**The Heart of True Repentance**

**Introduction**

1. Repentance is a condition of forgiveness and fellowship which all must submit to – **Acts 17:30; Luke 13:5; Acts 3:19**
2. Ultimately, repentance is something we do before God – **Psalm 51:16-17**
3. However, because known sin not only has implications for the sinner, but also for those around him (brethren, fellowship), it is important that true repentance be identified.
   1. **Luke 17:3-4** – ***“if he repents”*** implies an ability to perceive repentance; implication – if he does not repent, forgiveness is not an option.
   2. **2 Corinthians 7:10-11** – they ***“proved”*** their repentance to Paul.
4. This process of discerning repentance for ourself, and in regard to others must be accomplished through righteous judgment (**cf. John 7:24**).
   1. It must be discerned through what God says true repentance is, and what it looks like.
   2. It is unbiased about person and circumstance, but instead looks for true indicators of repentance – **Luke 3:8-9**
5. What does the heart of true repentance look like? What does it show? What does it do?
6. A Changed Mind
7. Comprehension – I recognize what I did was sinful.
   1. *metanoeō* – “to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider” (STRONG); “(1) to change one's mind, i.e. to repent (2) to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins” (THAYER)
      1. *“meta*, ‘after,’ implying ‘change,’ *noeo*, ‘to perceive’; *nous*, ‘the mind, the seat of moral reflection’” (VINE)
      2. **To know after, i.e. think differently – to change the mind – to regret – to change the conduct.**
   2. **Intellectual assent to the nature of the act as sinful/unlawful – 1 John 3:4**
      1. **2 Samuel 24:1, 10** – David acknowledged the true nature of his deed of numbering the people – not inherently sinful but knew and admitted he had sinned.
      2. He did not downplay the severity of the act – as though it was simply a bad decision, etc.
   3. **Acknowledgment of culpability (personal responsibility) – Ezekiel 18:20**
      1. **Psalm 51:3-4** – David took full responsibility, without laying blame to others, or circumstances.
      2. **Romans 3:1-4** – This is the spirit Paul was encouraging the Jews to have – **not blaming God, not comparing themselves to gentiles**.
8. Contrition – I am sincerely sorrowful for what I did.
   1. **Involved in pure, biblical repentance is always sorrow and remorse.**
   2. **James 4:9-10** – lament, mourn, weep.
   3. The punishment of God’s people for their sin draws out the emotions that are appropriate and true to repentance – **Lamentations 1:8-9, 14, 16, 18** – sorrow brought on by captivity and destruction, but ultimately for the sin as the cause of all this.
   4. *Metamellomai* – “to care afterwards, i.e. regret” (STRONG); “*meta*, ‘after,’ and *melo*, ‘to care for,’” (VINE)
   5. Parable of the Two Sons – **Matthew 21:28-32**
      1. ***“regretted” (v. 29), “relent” (v. 32)***
      2. **(v. 29)** – the son who said he would not work felt guilty about it.
      3. **(v. 32)** – the Jewish rulers should have felt guilty when they saw tax collectors and harlots believe Jesus.
      4. NOTE: Here, the context shows that *metamellomai* (to care afterwards) was not beneficial independent of itself, but there is an implied change of mind/will (*metanoeō).*
         1. **(v. 29)** – when he regretted it, cared differently afterward, he showed a change of mind/heart by taking proper action.
         2. “He who has changed his mind about the past is in the way to change everything; he who has an after care may have little or nothing more than a selfish dread of the consequences of what he has done.” (R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament)
         3. **Godly sorrow produces repentance** – **2 Corinthians 7:10** – scriptural commentary showing that emotional response is not an end in itself.
   6. True change of mind coupled with true contrition always involves confession – **1 John 1:8-10**
      1. Not – **(v. 8)** – acting as though the sin is no big deal – it doesn’t affect me, or God’ won’t hold it against me (**v. 6** – I still have fellowship with God).
      2. Not – **(v. 10)** – challenging the charge, arguing the point.
      3. But – **(v. 9)** – confession, admission, owning the sin and all it entails.
         1. ***“He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)***
         2. Pride avoids confession, but humility makes confession – **Luke 18:9-14** (Parable of Pharisee and tax collector)
            1. Why should I have to say what I did? – Pride is at the seat of this.
            2. **Confession marks the willingness to bring oneself to the true light of what you’ve committed which takes honesty and humility. Pride has an inflated view of oneself and conceals faults.**
      4. **Psalm 32:3-5** – true repentance with unfeigned remorse will lead to the disclosing of transgression in pursuit of ultimate relief.
9. A Converted Heart
10. Conversion – I have turned my will over to God’s will.
    1. John’s ministry – **Luke 3:3; Matthew 3:1-2** – preaching repentance.
       1. **Repentance** – *metanoia* (N, – *metanoeō,* V*) –* a change of mind (THAYER)
    2. Another related word is used in reference to John’s ministry – **Luke 1:16-17** – turn.
       1. *epistrephō* – “to turn about, turn towards” (VINE); “to cause a pers. to change belief or course of conduct, with focus on the thing to which one turns, turn act. trans., in a spiritual or moral sense” (BDAG)
       2. Full repentance is not simply a change of mind about sin, or turning from sin, BUT TURNING TO GOD (**v. 16**) – conversion.
       3. (**v. 17**) – hearts of fathers to children, disobedient to wisdom of just.
          1. **Cf. Malachi 4:5-6** – includes, hearts of children to fathers.
          2. Fathers (faithful ancestors – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) = wisdom of the just; children = disobedient.
