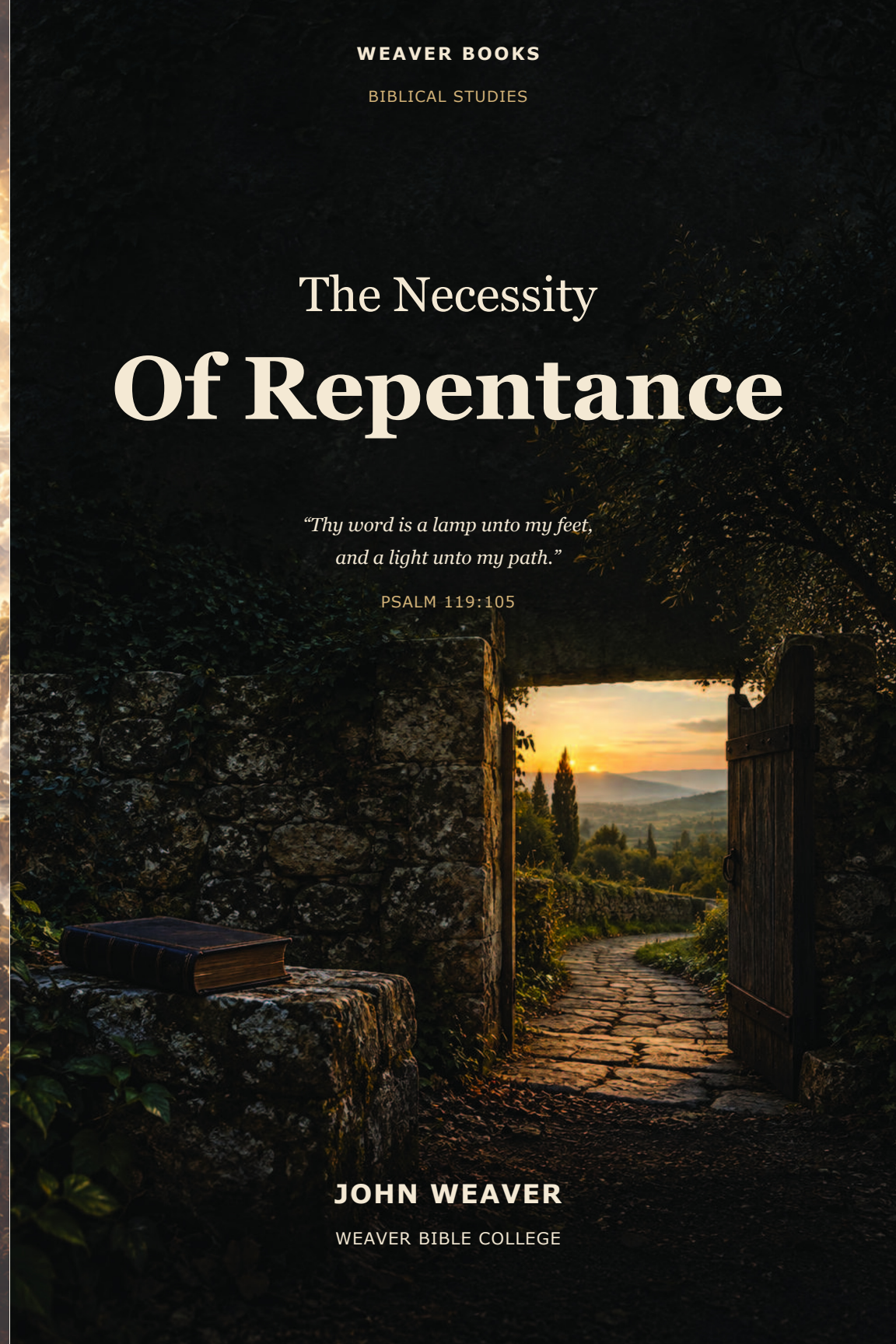
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Of Repentance

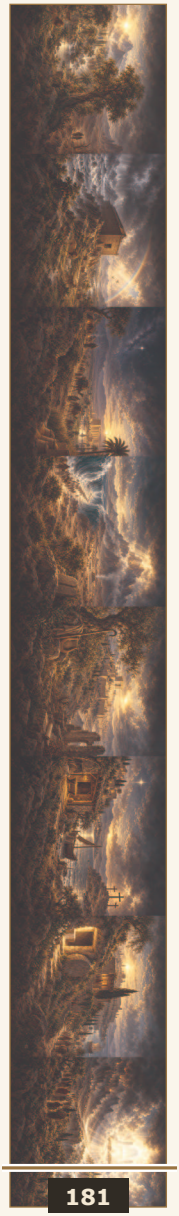
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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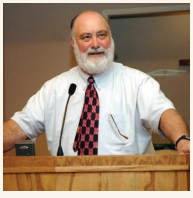
Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

ACTS 3:19, EXCERPT

Repentance is more than regret over an unwanted consequence. John Weaver examines its necessity, its relationship to faith, and the changed conduct that accompanies an honest acknowledgment of sin. These messages call readers to consider the response Scripture requires rather than the comfort of appearances.

“Repentance and faith go together, so much so that you cannot have one without the other.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

The Necessity Of Repentance

Part One of Two

Introduction: The Neglected Doctrine of Repentance

Jeremiah 31, verses 18 and 19. The title of the message is "The Necessity of Repentance." However, this is going to be a two-part message. Today will be basically the foundation for what I want to finish next week. In reality, the message is five points. I am going to cover three today, Lord willing, and that will leave two for next week.

In Jeremiah 31, beginning with verse 18, we read: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus. Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

One does not hear much today about the doctrine of repentance. It seems as if pastors, as well as churches, have dismissed this doctrine as needless and useless. The doctrine is not preached,

taught, or practiced in the religious world today. In fact, the truth of the matter is, in the religious world today, man is placed at the center instead of God. So we have a man-centered religion instead of a God-centered religion.

Modern-day Christianity, sinners now own man's needs and not the demands of God. We endeavor to make sinners comfortable and not convicted. We tell them of their goodness instead of God's greatness. Then we entertain them rather than instructing them. Repentance is certainly not a needless doctrine. It is a necessary doctrine. Repentance and faith go together, so much so that you cannot have one without the other. You might say that repentance and faith are the two sides of one coin.

Repentance and Faith Are Inseparable

So let me put it another way. If one truly, savingly repents, at the same time he truly, savingly believes. Again, if one truly, savingly believes, at the same time he truly, savingly repents. So it is impossible to have salvation without faith, and it is impossible to have salvation without repentance, for they go together.

