

Repentance

Harmony M.B.C., June 6, 2009 (Morning)

Robert P. Myers

Mat. 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

It could be that one of the least understood steps of humans toward salvation is the call to them by Jesus Christ to repentance. We are not altogether clear on why this is, because every person who ever entered into eternal life has gone through this experience. In fact it has been identified as the signature from God of that by which humans escape the eternal perishing that comes with entering eternity without Christ as our divine shield (see Luke 13:2-5). It is that element that apparently was lacking among the Jews who sought out both Jesus and John the Baptist in the beginning days of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (Mat. 3; Mark 1; Luke 3). Repentance toward God is the essential element that Peter presented at the first Holy Spirit empowered message of the church to those present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38) and indicated in Acts 3:19 that it was the necessary element which could bring their conversion to Christ. We know also that it was an element clearly articulated as one part of the gospel message to all the world that Christ charged His church with (Luke 24:47)

I. What exactly is repentance?

- The Greek word (metanoeo) for repentance in basic meaning is “to think differently or afterwards.” I like the fact that both differently and afterwards are implied in the basic meaning of this word.
- I like that because it is an experience that causes people to think differently and it is AFTER the Holy Spirit has gotten through with them.
- The Greek word also carries the idea of regret.
- So...”to have regret and think differently.”

II. How is this repentance produced?

- We know also that the person who comes to repentance experiences what is called Godly sorrow as a starting point so that repentance will be worked in that heart (2 Cor. 7:10).
- We know that the Godly sorrow is not the repentance, but rather it comes first in the personal experience of the individual being dealt with by the Holy Spirit as an operation of God directly connected to the truth about Jesus Christ: Act 2:37-38: “Now when they heard *this*, they were **pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? 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.
 - > (Following that sermon, 3,000 people were saved. How do you think that happened?
Ans: they repented and were obedient to God in the name of Jesus Christ)

III. What is the target of repentance?

- There has to be something to think differently about

- The thinking differently then has to be aimed at a target; so what kind of repentance is scripture talking about when it is connected with conversion and salvation?
 - > It is not just any emotional or mental process that produces a rethinking or having regret about **something**. Mat 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, **repented** himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
 - > But the kind of repentance that is connected to salvation has God as its target: Acts 20:21 “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God**, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - What this means is that those experiencing this kind of repentance are oriented toward a rethinking about God; they are oriented toward a regret about something related to God.

IV. God personalizes the work He does to bring people to repentance. That work differs somewhat in regard to the predisposed attitudes of the audience that the gospel addresses. (That is, the call to repentance addresses your particular prejudices against the truth contained in the gospel and your biases regarding your own personal sin)

- John the Baptist targeted the Jewish Pharisee’s self righteous and their “learned” prejudices (which were a kind of proprietary attitude about the things of God; especially the law and the guidance of God);
 - > Mat 3:7-9 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. (Arrogant pride in their genetic heritage and arrogant pride because they thought that just because God had promised certain things to Abraham and his seed that such a promise must mean them also)
- Jesus targeted the religious attitudes of the day regarding what righteousness really was
 - > Luke 13:1-5 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent**, ye shall all **likewise perish**. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent**, ye shall all **likewise perish**. (Regardless of what level of wickedness they possessed, or didn’t possess, without repentance they would perish)
- Peter targeted the Jewish predisposition toward a mental model of the Messiah that didn’t fit with reality
 - > In Acts 2:22-36, Peter redefines Christ for them and point directly to Jesus of Nazareth...he is targeting their mental attitude about what the Messiah was supposed to be...this was their big prejudice...the thing that kept them from submitting to God...this

- idea that the one they killed could not be the Christ
- > But, look now in verse 27 and see that something is happening to these people; then see what Peter's solution is:
- > Acts 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were **pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?
- > Peter knows the solution to their problem: 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.
- > They had not yet repented, but that was the solution presented to them.

- Paul targeted the predisposition of the Gentile world about who and what God was and about what was needed to obtain salvation
 - > See Acts 17:24-29

- None of the approaches contradict each other and none of them were off the mark - they targeted the audience
- why did they target the audience?
 - > Because it is the work of the Holy Spirit in taking a soul to the place of repentance to reveal to that soul what his prejudices against God really are; this is the heart of repentance

- So, we see that these different kinds of people received a command to repent and they were told what it was that they needed to repent of.
 - > You will notice that John the Baptist made disciples amongst religious Jews who had an elitist attitude about their heritage
 - > Jesus made disciples even among the self-righteous Pharisees
 - > Peter made disciples of Christ out of people who were dyed-in-the-wool Jews with who had rejected Jesus as the true Messiah
 - > Paul made disciples of Gentiles who worshiped every imaginable false god

How did this occur? The Holy Spirit used the actual spiritual/religious, or worldly environment those people lived in along with their own way of carnal thinking to speak to them about the real truth of the need to go through a change in order to approach God.

V. We know that repentance produces a certain kind of fruit:

- Mat 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet (Gr. Deserving or comparable) for repentance:
- The evidence that repentance has occurred is that fruit is revealed that is comparable with a state of having thought differently about God, about sin, about the Savior.
 - > What are those fruits? If we go back through those incidents I have been talking about we find a common fruit among these people who repented. That is, they obeyed God.