

The Necessity of Repentance



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) April 2, 2020

The very first message Jesus delivered after he emerged from the temptation in the wilderness was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). He called people to repent even before he called them to believe!

The word "repent" is rarely mentioned in most churches today. Pastors seldom call for their congregations to sorrow over sin — to grieve over wounding Christ by their wickedness. Instead, the message we hear from many pulpits is, "Just believe. Accept Christ and you'll be saved." The text used to justify this message is Acts 16:30-31. The apostle Paul was being held in jail when suddenly the earth shook and all the cell doors opened. The jailer immediately thought all the prisoners had fled, which meant he faced execution.

In despair, the jailer drew his sword and was about to kill himself when Paul and Silas stopped him, assuring him that no one had escaped. Seeing this, the man fell down before the apostles and cried out, "'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household'" (Acts 16:30-31). It's important to remember that the jailer was on the verge of suicide, with sword in hand. He was already at the point of repentance — on his knees, broken and trembling before the apostles. So his heart was truly prepared to accept Jesus in genuine faith.

Jesus promises that your godly sorrow, your repentant heart and your renewed love for him will lead you to life. So, pray to him right now: "Lord, give me a truly repentant heart. Take me back to who I was when I was first in love with you. Yet, this time take me farther, deeper in you, than I've ever been before!"

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