Hold Jeremiah 31, because we are going to come back there, but look in your Bibles to the book of Mark, chapter 1, at verses 14 and 15, and see how our Lord began His ministry. The Word of God says: "Now after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Here are what most people would say are two calls: "Repent ye" and "believe the gospel." I believe it is simply one call. But here is the important thing: when you look at Mark chapter 1 and verse 15, when our Lord says "repent ye" and "believe the gospel," both of these are present active imperatives in the Greek, which means that they are commands. They are not asking you to repent and believe; you are being commanded to repent and believe.

Now, in reality, when our Lord commands us to repent and believe, it is not two calls, but it is one call. The verse says, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe

the gospel." These are not suggestions or invitations presented as mere possibilities. They are commands from the Lord Himself, directed to those who hear the gospel.

I could ask Steve, "Steve, would you please hand me those glasses that are near you?" Everyone understands that as a question. But if I looked at Steve and said, "Steve, give me those glasses now," that is not asking; it is a command. This is what God is doing through our Lord Jesus Christ: He is commanding us to repent and believe. Since it is a command, failure to obey that command is sin. It is a transgression. It is rebellion.

The interesting thing is the little word "and," A-N-D, which we always say is a conjunction. In the Greek, it is kai, K-A-I, and kai is translated in our Bibles many times not just as "and," but also as "even." Thus verse 15 could read: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, even believe the gospel." You really cannot believe without repenting, and you really cannot repent without believing.

Repentance and faith are intimately tied together. In Mark 1:14, the Bible says, “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” Then He says, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” You really cannot preach the kingdom of God without preaching repentance, because that is exactly how our Lord Jesus Christ began His ministry: by preaching the biblical doctrine of repentance. Any gospel that does not include repentance is not the true gospel revealed in the Word of God.

The Definition of Repentance

I want to give you three thoughts. We will look more specifically at Jeremiah 31 next week, though we will consider it some this week. First, I want to give you the definition of repentance. Two questions need to be asked whenever you hear the word repent or the doctrine of repentance: What is repentance, and how is it defined?

I want to show you how this word is used in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. They are the same, but they are different words. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 8. This is part of Solomon’s prayer dedicating the temple. The very first Hebrew word

is shuv. It is translated, and certainly means, “to repent,” but it means “to return, to turn back, to show, or to demonstrate by turning.”

Obviously, it includes changing one’s mind, because you are not going to return or turn around until you change your mind. Notice 1 Kings chapter 8, beginning with verse 47. Solomon is praying, and he says:

“Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent”—there is the word shuv—“and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name.”

Notice, first of all, that in verse 47 he said, “if they bethink themselves.” In other words, if you consider in your mind and begin to say, “Well, something is awfully wrong with me, with our land, with our nation.” If you bethink yourself and repent, what is going to happen when you repent?

First, you are going to make supplication unto the Lord. Second, you are going to confess, saying, “We have sinned. We’ve done perversely. We’ve committed wickedness.” Third, you are going to return with all of your heart. The point is that when you see the word “repent,” and the Hebrew word is shuv, it literally means that you are going to turn back.

Repentance does not simply mean that you stop doing something. Repentance is much more involved than that. I have heard professing Christians say, “He’s a good man. If he would just stop getting drunk, if he would just stop drinking, he’d be all right.” Really, the drunkenness is not the problem; the drunkenness is the symptom of the problem. The problem is the wicked heart. You can stop drinking, become sober, and still have a wicked, unconverted heart. Repentance, then, means far more than merely stopping something.

In Ezekiel 18:30–31, God says, “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Now watch: repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Notice that there is a negative, a casting away, and there is a positive, making yourself a new spirit and a new heart.

In other words, there is indeed a real, genuine change. Turning from sin, which is a negative, must be followed by turning to God, which is a positive. When you see the Hebrew word shuv, it means to turn, to turn back, and to show and demonstrate that there has been a change by turning away from sin back to God.

There is a second word, nakam. It has the idea of sorrowing, of ruing one’s actions and repenting, and even of regret. Let me give you an illustration of that.

You remember in the book of Job? Job is always wanting a daysman. He wants to talk with God. Finally, God comes to Job and says, “Look, you wanted to talk with me? Fine. I’ll play the man. I’m going to ask you some questions, and you answer me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world? Where were you when I did this?” He asked him, “How do you make the hinds to calve?” He asked him all of these questions. Of course, Job cannot answer any of them. Finally, Job says in Job 42, verse 6, “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” In other words, “I wish I had not opened my mouth. I regret even wanting to challenge God or to talk with Him.”

When you understand this word nakam, it means that there is a genuine sorrow for your sins. You regret them. There is a shamefacedness for those sins. Look in your Bibles back to Jeremiah 31, verse 19: “Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: here it is, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.”

If I were to ask you today, “Would you please stand up and tell everyone about those awful, wicked things that you did when you

were young, or when you were middle-aged, of which now you are ashamed?" I do not think I would have any takers. We are still ashamed of those things, and we certainly do not want to talk about them. We wish we had never done them. We wish they had never happened. That is the impact of this word: we rue that we did those things, regret that we did them, and are ashamed of them.

The same thing is true in the New Testament. The main word for repent is metanoeo. It is made up of two words: meta, a preposition meaning "with," and noeo, which refers to the understanding or the mind. The noun of noeo is nous, meaning the mind. Thus, metanoia or metanoeo means literally, "I change my mind." When you change your mind, there is a resulting change of direction and a resulting change of conduct.

You are no longer doing that which you used to do. There is an abhorrence of the former conduct. You regret it now. Like the Old Testament words, the New Testament word is a double-sided word as well. It has a negative and a positive. Paul is talking to these Thessalonians and says, "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, now watch this, how ye turned to God"—that is a positive—"from idols"—that is a negative—"to serve the living and true God"—that is a positive—"and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." In this passage, you see both a positive and a negative. Repentance is not merely negative. You do not just stop doing something; you stop, but you turn to God, and there is a change in your conduct.

In Luke 13:1–5, we read: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." Here were some people worshiping God and sacrificing to Him when Pilate came in, had them murdered, and mingled their blood with the blood of their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." They were thinking that something exceedingly tragic, something exceedingly catastrophic, would indicate that one or some people were very

vicious sinners. Jesus said that this was not the case; rather, except they repent, they would all likewise perish.

Our Lord said, “No, no, no. But I'm going to tell you, unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” Now look in verse 4; He says it again: “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? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Here our Lord is talking about the absolute necessity for repentance—yes, the absolute necessity—because He said, “Except ye repent, ye shall perish.” The only alternative to perishing is to repent, to repent and turn back to God. He is talking about repentance. Metanoia means a change of mind. You are not going to change your direction or your conduct until you change your mind. You have to learn to think differently. Something has to disturb your thoughts; something has to change your thoughts in order to get you to change directions.

