

Title: Why Preach Repentance?

Text: Matthew 3: 1-12

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Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Matthew 3: 1: In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2: And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3: For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4: And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5: Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6: And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7: But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8: Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10: And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message he was to preach is the message of repentance.

The Pharisee's believed justification came by the works of men. The gospel of repentance commands men to a change of mind, to renounce salvation by our works, and to believe on Christ who is the believers obedience—all our righteousness.

The Sadducee's rejected the truth of the resurrection of the dead, and just as bad, they believed the free will of man. The gospel of repentance commands men to a change of mind, renouncing salvation by our will. Our will is in bondage to our sin nature. Christ's people shall be made willing in the day of his power.

Most in Israel expected the Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom like as they had in David's day. Both John and the Redeemer commanded them to repent of this notion, declaring, "For the kingdom IS at hand but it is the kingdom of heaven."

John 18:36: Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,..."

All others lived in open wickedness, denying they were sinners, denying their need of salvation, rejecting God and his Christ. The gospel of repentance commands sinners to a change of mind, to confess our sins and renounce all former falsehood as lies to put all faith in Christ.

When Christ himself began to preach, the Master, himself, began preaching repentance.

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

Luke 5:32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Christ commanded all his preachers to go throughout the world, preaching repentance—the Lord told the men on the road to Emmaus,

Luke 24: 46:...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

After exalting Christ from the dead to be head over all things to the church, God first sent Christ to his elect in Israel, beginning at Jerusalem, Peter said,

Acts 3: 26: Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Note: Repentance is turning away from your iniquities. Therefore, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached repentance.

Acts 2:38: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The apostle Paul was sent by Christ to preach repentance to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, mixed among them—

Acts 20:21: Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

So according to God, according to Christ our God and Savior, according to the Holy Spirit, according to the Holy Scriptures, repentance is of utmost importance. That is our subject tonight.

Title: Why Preach Repentance?

Proposition: We preach repentance because through the gospel the triune God grants repentance, turning the mind and heart of his elect from every false way to God, to faith in Christ the only way of salvation.

I. WE PREACH REPENTANCE BECAUSE REPENTANCE, LIKE FAITH, IS A GIFT WHICH GOD MUST GIVE.

Apart from God's work of grace in our hearts, sinners are unable to do anything that God commands us to do.

A Sinner's Will is in Bondage to his Nature

By nature we love sin and hate God. We love to be right and hate to be wrong. Christ said, "Without me ye can do nothing." So a sinner

cannot repent from his sin and believe Christ unless Christ give us the gift of repentance and faith.

Christ said the sinner's enmity is so great that if a sinner refuses to hear the scriptures then he will not repent if a man rose from hell and told him to repent. The rich man in hell said,

Luke 16: 30: And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31: And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

I am showing you the scriptures: God-breathed-scriptures. Will you deny the very word of God? It will be much worse for you who have heard the gospel and repented not than for those who never heard it.

Matthew 11: 20: Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: [and since they had the gospel and still repented not, Christ said]...22: But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Christ Exalted to Give Repentance

But thanks be unto God, as promised to Christ, God exalted the GodMan to be Lord and Savior, giving Christ the glory, authority and power as the GodMan, in our human nature, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to all those Christ redeemed. God declared it through the apostle Peter,

Acts 5: 30: The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Christ is the Prince—the Captain of our salvation—Head over all things to the church, which is his body. And Christ is the Savior of his body who fills all in all—in each child. God exalted Christ for Christ to give God’s elect Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. It is Christ’s glory to do so! Do you imagine Christ will fail? Never!

The preacher can do nothing but declare this truth. Christ must give repentance, purging the conscience from dead works, to serve the true and living God. Paul told Timothy,

2 Timothy 2: 24: And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25: In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

This is why God’s true preachers do not resort to idolatrous games. We do not attempt to be a priest urging you to walk an aisle to a preacher; we have one High Priest, Christ. Nor do we lord over men to persuade a vain show of repentance out of you; we have one Master who is able to make his servants stand, Christ. We do not attempt to be men’s counselors to help you “pray through”; we have one Counselor, Christ. We do not resort to any of man’s gimmicks but simply declare the scriptures, instructing those who oppose themselves, waiting on Christ to do the work.

Sinner, by opposing the truth of God, you oppose yourself. Jonah said, “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.” (Jon 2: 8) If you are trusting in your will, and God has granted you repentance from your will and works, then repent from your will and works today!

Christ gives repentance by the Holy Spirit regenerating the dead sinner—by the presence of the Lord entering into the heart. This is how we are converted. It is then that God reveals he has blotted out our sins by the blood of Christ.

Acts 3:19: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, [when will a sinner do so?] when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Remember the child cast out in the field, polluted in his own blood—a picture of an unregenerate child of promise—

Ezekiel 16: 8: Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

II. THAT IS OUR SECOND POINT. WE PREACH REPENTANCE BECAUSE GOD HAS APPOINTED A TIME WHEN CHRIST SHALL PASS BY EACH ELECT CHILD AND WORK THIS WORK IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT—thy time is the time of love.

A Time Appointed

God predestinated us, appointing the time, when each child shall receive the Spirit of adoption by Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...11:...being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

We saw last week that God made this promise to Christ.

Galatians 3:16: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

God tells us what one of those promises is here in

Romans 9:9: For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

In this allegory, Sara is a type of the mother, the church of God, through whom, every elect child of promise shall be born-again according to God's everlasting covenant promise to Christ. Isaac is a type of God's elect, the child of promise, who is born free, when we are born-again by God's promise.

