



men's

DIGGING

DEEP

2018-19

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Month 10: Repentance

Introduction: The sin of which we repent.

A. Repentance is a prominent biblical theme. Biblical repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of action, and in particular the change of heart whereby one determines to live for the Lord and not to serve the devil. Thus we repent *of sin*. But what is sin? If we do not focus on what the Bible says about sin, we may tend to think that sin is merely something that offends people. Sin may indeed offend people, but the essence of sin is to be in opposition to God's will. It is to offend God's nature. What do the following passages teach us about sin—its nature and its terrible effects?

1. Psalms 51:4
2. 1 John 3:4
3. Isaiah 59:1-2; 64:7
4. Micah 3:4; 1 Peter 3:12
5. Romans 5:6-15
6. Romans 6:23
7. Revelation 21:8
8. Use the passages above to reflect on sin that exists or has existed in your own life. How does God view that sin? What did that sin do to your soul? Make resolutions about removing sin from your life.

B. From the Romans passages above, it is clear that Jesus died because of the sins of humanity. Our sins put Him on the cross. Consider the following questions and answer them based on the passages cited:

1. Is it possible for sins to be forgiven without blood? _____ (Hebrews 9:22)
2. Is it possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins? _____ (Hebrews 10:1-4)
3. Whose blood was required to take away sins? _____ (Hebrews 10:5-25)
4. Read the crucifixion account from Matthew, chapters 26-28. Use a Bible or Bible software that has cross-references, and record all of the prophecies that are fulfilled during this time, making a chart with the Old Testament references beside the citations.

- C. Sin separates us not only from God in eternity, but also from good things in life. After considering each passage below, specify the sin that is condemned in the passage, and then think of an example from Scripture, or from your own experience, where this particular sin caused problems in relationships.
1. Galatians 5:15
 2. Ephesians 4:25
 3. 1 Peter 2:1
 4. 1 Timothy 6:10
- D. Find two biblical examples of each of the following three principles about the consequences of sin: (1) It is against God and therefore separates us from God. (2) It is responsible for the death of our Lord. (3) Sin causes great trouble in life.

Now, consider the following points about repentance:

I. Repentance is a prerequisite for receiving God's free gift of salvation.

- A. The following passages all teach that one must repent in order to be saved. Read each of these and make a brief note, summarizing what the passage teaches about repentance:
1. Acts 2:37-38
 2. Acts 3:19
 3. 2 Corinthians 7:10
 4. Revelation 2-3

II. Repentance is not just feeling sad.

- A. We read in 2 Corinthians 7:10 that feeling godly sorrow leads to repentance. There is a sorrow that is not godly and does not lead to repentance. As a case study in this area, compare the remorse of Judas and the remorse of Peter in the passages below. What is the difference in their respective sorrows?
1. Judas: Matthew 27:1-10
 2. Peter: Matthew 26:69-75; John 21:15-17

III. Repentance will show itself in one's actions.

- A. If one truly repents, then he will not keep on doing those sinful things he did before. Locate and read all of the passages that record what John the Baptist taught on repentance. What did he teach them about repentance? How will you apply that teaching to your life?
- B. In Colossians 3:1-11, Paul writes about the sins that the Colossian Christians had committed prior to obeying the gospel. What does Paul say about these sins? Find another passage that is similar, and discuss what both passages teach about turning from sin.
- C. Given all that we have read about sin, why is it impossible for someone to come to God while stubbornly holding on to sin? Use Hebrews 10:26-31 in your answer. Find some other verses that make a similar point, and write a paragraph that you might use in motivating someone to repent.

IV. Case study in repentance: divorce and remarriage.

- A. Suppose we are studying with someone who says he is eager to become a Christian, but in the course of our conversation, we learn that he is in a marriage that violates the Christian law on divorce and remarriage as found in Matthew 19:6-9. Our student reads this passage, and asks whether he may continue in his present relationship after becoming a Christian. What should we tell that person about repentance and its implications for their situation? Consult the following points as you answer:
 - 1. Use Colossians 3:5-7 in your answer.
 - 2. Listen to the sermon, "Remarriage" by Glenn Colley, here: http://westhuntsville.org/Audio/Uploaded/050513_AM_WORSHIP.mp3.
 - 3. A penitent person will not keep another person in a relationship if God says the relationship is adulterous, even if there is love in the marriage and breaking off the marriage relationship would be very difficult. (The same principle would apply if someone had kidnapped a child and reared him as his own.) Find an example of someone in the scriptures who was truly penitent, and use this person as an analogy for giving up the sin of adultery.