There is always both a negative and a positive: you turn from and you turn unto. Louis Berkhof, in his systematic theology, points out that there are basically three elements in repentance. First, there is the intellectual element, referring to the mind, where you begin to think, consider, and understand. Second, there is the emotional element, where you become sorrowful for your sins and ashamed of what you are doing. Third, there is the volitional element, where you actually turn from those sins unto God. You cease doing those things, turn back, and begin to follow the righteousness of God's Word in obedience to Him.

The old London Confession of Faith, 1689, gives this simple definition: “This saving repentance is a grace or teaching of the Scriptures whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the many evils of his sin”—intellectual—“does by faith in Christ humble himself with godly sorrow”—the emotional element—“hatred of it, for pardon and strength of grace with a purpose”—the volitional element—“and endeavor by the supplies of the Spirit to walk before God and to all well-pleasing in all things.”

Repentance is not simply stopping something. You cease from your sin, but you turn to God and begin to follow the path of obedience laid down in His Word. That is the definition of repentance.

The Demand for Repentance

The Demand for Repentance: The Unbroken Bullock

The second thing I want you to see is the demand for repentance. In Jeremiah 31:18, Ephraim says, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised." Now look at this illustration: "as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Here is a picture of a bullock that is unaccustomed to the yoke. Let me say this another way: the bullock is unbroken to the yoke.

That is, he is wild. He is headstrong. He is uncontrollable, unusable, and unsafe. A bullock that is not broken is one that does as he pleases, regardless of the wishes and desires of the owner. So we are given this picture of a bullock that is wild. Several times in Scripture, that pictures a sinner. For instance, in Deuteronomy 32:15: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."

So an unbroken bullock is a bullock that is stiff-necked. He cannot be turned. He is unstoppable in his course. He simply does his own thing. He has no regard for his master. He has no regard for his owner or his friend, and he oftentimes seeks to destroy those who only want to help him.

There is another phrase that deals with this unbroken oxen and this unbroken sinner. In Exodus 32:9, God says concerning Israel, "And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people." Stiff-necked people. You remember when Stephen was about to be stoned to death in Acts 7. He was giving his testimony, and he looked at those people who eventually stoned him and said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." And so he called them stiff-necked.

We had a horse years ago named Little Bit. I hope you have already surmised that the reason he was called Little Bit was because he was exceedingly tall. In fact, he was a very, very big horse. But a horse that is not meek, a bullock that is not meek, or a mule that is not meek is exceedingly difficult to bridle. That would have been the case with Little Bit, because I could barely reach up; if he raised his head, there would have been no way in the world I could have gotten a bridle on him.

Listen to me very carefully: a stiff-necked animal is an animal that resists, rebels, and refuses the yoke. The same is true of mules and horses, just as it is true of bullocks. Mules are well known for their stubbornness. When we see someone who is stubborn, we normally say, "Well, he is as stubborn as a mule."

Let me give you an illustration that will show you this demand for repentance. When I was a boy, we had mules. I drove mules and plowed mules. We had one mule named Old Crip. We called her Old Crip because, first, she was old, and second, she was crippled in one sense of the word. When she got tired or sore, she limped to some degree. I plowed that mule, drove that mule, rode that mule, and fed that mule. I did everything that needed to be done for her.

One summer my cousin came up from Miami, Florida. He was a city slicker. When he saw the mule, he wanted to ride the horse. I had to explain, "Larry, that is not a horse. That is a mule. There is a difference between a horse and a mule." It did not matter; he wanted to ride the horse. We did not have any saddles. I had ridden bareback all my life—horses and mules as well. It did not matter. He insisted that he wanted to ride the horse.

I got the mule out, put the bridle on her, and knew there was no way in the world he could drive or handle her. I slipped onto her back, reached my hand down, and pulled him up behind me. When I left the barn, there were a number of pecan trees in our front yard, and one of them had an exceedingly low limb. That mule did not want to be ridden, and she headed straight toward that low pecan limb. I was a boy.

I was not a grown man. I started pulling on that rein as hard as I could, but that mule was walking straight for the limb. I pulled so

hard, so help me, her head was turned horizontally, but she was walking straight for it. When I saw that I could not turn the mule and knew she was going under the limb, I knew what she wanted. As loudly as I could, I hollered, “Duck, Larry!” Then I laid down upon her neck and grabbed her. My city cousin, when I said, “Duck, Larry,” looked up in the sky and said, “Where?” About that time, the limb caught him across the chest, swept him off the rear end of that horse, and the last time I saw him, he was bouncing up and down on his rear end on the ground. By the way, he is now dead, but till the day he died, he swore up and down that I did it on purpose. I did not. I simply could not turn that mule. The mule was broken, but she was stubborn.

That is all there is to it. This is exactly what God is talking about when you have a mule, bullock, or horse that is unbroken to the yoke. In one sense, they simply do their own thing. Therefore, they must be broken. For a bullock to be broken, controlled, or made safe, he has to be broken to the yoke. Once he is broken to the yoke, he is easy to work with, gentle, and controllable. We could use another word: he becomes meek.

Here is the difference between a stiff-necked animal and a meek animal. I do not care whether it is a horse, mule, or bullock. If the animal is meek, when you put the bridle on, it will normally lower its head and make it easy for you to get it on. Then it will stand still while you put a saddle on it or hook it up to plow. That is a meek animal.

We have to understand something about meekness. When we talk about biblical meekness, most folks do not understand it. They equate meekness with mousiness, weakness, fear, or refusing to stand up for yourself. You become a foot mat and let people walk all over you. That is not meekness. Meekness is controlled strength. I am going to show it to you in just a moment. I have an eight-foot harrow

The harrow weighs about 1,000 pounds. Alice and I went out one day to hook up to that harrow, and there it was, flipped over with all the discs up to heaven. I thought, “What happened to this thing?” Then I looked down and saw General Beauregard’s hoofprints—my 3,000-pound bull. He had been rubbing his head under the harrow,

and then he simply flipped it all the way over. We had to get a chain and pull it back over.

All I am trying to show you is the strength of a bullock, a horse, or a mule. That strength has to be controlled. In Matthew 5:5, our Lord said, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” Let me tell you who the meek are: they are those who are broken to the yoke, those who are now controlled by God. Meekness is controlled strength.

Our Lord said in Matthew 11:28–30, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The blessed meek are those who are tamed by the Lord, broken to His yoke, and submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Father. They are controlled by His Word and His law. In other words, when our Lord says, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,” He is saying, “Blessed are the meek, for now they have controlled strength under My law, and they are willing and ready to do what I command them.”

