

# Kingdom News

Bible Study - Come Let Us Reason Together. (Isaiah 1:18)

Volume 1, Class 3

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## Boot Camp

### *Christianity 101 - The Basics*

## Repentance

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What would you classify as the basics of Christianity?

Over the next few studies, the Lord will walk us through some of the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Every so often, we should return to the first principles of the faith. Let's re-familiarize ourselves with the foundational principles of this Christian life.

Overall we'll revisit truths such as:

- Forgiveness – Treated in the May 2010 edition of the Kingdom News edition
- **Repentance** – What is it? Who should do it? Why and how frequently? What is its relationship with *forgiveness*?
- Faith – What is it and where do we get it from?
- Obedience – Obey who and why? What does *faith* have to do with *obedience*?
- Truth – In the word of Pilate, “What is *truth*?”
- Prayer – What is it and how do we do it? Is there a relationship between *truth* and *prayer*?
- Sin – You know “sweet in the mouth; and bitter in the belly”
- Righteousness – What is it? Is there a relationship between *sin* and *righteousness*?
- Etc. as the Lord pleases

Last month, we talked about Forgiveness; tonight we'll talk about *Repentance*. Here are some of the things that we must understand about *Repentance*:

### WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

One secular definition of *repentance* is to have such a sense of remorse for one's past behavior or sin; as to change one's mind regarding it. However, over time the predominant iteration of *repentance* is: a *repentance* that results in merely a change in feeling (with no resulting change in behavior). I remember the days when the use of the term “*repentance*” had inherent in it the understanding that you were expected to change your behavior. Now, “I'm sorry” seems to have become the encapsulation of our expression of “*repentance*.” Unfortunately, being “sorry” does

not cause a corresponding change in one's behavior. What we call *repentance* today, is the same as a basic "apology." But biblically, they are not the same.

True *repentance* is a Kingdom principle by which reconciliation is facilitated. *Repentance* facilitates reconciliation between man and man; as well as reconciliation between God and man.

In the Kingdom, it can be said this way: "*repentance* is to so agree with God on a particular truth as to align one's self (in word and deed) with that truth." In the Kingdom, there is only one type of *repentance*. That is a *repentance* that results in such a change in the posture of the heart so as to be reflected in one's behavior.

### **WHO NEEDS TO REPENT?**

If it is true that the Kingdom definition of *repentance* means that one so agrees with God as to align one's self (in word and deed) with truth." Then it follows that *whoever* is out of alignment with truth needs to repent; needs to change; needs to restore alignment.

Whichever areas of our lives are out of alignment with truth, we need to repent for them (change directions) and be reconciled to God and reconciled with truth.

### **WHY AND HOW FREQUENTLY?**

Asking "why" a person needs to repent; is the same as asking "why" a fallen human being needs to change (and to be changed) in order to be reconciled with a Holy God. When you look at it that way, the question kind of answers itself, doesn't it?

How frequently should we repent? I like the discussion between Jesus and Peter in Matthew 18:21-22. Peter asked, how often shall my brother sin against me and I be obliged to forgive him? When I hear Jesus' response to Peter's question; this is what it sounds like to me. "As often as your brother is genuinely repentant and desires to be reconciled to you; then forgive." Why? "Because then I [God] am encouraged (pardon the expression) to be reconciled to you each time you approach Me in repentance;" *quid pro quo* (this for that).

Here is another beautiful "key of the Kingdom;" to repent is to "agree with God." It is to say, "Lord, You are right ... about me; ... about You; ... about sin; ... about righteousness. You are right ... about everything; and I believe I *get it* now. I am now ready to change; I am now ready to "do it Your way." There you have it; both the "words and the deeds" of reconciliation.

### **IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *REPENTANCE* AND *FORGIVENESS*?**

In a word, "Yes." Here are some of the most precious relationships between *repentance* and *forgiveness*.

In the secular stratum, it is our thinking that *repentance* ought to precede *forgiveness*. We believe that whoever needs to receive *forgiveness*, ought to offer *repentance* first. Right?

