

Repentance Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, September 20, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here IN PERSON or watching via the LIVESTREAM, you are most WELCOME. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have MUCH to cover in a relatively SHORT amount of time.

SUMMARY & RECAP PT. 1

Last Sunday morning we began a new three-part series on the subject of REPENTANCE. Allow me a moment to offer a bit of a RECAP (i.e., since repetition is the BEST teacher and for the benefit of those who may NOT have been present).

KEY – Scripture places tremendous EMPHASIS upon repentance (i.e., touching upon it CONTINUALLY throughout both the Old and New Testaments). This emphasis SHOULD speak to us in whatever space or time we may find ourselves, causing us to ASK...

Q. What is repentance?

A. Repentance is DEFINED as a “turning AWAY from sin, disobedience and rebellion and turning TO God.” It signifies a “spiritual CHANGE of direction” in relation to the Lord. It should be noted that “REPENT” is the call of God to both the LOST and the FOUND (i.e., God calls the ____ to a place of repentance). Moreover...

SUMMARY & RECAP PT. 2

NOTE 1 – We noted that repentance is often ACCOMPANIED and/or CHARACTERIZED by the following...

- 1) **Humility** – A sense of LOWLINESS marked by penitence and submission
- 2) **Confession** – The open ADMITTANCE of one’s waywardness before the Lord
- 3) **Remorse and Shame** – FEELINGS of guilt and defilement/uncleanness for crimes
- 4) **Outflowing Change** – The repentant will produce the FRUITS of repentance (change)

NOTE 2 – We ILLUSTRATED these realities in the biblical EXAMPLES of THREE repentant INDIVIDUALS: **a)** the tax collector from the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (cf. Luke 18); **b)** Zacchaeus (cf. Luke 19); and **c)** the Sinful Woman (cf. Luke 7). If you were NOT here, the sermon and accompanying notes are AVAILABLE on our WEBSITE (www.NewLifeBarre.org).

KEY 1 – I would like to explore these themes on a LARGER SCALE today. If LAST week featured a concentration on examples of INDIVIDUAL repentance, this morning will feature moments of MASS/BROAD-SCALE repentance. You see, there are MOMENTS in the Bible wherein large GROUPS of people came to a place of repentance SIMULTANEOUSLY (i.e., signaling what we might call revival)...

KEY 2 – I want to EXPLORE such moments—DISCERNING present-day applications for 2020 and beyond!

PENTECOST PT. 1

KEY – The FIRST account that I want to explore takes place within Acts 2. In context, the Risen Christ has recently ASCENDED to His Father in heaven (i.e., following His Death and Resurrection). The apostles and disciples that remain have gathered for a period of EXTENDED PRAYER. This is where our story picks up...

Acts 2:1–14 (NIV)

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they [i.e., apostles and early disciples] were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd . . .

NOTE 1 – It is at this point that apostle Peter PREACHES concerning the ministry, death and resurrection of Christ. Feel free to read his words on your own time. I want to CONCENTRATE on the FINAL moments of his sermon and the subsequent RESPONSE of the gathered crowd...

Acts 2:37–38, 40–41 (Emphasis Mine)

37 When the people heard this [i.e., the authoritative message of Peter], they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38 Peter replied, “**Repent** and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. . . . 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

NOTE 2 – The story (i.e., to a degree) ENDS here. But in another way it does NOT! Let us read on...

Acts 2:42–47

42 They [i.e., including those who had just repented] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

PENTECOST PT. 2

Q. What do we see herein?

A. We see a moment of mass, broad-scale repentance wherein 3,000 people were saved (i.e., simultaneously).

KEY 1 – We see in this text direct and indirect EVIDENCE of...

1) Humility

Clearly, the 3,000 men, women and youths who turned from sin to Christ that day EXPRESSED humility (i.e., a spiritual LOWLINESS and PENITENCE). They accepted the offer of forgiveness for sin, INDICATING that they PERCEIVED a NEED for divine mercy and pardon!

2) Confession

For these people to accept pardon for sin, they would have first had to RECOGNIZE their SINFULNESS. Whether they voiced it with their mouths OR within their own hearts, this population was moved to AGREE with the ASSESSMENT of the Lord and His witness: i.e., they were SINNERS in need of mercy.