Now I want you to turn in your Bibles to two passages. The first one is Psalm 32, and then Jeremiah 17. Go back to Psalm 32 and look at verse 9. Psalm 32, verse 9, look at it. God says, “Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.” God is saying, “Don't make me put a bit in your mouth. You better have some understanding. Don't be like a horse or a mule.” He says you have to be broken. And look in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 17, because Jeremiah complains about these people, and God Himself is saying about these people, Jeremiah 17, verse 23, watch it. Look what He says concerning His people who would not listen. He said, “But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.”

I've known people like that. They just will not listen. They just will not hear. And so God says, "Don't be stiff-necked." In other words, you learn to be meek. When that yoke, when that bridle comes

around, you just drop your head and say, "Lord, I'm ready for whatever you have for me."

Now, here is what John Gill said concerning this illustration. He said, "As a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, or to draw the plow, as senseless and as stupid, yea, as thoughtless of danger, as that creature is when led to the slaughter, as untaught, as the word signifies, as ignorant of divine and spiritual things, knowing nothing of Christ, or of God in Christ, or of the way of salvation by Him, and of the operations of His Spirit and grace, as unruly as that to bear the yoke of the law, or the yoke of Christ, as impatient under the yoke of affliction, kicking, tossing, and flinging like a wild bull in a net." When I was a boy and had to plow mules, there was such a thing as jumping the traces.

You had the gear on the mule and the long leather reins coming back, but the mule was pulling the plow, the sled, or whatever you had hooked up to him. Traces held the mule inside this one little area where he could walk. Sometimes that mule would jump the traces. That means he gets out, and when he does, you cannot control him. Usually it's his leg. He hurts his leg when he jumps the traces, and it scares him and frightens him. And now he runs off, pulling that plow, tearing up everything that's been planted.

It's called jumping the traces. That's exactly what John Gill is talking about, these wild animals that are kicking, tossing, and flinging. He said, "like a wild bull in the net." By the way, there is a building still standing in Fitzgerald, where we live. When I was a boy, my father would take me into that building, and I never have forgotten it. As you walk in the building, you could go right down the middle. On the left-hand side, you could buy horses and mules, and on the right-hand side, you could buy tractors and cars. Had them all in the same building.

The illustration involved small tractors, because tractors were just coming in at that time—not the old steam engines, but gasoline engines and that kind of thing. Still, the illustration remains. God is saying, here is the demand for repentance, because we are unaccustomed to the yoke. We have not been broken to the yoke. There is a necessity to submit to God and submit to His law.

The demand for repentance is that we turn from idols and serve the one true and living God. It is the fact that we realize we have been selfish, senseless, useless, and contrary to our Creator and our benefactor. The demand for repentance is found in the fact that we kicked against Him, denied Him, resisted Him, and blasphemed Him.

The Duty of Repentance: God's Command and Coming Judgment

Now He commands us to repent and believe the gospel. There is a demand to be made from the illustration that we are as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke.

The third thing is the duty of repentance. In Jeremiah 31, verse 18, we read: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." The duty of repentance lies in the fact that we realize, perceive, and know that we have been unaccustomed to the yoke. That is, we know that we violate God's law.

We know that we transgress His commandments. We know that we displease Him. We know that we sin and that we are sinners. We know that we seek to please ourselves, engage in fleshly desires, follow our lusts, and walk contrary to His revealed will. Since God is our Creator, we owe Him glory and honor. Since we are sinners, we owe Him repentance. Duty is based upon lawful authority and doctrine, or, I could say, duty is based upon lawful authority and lawful orders.

Suppose that Steve, Ron, and I join the army. We get into boot camp as privates. Ron looks at me and says, “Private, I want you to get out and give me fifty push-ups.” I might answer, “Do you have any authority to tell me to do that? You are a private just like I am. I do not have to obey you.” But when a superior officer comes in and tells me to get down and give him fifty push-ups, I had better do it. In other words, when you talk about lawful authority and lawful orders, stop and think about this.

The one true and living God, the sovereign, supreme God of heaven and earth, is the Commander-in-Chief. He is the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of heaven and earth. He has the ultimate, full, and final authority, and He is the One who has commanded all men everywhere to repent.

Acts 17:30–31 says: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 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."

First, note that repentance is commanded by God: "but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Since this is a command, to disobey is a transgression. To disobey means that you are a transgressor, a sinner, and in rebellion against Him. He commands men to repent, to turn from sin, and to turn back to Him in submission and obedience. Thus you have the supreme, sovereign authority commanding repentance.

Secondly, He gives us underlying reasons for this command. I remember when my children were four or five years old. I could ask them to do something, and they would answer, "Yes, sir," and go do it—absolutely.

When a child is eleven, twelve, or thirteen, a parent may say, "Go, would you please go do this?" and the child asks, "Why?" Most parents answer, "Because I said so." That is a good answer. But when a child asks why, it may not be that he is being resistful or rebellious. He may simply want an answer. It is an opportunity to teach and for him to learn: "Here is why I want you to do this, son, because…" and then you explain. "I just want to know why." Well, guess what?

God tells us why He commands all men everywhere to repent. The first reason is that there is a judgment. He has appointed a day "in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." God says, "I am commanding you to repent now. Here is why I am commanding you to repent: because there is a judgment." There is going to be a time when we must face God, when everyone is going to face God, and the judgment will be done in righteousness.

There will be no fraud on the court and no bribery. There will be no continuances, no skipping out, and no backroom deals. Shyster lawyers cannot get you off the hook. Political influence will be absolutely worthless, and monetary gain will be useless. He says, “I have appointed a day in which I am going to judge the world in righteousness.” That is the first reason He tells us why He has commanded all men to repent.

Here is the second reason. He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness “by that man whom he hath ordained,” none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If you look back to John chapter 5, you will find exactly why the judgment will be by the Lord Jesus Christ. John 5:22 says, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour”

The Father, because the Son is God. “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” So our Lord is going to be the judge. He is the man that God has ordained.

Think about this scene for someone who is unconverted, someone who is unsaved at this judgment. Their judge will be the one that they hated, despised, rejected, blasphemed, sinned against, rebelled against, refused grace, refused mercy and love. Moreover, they refused His commands, His entreaties, and His exhortations. They are now in no position to receive mercy. There is no falling upon the mercy of the court once you get here, because the only thing left is righteousness, and righteousness and justice are one and the same. If something is just, it is right. If something is right, then it is just.

The Bible says in Romans 2:16, “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel,” wrote the Apostle Paul. God is going to judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

God not only tells you that there is going to be a judgment; He also tells you who the judge is going to be: the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 17:31 says, “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 gives you absolute surety that

there is going to be a judgment. Just as surely as God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead, just as surely there is going to be a judgment.

God commands all men everywhere to repent. Why? First, there is a day of judgment. Second, He has ordained the Lord Jesus Christ to be the judge. Third, He has given absolute assurance that this is true and certain and will come to pass, because He raised Him physically and bodily from the dead. He will be the judge. Just as surely as God raised His Son from the dead, just as surely there is going to be a judgment.

