Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Therefore **bear fruits worthy of repentance**, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ⁹ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” ¹⁰ **So the people asked him, saying, “What shall we do then?”** ¹¹ He answered and said to them, “**He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.**” ¹² Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” ¹³ And he said to them, “**Collect no more than what is appointed for you.**” ¹⁴ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “And what shall we do?” So he said to them, “**Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.**”

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When we see sin as God sees it and realize how harmful it is to others, and how deadly it is to us personally, our actions and responses will change. Actually, our Lord made it very easy for us to understand. He simply instructed that we should never do anything to someone else that we would not like done to us (Luke 6:31). If we do, we are sinning against God and man and need to repent.

We return to David for the final exhortation:

Psalm 51 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin *is* always before me. ⁴ Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, *And* blameless when You judge. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. ⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Make me hear joy and gladness, *That* the bones You have broken may rejoice. ⁹ Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit. ¹³ *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. ¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation,

***And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15
O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth
Your praise. 16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I
would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a
contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise. 18 Do
good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of
Jerusalem. 19 Then You shall be pleased with the
sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and
whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your
altar.***

**Let us pray the Psalm 51 prayer and truly, from our heart,
repent. This opens the door for the Lord to move in and
fill us with His Holy Spirit.**