Month 11: Confessing Christ

Introduction: The good confession

- A. “Jesus is Lord” is a basic affirmation of Christ’s exclusive authority over all things on Earth (Matthew 28:18; cf. Philippians 2:9-11). To say that “Jesus is Lord” is to imply that Hindu and Buddhist gods have no authority, that Muhammed has no authority, and that no other supposed gods have authority. God always has required this exclusivity from His followers. Find three Old Testament accounts that emphasize God’s requirement that He be first and only in the lives of His people. In these accounts, how did God respond when His people were unfaithful?
- B. The phrase “alien sinner” is not in the Bible, but the concept is biblical. It refers to someone who has never had his sins forgiven, but who would be a candidate for baptism were he willing to repent and confess. Think of three examples of alien sinners from the book of Acts, and write their names and corresponding Scripture references below.
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- C. Here, write down the references for at least two passages that teach the necessity of confession for salvation. (Refer to previous lessons if necessary.)
1. _____
 2. _____
- D. Where in the Bible is the confession of Christ called “the good confession”?
1. _____

Let us notice several biblical facts about this confession:

I. One cannot be saved without making the good confession.

- A. The church is build on the reality that is cited in the good confession.
1. What does Peter confess in Matthew 16:15-18? Find two other Apostles who make this same confession in the Gospels (Hint: both are recorded in the Gospel of John).

2. In Hebrews 3:1, Jesus is called “the high priest of our _____.” Find three other passages that discuss Jesus as our high priest. If Christ is willing to confess us before the Father, should we not be willing to confess Him on Earth? See also Matthew 10:32-33 and Revelation 3:5.
- B. A good deal of knowledge is presupposed by the good confession. In order to confess that Christ is Lord, one must already know the following truths.
1. That there is a God.
 2. That there is only one God.
 3. That Jesus of Nazareth was a historical Person.
 4. That Jesus was resurrected from the dead after He died.
 5. That Jesus occupies the position of God’s Son.
- C. Create an outline of passages and notes that you could use to study with someone about the previous five points.

II. God commands that we make the good confession openly.

- A. “Confession” literally means, “to say the same thing as another.” Thus, there is an emphasis in joining in with those who are confessing Christ. Confession amounts to professing to take a side with those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Consider that our confession connects us to all of those who followed God before us. Read Hebrews 11:32-40, 1 Peter 1:10-12, 1 Peter 2:4-10, and Ephesians 2:19-22. Summarize the content of these passages, reflecting on how our confession connects us to a long line of those who have said that Jesus is Who He claimed to be.
- B. It is not always easy to confess Christ. Sometimes there are severe consequences.
1. Read Acts 3-4, and list five things we learn about confession from the example of the apostles.
 2. Do research concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp, a personal friend and pupil of the apostle John. What did the confession of Christ have to do with Polycarp’s death?
 3. Find three examples of Old Testament heroes who suffered for their faith when it became known, and they refused to renounce.

III. God commands that we make the good confession continually.

- A. The word translated “acknowledges” or “confesses” in Matthew 10:32 is in the future tense, denote an action that will continue. A disciple of Christ is one who continues to confess that Jesus is God’s Son. What does the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) imply about open, ongoing confession of Christ?
- B. Those who truly are confessing Christ will be people of evangelism. Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-20, and write a paragraph considering how Paul views evangelism—why does he persuade others? What compels Him? Whom does he represent? Now, compare this to your view of evangelism. Are you continually confessing Christ through reaching out to others?

IV. The devil would like to prevent our making the good confession.

- A. What does John 12:42-43 teach about why some do not confess Christ?
- B. What does John 9:22 and 9:34 teach about why some do not confess Christ?
- C. We know that some Christians lost their lives for the confession around the turn of the 2nd century, from the letter of Pliny the Younger to the Roman emperor Trajan. Find this letter and read about what Pliny did to Christians. If you could have given these Christians a word of encouragement just before their audience with Pliny, what would you have told them?

V. Just making the good confession is insufficient to be saved.

- A. Even the devils are willing to admit that Jesus is Lord. Find a passage in which a devil makes the confession, and write the reference here. Also, read Matthew 4:1-11. Does Satan dispute the divinity of Jesus?
- B. On Judgment Day, everyone will make the good confession, but not all of them will be saved. Read Matthew 7:21, and find one more passage that teaches about how everyone will confess Christ.