The duty, then, to repent is based upon divine authority and command. You either obey or you perish. That is why our Lord said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Applications: The Necessity and Nature of True Repentance

First of all, repentance is not only necessary unto salvation; it is impossible to be saved without repentance, since repentance and faith go together. He that savingly repents also savingly believes. He that savingly believes also savingly repents, because they are the two sides of one coin. You cannot have one without the other. Anyone who savingly repents believes; anyone who savingly believes repents.

Here is the second application: repentance involves a change of mind and a genuine sorrow or remorse for our former direction, our former sins, and our former disobediences. Someone has said, "Well, I repented, but I haven't changed." In that case, you have never repented, because you cannot have repentance without a change. Repentance is not merely a word or an outward profession; it involves a real change in the direction of one's life.

If I happened to be a drunkard and told you I had repented, yet you saw me walking down the street soppy drunk, I would hope you would realize that I really had not repented. When we repent, there is genuine sorrow for our sins; that is for sure. But in 2 Corinthians 7:10, we must understand that there is not only a godly sorrow, but also a worldly sorrow: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to

salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

There is a godly sorrow that is not to be repented of, and a worldly sorrow that worketh death. A worldly sorrow means you are sorry you got caught. But godly sorrow means you are sorry you sinned against God and broke His law, and you want to change. Here you have the definition of repentance, the demand for repentance, and the duty of repentance.

It is based upon the absolute sovereign command of God. As creatures, we owe Him honor and glory. As sinners, we owe Him repentance. Our Lord said, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and truth. I pray that You would open our understanding and grant us enlightenment by Thy Spirit.

CHAPTER 2

The Necessity Of Repentance

Part Two of Two

Review of Part One: Definition, Demand, and Duty of Repentance

Jeremiah 31, verses 18 and 19: “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.”

This is the second part of the message I started last week, and I will review and try to tie everything together this week. The message is “The Necessity of Repentance, Part Two.” Last week I began this message on the necessity of repentance. I trust that you will remember a good bit of it, and that at least some of the truths have sunk deeply into your mind. Let me begin by giving you a quote I gave in the introduction last week: Repentance is not a needless doctrine. It is a necessary doctrine.

Repentance and faith go together. It is impossible to have one without the other. You might say that repentance and faith are the two sides of one coin. If one truly, savingly repents, at the same time he truly, savingly believes. If someone truly, savingly believes, at the same time he truly, savingly repents.

We are commanded in the Word of God to preach repentance. Think momentarily of the rebellion of a lot of preachers in this land and churches in this land who will not preach, or will not allow repentance to be preached. The Bible tells you in Luke 24:47 that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Our Lord himself began his ministry by preaching repentance. Mark 1:14-15 says: “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Note that he said, “Repent

This is not two calls in reality. This is one call, because the little word “and” in verse 15 is the Greek word kai. When he said, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel,” that little word kai is oftentimes translated in our Bibles as “even.” So you could read that, “Repent ye, even believe the gospel.” No one really believes without repenting, and no one really repents without believing.

I pointed out the definition of repentance, the demand for repentance, and the duty of repentance. Let me begin by summarizing the definition of repentance. We looked in the Old Testament and saw the Hebrew words. Then we went to the New Testament and saw the Greek word, especially metanoia. These words in the Old Testament in Hebrew and the word in Greek basically have the same meaning. In other words, metanoia and the Hebrew word shub and the other Hebrew word all refer to a change of mind, which produces a godly sorrow, which then also results in a change of direction.

Repentance and faith are actually two parts. There is a turning from and there is a turning to as well. Louis Berkhof, in his systematic theology, points out the three elements of repentance. He describes, number one, the intellectual element of repentance as a

change of view and a recognition of sin as involving personal guilt, defilement, and helplessness. Secondly, the emotional element is a change of feeling, manifesting itself in sorrow for sin committed against the Holy God. Thirdly, there is the volitional element, which is a change of purpose and an inward turning away from sin and a disposition to seek pardon and cleansing.

That is 100% correct, because based upon these Greek words and the Hebrew words, you always have the intellectual element when you understand. You also have the emotional element when you begin to have a godly sorrow, which we will talk about later, and then, of course, the volitional element.

Repentance means that you actually turn from sin to God. Repentance is not only defined; it is also demanded because of our transgression and because of our sin. We considered this in detail last week. Jeremiah 31:18 gives us a wonderful illustration of this demand: "Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." A bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, or an unbroken bullock, is headstrong, uncontrollable, unusable, and unsafe. It has no concern for its owner, its master, or his wishes or his desires.

The Bible gives us this same picture again in Deuteronomy 32:15, where God says: "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness. Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." So again, a sinner is pictured as a bullock unconcerned about its owner or master. An unbroken bullock is also stiff-necked; it cannot be turned and is almost unstoppable in its ways. Mules and bullocks are certainly alike in this regard, in that sense of the word. I gave you a good illustration from the mule I used to have as a boy, old Crip. But an unbroken bullock has no regard for his master or anyone else.

What the bullock needs is meekness, submission, and control. That is exactly what is demanded in repentance. Then I pointed out, thirdly, that the duty of repentance is based upon the plain commands of God, our Creator, Owner, and Sovereign. Our duty arises from the fact that the sovereign God of heaven and earth has commanded us to repent.

There is none greater than Him. He is the Commander-in-Chief, the absolute authority. He is a sovereign authority, and He has commanded it.

I ask you to look once more in Acts chapter 17, holding Jeremiah 31. This is where we ended last week when I was explaining the duty to repent. Beginning with verse 30, the Bible says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: 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."

First, God commands all men everywhere to repent. Once that command has been issued, it is sufficient in and of itself. But He also gives foundational reasons for that command. Verse 31 explains them. There is a judgment; it is coming. He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness. He goes farther and tells us who the Judge will be: "by that man whom he hath ordained," the Lord Jesus Christ.

We then looked back to John chapter 5 and saw that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Notice, therefore: not only has He told us there will be a judgment, and not only has He told us that the Lord Jesus Christ will be the Judge, but He has given absolute assurance of that fact: "whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Just as surely as God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, there will be a judgment. In light of these facts, He commands all men everywhere to repent. His command alone would be sufficient, but now He gives undergirding foundations for it.

Duty Does Not Equal Ability

Duty does not equal ability. Responsibility does not equal ability. Simply because we have a duty, because we are responsible, or because we have an obligation, does not necessarily mean that we have the ability in and of ourselves to fulfill that duty, obligation, or responsibility. Duty and responsibility differ greatly from ability.

