

The Power of Repentance

Jonah 3:1-10

The fruit of repentance is a changed life. It is a turning away from something and a turning to something. It's a change—a change of direction; a change of desire. It's a turning away from a life pursuit of sin, self-righteousness, and self-centeredness, and a turning to the Lord with a new mind, a new heart, and a new will. Saving faith is then the entrusting of your life and your soul to the Lord Jesus Christ—but you must be turned in order to believe. So, the fruit of regeneration is really a lifelong turning away from sin and turning to follow after Jesus Christ. It is no longer going your own way, according to the course of this world. Now, with the world behind me and the cross before me, I am a follower of Jesus Christ. That turning is repentance, and it's a lifelong repentance. Steve Lawson, ligonier.org

- I. Simply put, God honors true heartfelt repentance. Whether we understand it's significance or not, repentance, i.e., the asking for forgiveness and a turning from sin, is an essential part of knowing God. Therefore, there is no excuse to minimize its importance by never truly examining the heart to make sure we are walking in His ways. Sin is deceptive and the heart deceitfully wicked and desperately sick. Without self-examination and an owning up to sin, we put ourselves in danger of becoming blind to the true state of our heart, which could be far from the righteousness He desires to bear through us.

Jonah 3:1-6

Mark 1:15

Jeremiah 17:9

John 14:21 *Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."*

2 Corinthians 13:5 *Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?*

Psalms 4:4 *Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.*

- II. The response of the Ninevites to God's mercy gives us a picture of being broken over sin. We can safely assume that they were dismayed, revulsed, shocked, and disgusted over the condition of their culture of evil, violence and disregard for human life. They were a people far from God and His righteous ways, yet His mercy and the prospect of forgiveness was not contingent upon who they were but upon their willingness to humble themselves before Him and ask for forgiveness. They were honest before Him, named their sin for what it was and wanted nothing to do with it. The Holy Spirit was the one who moved through them to open their eyes to their need for repentance. His presence was a gift from God, which they received and responded too. As his forever saints, we must be aware of sin, keep honest about it, turn to Him, turn from it and stay cleansed so that we remain fit for the Master's use.

Jonah 3:6-9

Mk. 3:25

Romans 3:23

Romans 5:8

1 Cor. 7:10

1 Jn. 1:8-9

Jer. 18:7-8

Acts 3:19 *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”*

2 Chron. 7:14 *14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

- III. The fascinating thing about being forgiven by God is that it comes from our Creator, the one and only true God of all that exists. His forgiveness supersedes man's opinion of who we are and what we've been like be it well thought of or looked down upon with condemnation or disdain. He moves us on from that and instead gives us a new status as forgiven saints who are holy and righteous in His sight. That is the power of repentance, which always leads to him creating a clean heart and right spirit within. It's a precious gift that we must cherish and guard till He calls us home.

Jonah 3:10

Isa 66:1-2

Jer. 18:7-8

Matt. 12:40-41

Ps. 51:10 *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*