3) Remorse/Shame

Verse 37 indicates that the people who heard the message of Peter were “CUT to the heart.” i.e., They sensed the BURDEN of their criminality before God—perhaps for the first time! This inward sense PROPELLED them to seek a REMEDY (cf. v. 37b – “Brothers, what shall we do?”).

4) Outflowing Change

Verse 41 notes that the people accepted the message of Peter and were BAPTIZED. i.e., They took the public step of IDENTIFYING themselves as Christ-followers. Moreover, look at the EVIDENCE that their lives were truly changed in Acts 2:42–47 (e.g., devotion to biblical teaching; spiritual community and self-sacrifice; lives marked by joy and sincerity, etc.).

KEY 2 – We ALSO see that this moment of mass, broad-scale repentance had an ONGOING IMPACT...

Acts 2:47b (Emphasis Mine)

“47 . . . And the Lord **added** to their number **daily** those who were being saved.”

Q. What TRIGGERED this moment of mass, broad-scale repentance wherein a large grouping was saved?

A1. The believers that were used of God were SATURATED in PRAYER.

A2. The believers were EMPOWERED by the Lord to function as His emissaries.

A3. The believers were FAITHFUL to proclaim the true, pure and unadulterated TRUTH.

Q. Can WE learn anything from this moment of mass biblical repentance?

JONAH PT. 1

The SECOND account that I want to consider comes from the Book of JONAH. Jonah was an OT prophet of God who was called to proclaim the word of the Lord to the WICKED people of Nineveh. I will admit that Jonah does NOT provide an ASPIRATIONAL example (i.e., he ran from God, was racially prejudiced, and exhibited a terrible attitude or resentment toward the Lord)!

KEY – However, there is NO question that he was used of God to catalyze a moment of MASS repentance!

Jonah 3:1–10

1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time [i.e., after Jonah ran from the initial call of God in the opening chapter]: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

3 Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. 4 Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” 5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

6 When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: “By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

JONAH PT. 2

Q. What do we see herein?

A. We see a MOMENT of mass, broad-scale repentance wherein an ENTIRE CITY came to a place of repentance (i.e., NIGH simultaneously). Whereas Peter led 3,000 people to the Lord, the ministry of Jonah came to impact a CITY of approximately 120,000 people (cf. Jonah 4:11)!

KEY 1 – We see in this text direct and indirect EVIDENCE of...

1) Humility

Take note of the RESPONSE of the people in verse 5–9 (i.e., they FASTED, they PRAYED earnestly, they put on SACKCLOTH, etc.). Each of these indicate a SENSE of lowliness and penitence before the Lord. They HUMBLISHED themselves in His mighty presence (i.e., hoping that He might show the MERCY they SO desperately needed)!

2) Confession

We do NOT have a full RECORD of their prayers and contrition before God. I am willing to bet, however, that they openly ADMITTED to their spiritual waywardness. I am sure that they CATALOGUED before the Lord the many ways they had GRIEVED him, etc. Yet their king did RECOGNIZE—to some degree—the evil of his people...

Jonah 3:8 (Emphasis Mine)

8 But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them **give up** their **evil ways** and their **violence**.

3) Remorse/Shame

These people—from the LEAST to the GREATEST—expressed genuine SORROW for what they had done. Their SPIRITUAL sense of guilt and shame was made PHYSICALLY APPARENT by the wearing of SACKCLOTH (i.e., a cultural symbol of penitence for wrongdoing). They even made their ANIMALS participate in this!

4) Outflowing Change

We do NOT know the CHANGES that took place in the lives of the people in the days that followed. I would reasonably INFER that some degree of change DID take place, as the Lord saw fit to RECANT His threat to overthrow the city. If such an overthrow was to come (SPOILER-ALERT – it did cf. Nahum), it would NOT take place in THIS generation!

Q. What TRIGGERED this moment of mass, broad-scale repentance wherein a large grouping was saved?

- A1. Jonah was bathed in PRAYER (cf. Jonah 2) – though I would NOT fully attribute it to that.
- A2. Jonah was EMPOWERED by God as a prophet (but God worked despite—NOT because of—Jonah).
- A3. Even if Jonah had his issues, he was FAITHFUL to proclaim the full message of the Lord (UNADULTERATED).

NOTE – This mass repentance was the HUMAN RESPONSE to the PROCLAMATION of the WORD of God. Once again, we see the Word of God playing a critical role in FACILITATING these moments of large-scale repentance. Wherever such repentance takes place, it is PRECEDED by the preaching of His Word.