Suppose you had a wonderful idea for making an awful lot of money, but needed to borrow some in order to get your project off the ground. You could go to a bank or to a Christian brother, and let us suppose you borrowed twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars. You would be responsible to pay that money back. Are you duty-bound? Yes. Are you obligated? Yes. You might say, "Nothing. No problem. I will do it."

But suppose you became involved in a head-on wreck, and the next thing you knew, you woke up in the hospital six months later. When you did wake up, the only thing you could do was sit in a wheelchair while someone fed you. You were totally incapacitated. You had not only lost a job; you had lost the ability even to function.

Here is the question: Do you still have the duty, obligation, and responsibility to repay that money? The answer is yes. But do you have the ability to do so? The answer is no. There is a vast difference between responsibility and ability. Although we have the duty, and although we have been demanded and commanded to repent, that does not mean that we have the ability in and of ourselves to do so.

The Donation of Repentance: Repentance as a Gift from God

One of the wiles and lies of the enemy, and of the flesh, is that when we are enticed to sin or seduced to do something, we think, "Listen, there is an easy repentance. All you have to do is simply confess, and it is over." What we forget is this: repentance does not belong to the devil to give. Moreover, repentance is not in us.

The Donation of Repentance

We cannot work it up. We cannot repent just at our leisure. There have been people who have been seduced into sin, and they think they can stop whenever they want. Later they find out they cannot stop, and they end up being totally destroyed. Repentance is not in us. I will say this again: you cannot work up repentance. You cannot repent in and of yourself. It is impossible.

Here is my fourth point: the donation of repentance. By donation, I simply mean that it is a gift. I pointed out not only last week, but

also again in the introduction today, that repentance and faith are the two sides of one coin. Let me say it another way: repentance and faith are conjoined together. You have heard of conjoined twins. Repentance and faith are conjoined because both are the gifts of God. Just as faith is His gift, repentance is also His gift. Just as you cannot believe without His gift of faith, you cannot turn from sin without His gift of repentance.

It is our duty and our responsibility to seek His gifts—our duty, our obligation, our responsibility. Hold Jeremiah 31, and turn to Matthew chapter 9, beginning with verse 11. Our Lord is eating with publicans and sinners: “And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 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.”

Notice what our Lord said: “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Is there anyone in this room who would wake up one morning and say to yourself,

“I feel absolutely wonderful. I mean, this is a great day. My body’s in great shape. I’m ready to go to work and do whatever I need to do today. I’m in wonderful health. But before I start, I’m going to run by the doctor’s office, let him look at me, and give him three or four hundred dollars just to check me out.”

You’re not going to do that, neither am I. If you did not wake up feeling absolutely wonderful, what are you going to do? You’re going to your medicine cabinet and taking what you think is going to help you. If you take what you think is going to help you and it does not help you, then you will say, “Hmm, let me call Steve over there.”

“See if he's had any symptoms like I've gotten. If so, what did he do?” So you call Steve. Steve said, “Man, you called me just right, because yeah, I've had symptoms just like that.” “Well, what did you do, Steve?” “Well, I ate some chocolate cake and some ice cream and put some grits and oatmeal in it and a dill pickle, and man, I got well.” Next thing you know, you're trying that yourself, because if it worked for him, it'll work for you.

The point is, if you feel badly, you're going to do everything you can to heal yourself. If you can't, then you're going to call your friends and neighbors. When you get absolutely helpless and realize that, if you're ever going to get well, you've got to go to a doctor—somebody that knows what to do—you will seek help. This is what our Lord is saying: as long as sinners do not realize their sin and the depth of their sickness, they'll never seek Him. They'll never ever want Him or desire Him.

Just as a healthy person would not go to a physician, a sinner by nature will not seek the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, then, do some seek Him? You say, “But I did.” I know, but let me show you why. In Acts chapter 5, Peter says, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 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.” Note the words “for to give.”

In Acts chapter 10, Cornelius the centurion, the Roman soldier, and his household were converted. In chapter 11, Peter was reproved because, as an Israelite, he had gone into someone unclean. He explained how God gave him the vision and showed him not to call anything unclean that God had cleansed. He told them that, when he spoke to them, God gave them the same gift He gave the Jews when they believed. Peter said, “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?”

When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Look at the word “granted.”

In 2 Timothy 2:24-26, the Apostle Paul writes, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

When do men recover themselves out of the snare of the devil? According to verse 25, it is when they acknowledge the truth. When, then, do men acknowledge the truth? When God gives them

repentance. Without repentance, there is no acknowledging the truth; and without acknowledging the truth, there is no recovery from sin and the snare of the devil.

When Acts 5:31 says “for to give repentance,” Acts 11:18 says “God granted repentance,” and 2 Timothy 2:25 says “if God peradventure will give them repentance,” the words “give” and “granted” are the same Greek word, didōmi. It means a gift, a grant; to give or deliver something to someone; a donation. It is something given, something you did not have before, and something you absolutely needed.

Now we understand Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” What is the gift of God? Faith. It is not of ourselves. God must give faith, and the same is true of repentance. God must actually give repentance.

Someone says, “Well, all men have faith. They just need to use it.” No, that is not true. Look at 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2: “Look what the apostle says.”

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." All men do not have faith. You may say, "Well, all men may have a natural faith," but there is a vast difference between a natural faith and a saving faith. When I sat down in this chair, I exercised a natural faith because I believed this chair would hold me up. That is vastly different from saving faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That kind of faith is the gift of God and the gift of God alone. God must give faith, and likewise God must give repentance. If God does not give me the gift of faith, then I cannot believe. If God does not give me the gift of repentance, then I cannot turn. If you do not have the gift of repentance, you will die in your sins.

It is just that simple. Our Lord said to those Jews in John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Where there is no faith, there is no repentance. Where there is no repentance, there is no

faith. Faith and repentance are conjoined. They go together because both are the gifts of God.

In Acts 20, the Apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders what he preached and taught: "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," which means he taught the whole counsel of God, "but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance and faith go together. In Acts 26:20, speaking to King Agrippa, he said, "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." They should repent and turn to God. That is turning from sin and turning to God in faith. Repentance and turning to God in faith are necessary unto salvation, for both are the gifts of

You not only have the definition of repentance, the demand for repentance, and the duty of repentance; now you see the donation of repentance. God must actually give us repentance, exactly as he gives us the gift of faith.

The Discharge of Repentance: Exercising the Gift

There is one last point: the discharge of repentance. This refers to the fact that we actually repent, that we actually turn from sin. Did I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes. Did I turn from my sins? Yes. When I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, I was simply exercising the gift of faith that he gave me. When I turned from my sins, I was simply exercising the gift of repentance that was given unto me.

