

Repentance – Forgiveness – Confession

3 words used in the Bible that sometimes get used interchangeably and often in regards to only 1 topic. Sin.

Repent from sin, ask forgiveness of sin, confess your sin.

Let's define each one and see how it is used in our lives. We'll start where Jesus started.

Repentance

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

- Repent = Metanoeo – To think differently afterwards.
 - Nave's = A complete reversal of one's attitude and values, i. e. a turning toward God
 - Biblical – To change your mind and come into agreement with God.
- What does Jesus' message – "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" mean?
- He was saying to change from the way they think, their worldview, and begin to think how God thinks – His worldview.
 - Old worldview - God is far away. God is unapproachable. You can't truly know God. The law is the way to righteousness. Only Israel is accepted by God. A Messiah will give them a Kingdom on the earth that will rise above all other kingdoms on the earth.

Jesus' main message on the earth was repentance. But not necessarily how we think of it. Jesus taught primarily about transition.

- Are the Gospels Old Testament or New Testament?
- Did Jesus preach law or grace?
- Jesus was under the law, and He preached both. Law to prove that people need grace.
- Transitional teachings are sometimes easy to identify, like:
 - **Matthew 5:27-28** "You have heard that it was said to those of old, '*You shall not commit adultery.*'²⁸ But I say to you that

whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- Sometimes Jesus made people really think to get what He was saying. We'll cover one of those next week.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- Here, Paul shows that after rebuking people, their sorrow led them to change their thinking to agree with God, and then that leads to salvation.

Repentance is a foundation for almost all Spiritual actions.

- Authority = Coming into agreement with God about a situation and then declaring that.
- Salvation is really coming into agreement with God about who He is and what He has done.
- Listen to this verse.
 - **Hebrews 13:15** Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.
 - **Hebrews 13:15 (NLT)** Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.
 - **Giving Thanks = Homologeo – Same words**
 - The continual sacrifice of praise is actually aligning our words with God. Using God's words.

The most powerful thing we can do is to change our thinking to think the same as God. About who He is. About what He has done. About who we are in Him. About His Word.

This is the basis of our salvation, our authority, our blessing, our victory.

Forgiveness

- Dictionary - Forgiveness is the process by which one who may have felt initially wronged or harmed changes their feelings toward the offender and overcomes the impact of the offense.
- Biblical – To cancel the debt that someone owes you.
 - **Matthew 18:27** Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.
 - **Colossians 2:14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

One of the first things that happens at salvation is that we receive the forgiveness of God for all of our sins.

- **Acts 13:38** Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;

But is it at salvation where your sins are forgiven? No. All of your sins were forgiven at the cross. You were already forgiven before you got saved.

- **2 Corinthians 5:19** that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
- **This is not heresy.** This is truth. God has forgiven everybody by the blood of Christ. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and Jesus' death paid the debt that was owed (**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.)
- **However, that forgiveness does not do you any good unless you receive it.** That's why everyone is forgiven, not everyone is saved. But it is available to any that will believe (**Galatians 3:22** But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.)

As believers, do we need to continually ask God for forgiveness?

- A short answer is no. But when we sin, we need to repent. This is not the same as getting forgiveness.
- If we needed more forgiveness, then that would mean that Jesus' death wasn't sufficient for all our sins, even future sins, even though all of our sins were in the future compared to when the cross happened.
- When we sin, we do not lose our righteousness. Refer to the Romans study.
- But repentance is necessary. Not to regain favor with God, but to live according to who you are.
- Being in sin is being out of agreement with God. Repentance is coming into agreement with God.

But a key point is this. We must also agree with God that we are forgiven.

- **Ephesians 1:7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

There is another part of forgiveness, which is not just getting forgiveness, but giving forgiveness. We will come back to that next week. It's big enough and important enough to go further into depth than we can this week.

This brings us to confession. I believe that confession ties repentance and forgiveness together, and also a lot more.

Confession

Confession is declaring something that you believe.

- True Biblical confession is declaring faith in agreement with God; bad confession is giving voice to unbelief.

- It is important that you understand this distinction. **Good confession is agreeing with God** but bad confession is doubting or declaring things that are contrary to God's nature, who we are, whatever.
- True confession always leaves you Christ-conscious but bad confession leaves you self-conscious.

Confession unto salvation

- **Romans 10:9-10** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Confession of sonship

- **Romans 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."
- Once we are saved – confession unto salvation – this is the next confession to be made. I am a child of God.
- We no longer need to ask for salvation. We no longer ask for that mercy and grace because it has been given. Instead, we now confess that we have it.
- We confess our position before God. Our spirit is already doing it!
- **Galatians 4:6-7** And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
- **With being a co-heir comes confessing all the things you already have – not still asking for them.**

Confession of sins

- **Psalm 51:1** Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.
- **Q – If Jesus has given us his righteousness, and has already forgiven our sins past, present and future – do sins need to be confessed to be cleansed?**
- **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - This verse makes it appear that only if we confess our sins, then Jesus will forgive us – conditional forgiveness.
 - But is that what it is saying? Two things we must look at. Who is the “we” John is referring to, and what do all those words mean in context.
 - 1 John is written to groups of people. It is like a stage of Christian life book. There are unbelievers, not given a title, new believers (little children), believers (young men), and mature believers (Fathers).
 - This verse was written to unbelievers.
 - Look at the word confess.
 - Confess - *homologeō (hom-ol-og-eh'-o) – To agree with God's word*
 - If we agree with God that we have sinned and need Him and His righteousness, He is faithful to give us His righteousness. This verse is about our salvation. Coming into agreement with God about our state (see confession unto salvation) and accepting His righteousness.
 - In Context – **1 John 2:1-2** My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

- **1 John 2:12** I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.
- John continues that we are forgiven and the power to overcome sin is what has already been given to us – Jesus Himself.
- So again, if we are righteous and forgiven, why confess sin? The confession that needs to happen is not “I have sinned, please forgive me” but rather “I sinned, but I know what you say about _____. I know this is true and as a born again member of your family I am not a _____. Let your ways become my ways.”
- This gives us strength to overcome sin, not just repeat the cycle of sin, ask for forgiveness, repeat. There is no power in that.
- There is a big difference between “Look at what I have done” and “Look at what Jesus has done.”

Confession of His Promises and Goodness

True confession is basically proclaiming “Jesus” over our lives. It is declaring the good news of his kingdom. It is proclaiming the gospel of his grace and saying “Thank you, Jesus!”

Bad confession looks at ourselves and our circumstances alone. Good confession sees Jesus and the power of His life in us. What He has already done and is wrapped in thankfulness.