Galatians 4: 22: For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23: But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24: Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the

mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.25: For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. [Hagar pictured Jerusalem in the earth, sinners who have not been born-again, without repentance from the law of works to faith in Christ] 26: But [Sara answereth to] Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all [the church of God above is the mother of all God's born-again children of promise] 27: For it is written, [after prophesying of Christ's finished work in Isa 53 then Isa 54 declares the result when Christ arose to the right hand of God] Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. [because God comes to each child at the appointed time of promise, regenerates them, because Christ travailed and finished the work—the church of God has many more children than the false church working for salvation] 28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29: But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Be sure to understand what we just read: God promised to Abraham and Sara, that at the set time, God would come and Isaac would be born of the Holy Spirit—he was.

Likewise, the word of promise to Christ concerning all God's elect is at the set time, God will come and God's elect shall be born-again of the Holy Spirit, given repentance and faith in Christ because Christ redeemed us. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise—because we have been born-again after the Spirit by God's everlasting covenant promise to Christ.

This Promise Connected to Christ's Redemption

This is so important because to deny this promise is to deny the very reason why Christ redeemed God's elect. That promise from God the Father to Christ his Son—that each child would be born-again at the appointed time—is why Christ came and redeemed us from the curse of the law—and Christ having redeemed us is why Christ sends forth the Spirit of adoption into our hearts.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Every Elect Shall Be Called to Repentance

Now the reason we preach repentance, is because we believe God shall not destroy this world until he makes good on that promise to Christ and calls the last elect, redeemed child to repentance.

2 Peter 3: 7: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8: But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, [including this promise God made to Christ] as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, [elect children of promise] not willing that any [elect

child of promise] should perish, but that all should come to repentance [God promised Christ, God predestinated each one unto the adoption of children therefore all shall come to repentance according to God's promise. Therefore...].15: And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

Brethren, God promised Christ to regenerate and give repentance to all his children of promise at God's own set time. Therefore, God's longsuffering is salvation. This is God's goodness by which he leads all his elect to repentance. Do you rejoice that it is so?

Romans 2:4: Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

III. SO LASTLY, WE PREACH REPENTANCE BECAUSE REPENTANCE IS ABSOLUTLEY NECESSARY FOR A SINNER TO BE SAVED.

Whatever Christ Jesus preached as being necessary to salvation—saying “except ye”—is necessary to salvation.

Of faith Christ said in

John 6:53: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb 10: 2)

Of repentance, Christ said repeatedly,

Luke 13: 3, 5: Except ye repent, ye shall all...perish.

Therefore, we preach repentance because God sends his preachers to give a general command to all men everywhere to repent. Paul preached at Athens, saying,

Acts 17: 30....now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent: 31: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

God who elected his people unto salvation in Christ, God who redeemed his people from all our sins at Calvary, also foreordained and predestinated each one to hear the gospel of Christ, to be regenerated to life by the Holy Spirit, to be granted repentance and faith by Christ our Head.

So Peter said, "Count on it! The longsuffering of God, shall bring each one to repentance." This is why Paul thanked the triune God for his Thessalonian brethren,

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All three persons in the Godhead receive glory for their particular work in the salvation of God's elect. Therefore, to deny one work of one person in the Godhead is to deny the whole work of the triune God.

Therefore, friends, if you are hearing this word—which God himself speaks—but you object because you have been taught by the tradition of men—by your denomination—that it is not necessary for an elect child to hear the gospel, to repent nor to believe Christ in order to be saved then you are in need of repentance.

The doctrine you hold is a false doctrine which you must repent from. To reject Christ's doctrine, preferring the doctrines of men, is to reject Christ. Repent and believe Christ. The Master declares repentance is absolutely necessary for without it you shall perish in your sins.

Lastly, repentance is in heart but also in deed. The Spirit produces—works meet for repentance.

John the Baptist said to the Pharisee's and Sadducee's **“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father:...the ax is laid to the root of the trees.”**

They were willing to be baptized of John as long as they could hold to the lie that the reason they were children of God was because of something done in their flesh: by being Abraham's children, by their will or by their works.

God laid the ax to the root of their nation—all their privileges, civil and ecclesiastical; even the covenant which God had made with that people as a nation, was left desolate.

Henceforward they had nothing to expect from being the seed of Abraham, from being Israelites, or from being circumcised persons.

The same is true of us: we have not repented if we are looking to anything done in our flesh: to our fathers, to our denomination, to our will, to our works—all is marked for destruction.

Repentance is a public separation and denial of all our former personal false refuge and all false gospels. It is not professing to believe Christ and true doctrine, while claiming to have been saved by that other jesus, which is not another.

The God a man believes saved him is the God a man believes. The true and living God, Jesus Christ, purged a particular people of our sins and accomplished eternal redemption for us by his blood. He regenerates us. He gives repentance and faith. He keeps us. He raises us from the dead. He gives us glory with him. True God is completely different from that impotent jesus who they claim died for all men, even for those who perish in hell—that jesus is a complete failure—an idol. When the true Christ saves us then we repent from the other.

Repentance is not simply leaving a false gospel and joining with God's people under the sound of the true gospel. It is renouncing all our former hope which we once counted to be the truth. Where you have repentance you will have these works. Here is an example.

Philippians 3: 4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee: 6: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

If God strips you to give you repentance it will cause you great sorrow. But “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” So remember the words of God the Savior,

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” (Rev 3: 19)

Amen!