Faith is the gift of God, but God does not believe for me. Repentance is the gift of God, but God does not repent for me. God gives me his gift of faith, which enables me to believe, and the gift of repentance, which enables me to turn from my sins. When I believe and repent, I am merely exercising the gifts God has given unto me. I can truthfully say I believed, and I can truthfully say I repented. But I can also truthfully say I would never have believed and never have repented unless God had given me the gifts of faith and repentance.

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7. The Apostle Paul asks pointed questions: “For who maketh thee to differ from another?” Why is it you believe when others do not? Why is it you study the Scriptures and others do not? Why has your life been blessed instead of cursed? Who made you to differ from another? Why were you not born in the darkest continent in this world, under heathen deities and heathen worship? Why were you born where you could hear the Scripture? Who made you to differ?

What is the next question? “And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Everything you have, God gave you. He gave you the gift of faith and the gift of repentance. Then comes the next question: “Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”

Now I repented, yes, I believe, but the only reason I did was because of the gifts and the grace and the mercy of God himself. Now I want you to go back in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 31. I worked on this passage last week, I'm going to finish with it this week. I want you to look at verses 18 and 19 together. Here it is: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented; and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." Now, let's ask a question: Why was Ephraim bemoaning himself? Here's the answer: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Now, let me just tell you, there is a play on words in verse 18. So when he said first, "Thou hast chastised me," that means that God whipped him, God disciplined him. When he said, "and I was chastised," that is not saying the same thing. That's not like me looking at Steve and saying, "In whipping I will whip thee." You know, that'd be saying the same thing. So when he says, "Thou hast chastised me," that refers to the punishment, the chastisement, the affliction of whatever it was. And "I was chastised"—the phrase "and I was chastised" then refers to the instruction or the result or the benefit of having been whipped and chastened to begin with. So let me try to explain it and give you a verse that will show it to you. So if you will look in your Bibles, hold

Jeremiah, we're coming back there, but look to Psalm 94 and verse 12. Psalm 94 and verse 12. Here it is. Look what it says: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord." Now here's the result of that chastening: "and teachest him out of thy law." So that's exactly what is meant when he said, "O Lord, thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised." In other words,

I was whipped, I was convicted, and I saw the truth and had some beneficial results. I saw that I was a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Now go back to Jeremiah 31, because I want you to see the next plea. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." So God has chastened him and opened his eyes. But look at the next plea: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God."

When he is chastened, and the result of that chastening is that he is taught and has his eyes opened, he now sees his absolute inability and helplessness, and he prays, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." God moved first. God initiated it. I would never have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ if God the Father had not given me faith. I would never have turned from my sins if he had not given me the gift of repentance. I would never have known my own helplessness, that I needed a Savior, had he not opened my eyes and shown me.

Our Lord said in John 15, verse 5, "Without me ye can do how much?" Nothing. That is why he says, "Now that I've been chastened and the results I see, now I'm praying, 'Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned.'" Hold Jeremiah, but look back in your Bibles to Psalm 80, and then we are going to Psalm 85. This plea appears over and over in Scripture. In Psalm 80, verse 3, we read this prayer request: "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." "Turn us again,

Psalm 80 says, “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” Verse 7 says, “Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” Verse 19 says, “Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” We must be turned individually, familially, ecclesiastically, and nationally. If God does not turn our nation, we

are headed for straight destruction. If God does not turn us individually, we are headed for straight destruction.

Psalm 85:4 says, “Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.” God’s anger is only going to cease when we are turned by him and there is real, genuine repentance.

Now let us go back to Jeremiah 31. Verse 18 says, “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised. I saw where I was as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Now here is my plea: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.” Then he says, “Surely after that I was turned I repented.” After God gives him the gift of repentance and points him in the direction, he says, “I was turned.” God moved first, and when God gave his gift of repentance, then there was the exercise of repentance.

The latter part says, “and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” After he was instructed, he smote upon his thigh and bore the reproach of his youth. Now turn to 2 Corinthians 7:10, while holding Jeremiah 31.

Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow

I referred to this passage last week, but I want you to see it in light of verse 19 of Jeremiah 31. Second Corinthians 7:10 says, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” He makes a distinction between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. You must remember that there is a difference between them.

Worldly sorrow is being upset because you were caught, embarrassed, or because everybody has found out about your sin. It is wishing the sin had never happened and that you had not gotten into all this trouble. Godly sorrow, however, is sorrow over sin and sorrow that it was ever done. It is sorrow that sin offended a holy God and violated God’s law. It is sorrow that leads to a change of direction in one’s life. Godly sorrow is not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Here is a good question: How does one distinguish between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? How do we know which one is which? How do we tell the difference? We can tell the difference by the fruits of each one. When our Lord said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," that is true not only of individuals, but also in the area of repentance as well. For instance, let me give you something to stop and think about.

Consider Cain. You know what Cain said? "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He was not sorry that he murdered his brother. He was sorry that he got punished and that it was a heavy punishment. Judas, the Bible said, came back and threw the silver on the floor, saying, "I have betrayed the innocent blood," and then went out and hanged himself. You look at the people who are jumping out of windows and who have been caught stealing millions upon millions. They are embarrassed and end up killing themselves. Such sorrow reveals distress over consequences rather than sorrow over sin against God.

There is no real sorrow over the fact that they have done wrong. They simply do not want to face the responsibility and punishment for their wrongdoing. Esau was exceedingly sorrowful that he lost his birthright, but there was no genuine repentance. Oftentimes worldly sorrow is simply, "I'm embarrassed. I got caught. I don't want to be punished. I know I'm going to be, but I don't want to be."

Worldly sorrow often makes someone very bitter and vindictive. If I am doing something wrong and Clay catches me and exposes me, and now I am facing not only the frowns of my friends but also prison, I could say to him, "You just wait. I'll get you back. I'll nail you. I will plan." In other words, my worldly sorrow is not sorrow for my sin; I am sorry that I got caught, and now I am bitter that this man has exposed me, and I am going to try to get him back. That is worldly sorrow. It has nothing to do with godly sorrow. Godly sorrow produces repentance, and it also brings forth the fruits of repentance.

Fruits Worthy of Repentance

In Matthew chapter 3, John the Baptist is preaching. Verse 7 says, "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?" Then verse 8 says, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." He called the religious leaders of his day vipers, and then said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." Meet means bring forth fruits evidencing or manifesting repentance, fruits that are worthy of repentance.

In Luke chapter 3, John says to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin 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."

John said, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." The people asked, "What shall we do then?" He answered, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." Publicans also asked, "Master, what shall we do?" He said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." Soldiers asked, "And what shall we do?" He answered, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

Fruits worthy of repentance, or fruits meet for repentance, are fruits that evidence and manifest genuine repentance. It is insufficient merely to say, "I repent. I'm sorry." Some sins cannot be undone. If I pulled out a pistol and shot Steve between the eyes, there is no way in the world to undo that; it is done. But if I steal from him, I can make it right by returning what I have stolen and making restitution as well.