          3. He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children in favor…
          4. **…because he will turn the hearts of the children back to the spirit of faithful obedience of the fathers.**
       4. **Isaiah 29:22-24** – concerning the future restoration of God’s people – Jacob will no longer be ashamed of them, because they are faithful.
    3. Twice in Acts *metanoeō* (repent – emphasizes the negative) and *epistrephō* (turn – emphasizes the positive) are paired together:
       1. **Acts 3:19** – repent and be converted – turn away from sins, and turn to God.
          1. Parallel – **Acts 2:38** – conversion and baptism.
          2. **Romans 6:1-4** – repent of sin, die to sin, alive to God – fullness of repentance includes turning self over to God’s will.
       2. **Acts 26:20** – Repent (of sins), turn to God (yield to His authority, do His will).
11. Correction – I have altered my ways to fit God’s will.
    1. **If the mind has been changed about sin, if the heart has turned to God in surrender to His will, then there will be a demonstrable change of ways and deeds.**
    2. **Acts 26:20** – repent, turn to God, works befitting repentance.
       1. ***“performing deeds appropriate to repentance” (NASB***)
       2. ***“performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.” (ESV)***
       3. ***“doing works worthy of reformation” (YLT)***
       4. ***“prove they have changed by the good things they do” (YLT***, paraphrase)
    3. Thessalonians’ example – **1 Thessalonians 1:6-10**
       1. **(v. 6)** – following apostolic doctrine revealed by HS.
       2. **(v. 8)** – faith is such that they don’t need to say anything – **THEIR ACTIONS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.**
       3. **(v. 9)** – turned (*epistrephō*) to (*pros* – towards) God [and turned] from (*apo* – away) idols to serve (positive fruit – **v. 3**, work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope).
       4. ***“what manner of entry we had to you”*** – **1 Thessalonians 2:13** – word is at work in them.
    4. **If my mind has changed about the sin I will STOP doing it. If I have turned to God my DILIGENCE in spiritual matters will be APPARENT – including all mentioned before, remorse expressed, confession made, corrections made.**
12. A Corresponding Fruitfulness (Proven Change)
13. Compensation – I have taken appropriate action to convince God, and any other who was sinned against of everything prior to this point (comprehension, contrition, conversion, correction).
    1. **Sin always has the offender (sinner) and the offended (one sinned against – God always, other men).**
       1. **True repentance involves correction, which always involves compensation or restitution for the wrong committed.**
       2. I.e. in the reversal of repentance there is the opposite action of the sin taken, or a corresponding counter action taken to “make up for” the offense, and/or prove true repentance.
       3. **This would include doing everything within one’s power to make things right, and manifest change.**
    2. What shall we do then? – **Luke 3:7-14** – what does bearing fruits worthy of repentance look like?
       1. There is the sinful action/behavior/attitude, and then a corresponding action which counters it.
       2. **(v. 11)** – correcting and compensating for the sin of shutting your hand from a needy brother – **Deuteronomy 15:7-11**
       3. **(vv. 12-13)** – correcting and compensating for the sin of exploiting others and taking from their wages – **Malachi 3:5**
       4. **(v. 14)** – correcting and compensating for the sin of abusing power, extortion, and lacking contentment – **Leviticus 19:11-13**
    3. Example of Zacchaeus – **Luke 19:1-10**
       1. **(v. 2)** – rich tax collector – stigma/reputation – **(v. 7)**
       2. **(v. 8)** – Zacchaeus demonstrates how true repentance acts.
          1. He is showing that he is repentant and is going to prove it.
          2. **He goes above and beyond – half, and fourfold.**
       3. **(vv. 9-10)** – Jesus commends, thus, validates his spirit of repentance.
    4. What true repentance does – **2 Corinthians 7:11**
       1. **Diligence** (the umbrella under which the rest fall) – earnestness, haste.
       2. **Clearing** – *apologia* – defense, i.e. they built a case (by their activity) for themselves to show their repentance/change.
       3. **Indignation** – strong opposition/anger toward sin (specifically what they were guilty of)
          1. No minimization of the sin, or bringing blame to others – excuses.
       4. **Fear** – of God, of punishment, and returning to sin.
       5. **Vehement desire** – to make things right, to be restored.
          1. No complaint about what’s expected of you. No haggling but doing.
       6. **Zeal** – ardor, enthusiasm in the process, and in pursuit of the right course of action.
       7. **Vindication** – (specifically for the Corinthians) meeting out punishment for the sexually immoral.
       8. **Proof of being clear of their sin!** – this is Paul’s observation! – i.e. not the Corinthians claiming they’ve done enough, but Paul assuring them they have.
14. Celebration – I can rejoice that I have been restored.
    1. **Psalm 51:12** – the petition to God for restored joy – because it can only come when he grants forgiveness.
    2. **Psalm 32:1-5, 10-11** – the blessedness, and therefore joy, only comes to the one who has repented and been forgiven.
    3. The sinner has no right to expect joy prior to all conditions being met and being forgiven. Expectation of premature joy manifests a lack of repentance.

**Conclusion**

1. We must understand what true repentance is according to the scripture.
2. We have no right to change what repentance looks like – exceeding expectations or failing them.
3. **When we sin, and we are truly sorrowful and repentant, we must understand that the onus is entirely upon us to prove that to God and those we’ve wronged.**