Month 12: Baptism

Introduction: A case study in baptism that pleased God and resulted in salvation

- E. Many people in the religious world have been baptized in some context. Baptism involves contact with water, but obviously not every contact with water has anything to do with pleasing God or being right with God. For example, being dunked in the swimming pool during playtime at summer camp has nothing to do with pleasing God. Only contact with water for certain reasons and under certain circumstances has anything to do with pleasing God and being saved. Find a verse(s) that teaches this principle, and write a paragraph that you can use to explain the verse(s) to someone who had been baptized for the wrong reasons, or under false pretenses.
- F. As a case study in biblical salvation, read and outline Acts 9:1-19 and Acts 22:1-16 for the account of Saul's salvation from his sins. These passages will be the basis of our study.
- G. If we do what Saul did, then we will be saved from our sins just as he was. Use the following points to (a) evaluate your own baptism, and (b) prepare to study with the lost about God's plan of salvation. Based on our text about Saul, we can ask several questions about baptism. If a person can answer "Yes" to each of the questions below, then his or her baptism was Scriptural and valid, resulting in salvation.

I. Belief in Jesus must accompany baptism

- A. Saul obviously believed in Jesus when he was baptized. Find a passage from our reading that makes this clear. Write down the Scripture reference below, and find five additional passages that teach the necessity of belief.
- B. What does the Bible's teaching on belief imply about the practice of baptizing infants? Using the Scriptures you found above, write a paragraph that explains how these verses teach that infants have no need of salvation from sins.
- C. To further understand the Bible's teaching on infant baptism, also consider whether or not infants inherit the guilt of Adam or the guilt of their parents. Are infants guilty of Adam's sin? In other words, have they inherited guilt? As you formulate your answer, read the article "Did David Authorize Infant Baptism?" here: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1062>.
- D. Some say that baptism is not necessary for salvation, because one is saved when he believes in Jesus, regardless of whether he has been baptized. Often, justification for this position is that there are various passages that teach we are saved by believing in Jesus. However, given the foregoing discussion in this chapter and in the chapter on faith, what can we say about the concept of belief in the New Testament? What is saving belief, and how does it relate to obedience? In your answer, use John 3:5 and John 3:16.

II. Repentance must accompany baptism

- A. Saul obviously was repenting of his sins. Find a passage from our reading that makes this clear. Write down the reference.
- B. Read Acts 9:19-31 and compare the life that Paul lived *after* his baptism to his behavior *prior* to his baptism. Read all of the information in Acts about Saul prior to baptism, and list at least two major differences between his life before and after baptism.
- C. As a case study in true repentance, compare and contrast the reaction of Judas (Matthew 27:1-10) and Peter (Luke 22:54-62) to their sins surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. Consider their actions in light of 2 Corinthians 7:8-13.

III. Immersion is the proper mode of baptism

- A. Saul certainly was immersed. Look up the Greek word baptizō (a cognate of which is translated “be baptized” in Acts 22:16 and “was baptized” in Acts 9:18) and record the definitions.
- B. Consult the article “Translating *Bapto*” by Wayne Jackson here: <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/560-translating-bapto>, and answer the following questions:
 1. What is the historical reason why many Bible translations use the transliteration or Anglicization “baptism” rather than a translation such as “immersion”?
 2. Is the Greek word for “baptism” ever translated rather than transliterated? Give the Scripture references.
 3. What is the significance of the translation of the word for “baptism” in these passages? (E.g., What does this translation say about the practice of sprinkling for “baptism”?)
- C. Find records of two baptisms in the Bible that emphasize that the baptizer and the one being baptized went down “into” the water. Why is this important?

IV. Baptism must be done FOR the forgiveness of sins

- A. Saul obviously was baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Find a passage from our reading that makes this clear. Write down the reference. Some teach that one is saved at the moment when he believes in Jesus, but observe that Saul already believed in Jesus and yet still needed to have his sins washed away. How would you answer someone who argued that the purpose of the baptism is irrelevant, as long as one is baptized? As you formulate your answer, read the article “Believer’s Baptism for the Remission of Sins”

here: <https://plainsimplefaith.com/non-negotiable-believers-baptism-for-the-remission-of-sins/>.

- B. The reason for which a person is baptized is very important. Otherwise children playing in a swimming pool who dunk each other in the water would be making a difference in someone's salvation, which is absurd. The New Testament teaches clearly that baptism is *for* (in order to obtain) the remission of sins and is therefore required for salvation (Acts 2:38). It is the moment at which God's free gift of salvation is appropriated to the lost person. Read the following passages, and answer the following questions to understand this Biblical concept:
1. Read 1 Peter 3:20-21. What does baptism do for us?
 2. Read Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3. What happens when one is baptized? Prior to baptism, is one in Christ or outside of Christ? Find 10 verses in the New Testament that note the blessings that are found only "in Christ."
 3. Read Acts 2:38 and especially notice the word "for" in the phrase "for the remission of sins." What does this word mean? (For help, see how the same phrase is used in Matthew 26:28.)