



A Publication of the Winnetka Ave. Church of Christ

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December 10, 2023

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“I TELL YOU NO...”

“I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3) Jesus stressed the need for repentance on the part of mankind, not just in this reference but throughout his dealings with man. Notice as well what Peter said, when those listening to his message on the day of Pentecost, when they cried out *“what shall we do?”*, to which he said, *“Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...”* (Acts 2:38) The word “repent” is a lot more than a feeling of guilt or regret. It also carries the realm of “to return”. That doesn't discount the aspect of regret or being remorseful. In short repentance involves, to be sorry for, a change of mind and a turning away from.

C.S. Lewis, in his work “Mere Christianity” sets forth the following. “Repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death.” Whoa, talk about ominous, true it sounds uncomfortable and dark. However looked at from another way, it is meant to lead to something good and positive. A change in attitude and a change in behavior.

In John, chapter eight a woman who was guilty of adultery, was brought before Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees. They then proceeded to lay a trap for Jesus with their question, *“Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?”* (vs. 4-5) To which Jesus responded, *“He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a*

stone at her.” (v 7) When no stones were hurled in her direction He told her. *“...go your way. From now on sin no more.”* What Jesus told her to do, was classic with respect to repentance, change your direction in life and change your behavior.



The best apology is changed behavior

The seventh chapter of 2Corinthians serves as a celebration of sorts, as Paul notes how the Corinthians had responded to his first epistle to them. *“I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful. But you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance...”* (v 9) He laid out the marks of godly sorrow and fruits of repentance in verses seven through thirteen (see also Matthew 3:8, *“Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance”*). The first of which is an attitude of earnestness in regards to sin, accepting responsibility. Then embracing a firm desire to rectify the situation to the fullest degree as possible.

Progressing to indignation at self for having committed the sin in the first place,, and lamenting the consequences such has brought to others as well as self. The recognition of failing God as well as others. A longing desire for reconciliation and renewal of the precious relationships. The passion for doing the right thing and making restitution; doing all that is necessary to make right the wrong.

As noted earlier, repentance demands not only a sense of sorrow and a mind set change, but clearly changed behavior. It is ever so easy to say “I'm sorry”, but the need for changed behavior is something all together different. *“The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”* (2Peter 3:9) (wbe)