Thus, fruits evidencing repentance verify and manifest that repentance is real and genuine. A drunk, if he repents, becomes a sober man. That does not mean he is sober for a day or two, or a week or two; it means he lives a life of sobriety. A thief, if he genuinely repents, not only ceases stealing but becomes an honest man, working with his hands, giving generously, and helping others.

The evidence of repentance is always found in the area of specific sins. It is true that all men are sinners; there is not one individual in this room or outside of it who is not a sinner. We are all sinners, but that does not mean we all have the same sins. Some sins exclude others. A miser is never going to be a spendthrift. Usually, a covetous and greedy man will not be a sluggard and indolent man, because he wants everything he can get and will work his fingers to the bone to obtain it. Some sins, therefore, exclude other sins. But I want to show you what I am talking about.

In Luke chapter 3, the people asked John, “What shall we do then?” The publicans asked, “Master, what shall we do?” The soldiers likewise demanded, “And what shall we do?” The question asked in verses 10, 12, and 14 is the same, but the answers John gave were different to each group.

John had just said, “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance,” and, “The axe is laid to the root of the tree. Every good tree is going to bring forth good fruit, and if it does not, it is going to be chopped down and put in the fire.” Then the people came and asked, “So what shall we do then?” In other words, what shall we do to manifest that our repentance is real and genuine?

John answered these people in verse 11: “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” Why did John tell them that? He did not say that to the publicans. He did not even say that to the soldiers. He was addressing the predominant and prevailing sins of the people. Their predominant and prevailing sin was that they were covetous and selfish.

John said, “You say you repented. Here is the evidence for you: since you are so covetous and selfish, if you have genuinely repented, if you have two coats, give one to someone who does not have one. If you have enough meat to eat, give some to someone who does not have any meat to eat at all.” In other words, you are going to manifest evidence of repentance in your predominant and in your prevailing sin. It is just that simple.

Then the publicans came to be baptized and asked, “Master, what shall we do?” John said to them, “Exact no more than that which is

appointed you." The publicans worked for the Roman government and were paid by the Roman government to collect the taxes. So, since a publican had a job where he was getting paid, he comes to Gary and he says, "Gary, your

A publican might tell Gary that his tax bill is 300 bucks when it was actually 200, and charge him 300. Gary pays him because he is the publican. The publican then takes 100, puts it in his pocket, and gives the Roman government 200. Publicans were notorious thieves.

You want a good example of a repentant publican? Look at Zacchaeus, the one who climbed up the tree to see Jesus. When Jesus came that way, He said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." Zacchaeus said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Our Lord said, "This day is salvation come to this house." He evidenced his repentance because he was willing to restore that which he had taken away and to be generous, giving half his goods to the poor.

Then, in verse 14, the soldiers likewise demanded of John, "And what shall we do?" He said unto them, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." The predominant sin of the soldiers was violence, fraud, rioting, and rebellion. If they wanted to prove that they were genuinely repentant, they were not to be unnecessarily violent toward anyone or defraud anyone.

A Roman soldier in those days could compel any man to carry his gear for a mile. That is why our Lord said, "If any man compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain"—to make sure you are not bitter about it. John gives different answers because of the prevailing sin. If I happen to be a thief, it would do me no good to repent over drunkenness. I have never been drunk a day in my life, nor even had a beer. I could say, "I repent of being drunk," but if I am a thief, what good is that? I have to repent of my predominant and prevailing sin. Unless I repent of my thievery and theft, my repentance is fake and not genuine whatsoever. Jeremiah 31—look at verse 19. Here is where we are. He says,

Continual Repentance and Instruction

"Surely after that I was turned I repented; and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." I want you to note what John was telling these people in Luke chapter 3. You had to deal with your prevailing and predominant sins. Everyone has prevailing and predominant sins. But we also have sins that we're totally ignorant of, or we may know about them, but they're not prevailing and they're not predominant.

When God saved me, when God converted me, I had to deal with my predominant and prevailing sins. But here's a statement of truth: I've done far more repenting since I have been saved than I did when I got saved. Because after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, and I was confounded. I was ashamed. I did bear the reproach of my youth. In other words, when I was convicted initially, I was convicted of these predominant sins. But after I began to read and study, I found out there's an awful lot of other sins in my life that I did not even know were sins, and they had to be dealt with. And that's exactly the picture that we're getting here.

Applications: Faith, Repentance, Growth, and Perseverance

Repentance produces fruit, and they are going to be continually producing fruit. We can only discharge our duty of repentance by exercising the gift that God has given us. Faith and repentance go together. Both are absolutely necessary for salvation. It's impossible to have one without the other in biblical salvation. If it is possible to be saved without faith, then it would be possible to be saved without repentance, but both of those are impossibilities. You have to be given faith, and faith includes repentance.

Prevailing and predominant sins have to be dealt with initially, but all of those other sins hiding in our lives, when we're seeing the truth in the Word of God or the Holy Spirit of God is enlightening our minds, are to be dealt with then.

I can show you in Scripture, and most of you know, that we are commanded to grow in grace. Do you realize it is impossible to grow

in grace without faith and repentance? Can you grow in grace if you are refusing to repent of something that you know is wrong? Faith and repentance are to be continually exercised in our lives. Perseverance involves both faith and repentance.

It is true that we are preserved in Jesus Christ. The Bible says that in Jude 1, verse 1. We are preserved in the Lord Jesus Christ. How do I know that I am preserved? The answer is that he enables me to persevere in the faith. If I persevere in the faith, I am continually exercising faith and continually exercising repentance.

We have to understand this. Just as the apostle asked, "For who maketh thee to differ from another?" If God has given you his gift of faith and his gift of repentance, God made you to differ; therefore, he gets all the honor and all the glory.

I saw a short video of a young man who was a gangster. I only saw him from his waist up. He was tattooed everywhere imaginable, had a big chain around his neck, and was talking about his gang. When I looked at him, I thought, "O Lord, who made me to differ?" Apart from the grace of God, we would all be as wicked and vile and hateful as we could possibly be. It is only God's grace and only God's gift. Yes, we must discharge repentance; we must actually exercise it, but we can only do it as God gives it, because it is his gift.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank you, Father, not only for the gift of faith, but also for the gift of repentance. We ask, Lord, that you would indeed turn us, O Lord, and we shall be turned. We need to turn individually, familially, and ecclesiastically, and we most definitely need to be turned nationally. Give us, Lord, your grace and your mercy, for we can never discharge our duties apart from the abilities, grace, and mercy that you give us. Help us, O Lord, and we shall be helped. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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