Q. Can we learn anything from this moment of mass repentance?

- A1. The realization that God can work sovereignly with OR without us (i.e., better WITH us).
- A2. The realization that the Word of God is CRITICAL in bringing about spiritual response – PREACH.

2 Timothy 4:1–2a (Emphasis Mine)

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 **Preach the word** . . .

JOSIAH PT. 1

I want to CONCLUDE with—perhaps—the greatest example of mass repentance in Scripture. It was NOT just a GROUP of onlookers (cf. Acts 2) or even a CITY (cf. Jonah 3). Rather, what we are about to read is a NATIONAL movement with wide-ranging implications.

KEY—We WON'T have time to examine the whole story but let us note the following from the days of JOSIAH...

NOTE 1 – Josiah was the king of Judah from 640–609 B.C. He began to reign at the age of EIGHT-years old (i.e., following the assassination of his father). His story is recorded in both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. Josiah was the son of King Amon and grandson of King Manasseh—both desperately WICKED kings. However, Josiah—even as a young man—evidenced a GOD-WARD sensibility.

NOTE 2 – In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah determined to raise money to REPAIR the Temple. It was during said repairs that the high priest Hilkiah DISCOVERED a copy of the Book of the Law. Likely, all known copies were DESTROYED by King Manasseh years earlier, as he sought to stamp out the Word of God. Yet someone must have HIDDEN a copy!

NOTE 3 – Josiah had the Word of God READ—consider what takes place NEXT...

2 Kings 22:11–20 (Emphasis Mine)

11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, **he tore his robes**. 12 He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Akbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: 13 "Go and **inquire** of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

14 Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

15 She said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 'This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.' 18 Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: 19 Because your heart was **responsive** and you **humbled yourself before** the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and because you **tore your robes** and **wept** in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the Lord. 20 Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.'" So they took her answer back to the king.

Q. What occurs NEXT?

2 Kings 23:1–3 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Then the king called together **all** the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 2 He went up to the temple of the Lord with the **people** of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets—**all** the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing **all** the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. 3 The king stood by the pillar and **renewed the covenant** in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then **all the people pledged** themselves to the covenant.

NOTE 4 – Many national reforms followed.

- 1) The Temple was CLEANSED from all objects of pagan worship
- 2) The idolatrous “high places” were completely DEMOLISHED
- 3) Josiah RESTORED the observance of the Passover Festival
- 4) Josiah REMOVED mediums and witches from the land

Q. What do we see herein?

- A1. We see a moment of individual and mass HUMILITY
- A2. We see a corporate RECOGNITION of sinfulness (confession)
- A3. We see a CUMULATIVE sense of guilt and shame for “waywardness”
- A4. We see a host of outflowing CHANGE at the NATIONAL level (i.e., entirety)

KEY – This resulted in the POSTPONEMENT of judgment for a latter generation (i.e., operation of God’s mercy).

Q. What TRIGGERED this moment of mass, broad-scale repentance wherein a large grouping was saved?

- A1. Once again, the WORD of God played a critical role (i.e., rediscovery, reading and response).

Q. Can we learn anything from this moment of mass repentance?

- A1. Perhaps it is time to freshly commit to serve the Lord (i.e., renewed pledge and resolve; repent).
- A2. Perhaps it is time to recognize the priority and the primacy of the Word of God (i.e., all accounts).

PRAYER...

CONCLUSION 1

KEY – Before we fully dismiss allow me to make one or two brief ANNOUNCEMENTS.

1) NURSERY – We are working to reopen the NURSERY shortly. In fact, Katie Barry (Nursery Coordinator) and I believe that we will be able to REOPEN on Sunday, October 4, with some modifications. We are finalizing the details now, so expect the details next Sunday.

2) CHILDREN’S CHURCH – We are also looking to reopen the CHILDREN’S CHURCH as early as mid-late October (i.e., once again with some modification). As plans are finalized in that arena, we will RELAY the necessary details. Ultimately, THANK YOU for your prayers and patience!

CONCLUSION 2

KEY – Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Should those of you who have joined us online wish to give, please do so through the giving portal of our church WEBSITE (www.NewLifeBarre.org). For those who are present, you may place your donation in the OFFERING BOXES in this Sanctuary.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.