In the Kingdom (and in the dictionary), there is a sense in which, *forgiveness* precedes *repentance*. Although repentance is a necessary prerequisite to forgiveness, in the Kingdom; forgiveness was

made available first. You'll recall that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world.<sup>(1)</sup> Although we must appropriate it (through *repentance*); the Lord had already made *forgiveness* abundantly available in Christ Jesus. The operative word here is "available." The Lord is willing to grant *forgiveness* if we are willing to *repent*. *Repentance* and *forgiveness* have a co-dependent relationship; a sort of "*sin quo non*" proximity. It is the case that where one does not exist, the other is necessarily nonexistent. Be certain, that where genuine *repentance* does not exist, then *forgiveness* is not granted; nor can it be. This is a fundamental Kingdom principle. (Oh, I'm sorry, was that your toe that I was stepping on; here I'll move then.)

**(Very Strong) Disclaimer:** Repentance is one of the Kingdom principles that has a very different "horizontal application" from its "vertical application." Please listen very, very carefully here.

### **Horizontal Application**

Horizontally (man-to-man), we ought to repent (cease and desist; and be reconciled) when we incur an infraction with our fellow human being. However, whether or not the offender *repents* we may horizontally extend *forgiveness*. Why? Because we NEED vertical *forgiveness*; and the Law of Sowing and Reaping governs *forgiveness*. This is another Kingdom principle.

### **Vertical Application**

Vertically (God-to-man), we must repent (turn around; and be reconciled) when we are out of alignment with God; when we are misaligned with truth. However, there is a sense in which God is not at liberty to step over *repentance* and *forgive*. Why? It is because the delicate relationship between *repentance* and *forgiveness* is inherent in the very nature of God. For God to side-step *repentance* in order to *forgive* someone; would necessitate that He set Himself at odds with Himself. As we can appreciate, that will not happen.

That being said, let's personalize this concept: You're married and your spouse is cheating on you. When you bring it to their attention: they say "I'm sorry, can you ever *forgive* me?" And you say (very willing to *forgive*, because you love them), "So it's over? You're going to end the relationship with this other person? When are you going to break the news to them?" And much to your surprise, your spouse says, "Well, I don't know about all of that; I just wanted you to forgive me. I didn't want you to be angry with me; that's why I apologized." You think to yourself; "Let me see if I have this right: you have not intention of changing, you simply want me to indemnify you." The temperature in the room gradually (but rapidly) begins to spike upward. You begin to count down backwards from one million (very slowly), so that you don't do or say something that you will not be able to recover from.

Lest you misinterpret this example as relinquishing you from your responsibility to extend *forgiveness*; go back and reread the above Disclaimer very carefully.

You can see "up close and personal," the discord in the heart when genuine *repentance* does not accompany a request for *forgiveness*. Now, our Lord has some things more to say about *repentance*.

When the Lord was talking to the angel of the church at Pergamos.<sup>(2)</sup> He said, I know that you have been positioned in a very fierce location (they were in close proximity to Satan's seat of authority). He said, I see that you have kept the faith, and you have kept My name. H-O-W-E-V-

E-R, there are a few places where you [Pergamos] are out of alignment with truth. And our Lord's response to that misalignment was "Repent, or else..." Flashback (to the prior question): Why did He command them to *repent*? Because He cannot grant *forgiveness* where there is no *repentance*.

When the Lord spoke to the angel of the church at Thyatira<sup>(3)</sup> again He used the "sandwich" approach to constructive feedback. He said, "I see your works of faith and charity. N-E-V-E-R-T-H-E-L-E-S-S, I have a "bone to pick with you." You tolerate the spirit of Jezebel to hold a place of influence over the body of believers. Now "where sin is abundant, grace is much more abundant;"<sup>(4)</sup> therefore I gave her plenty of time to repent. But she wouldn't repent.

Why does our Lord keep (*pardon the expression*) harping on *repentance*? It is because the Lord wants to *forgive*. But the law of the Lord is *perfect* (it won't change); therefore it is the soul that must be converted; it is the soul that must change (repent).

There are many, many more instances. But I'm impressed that the Lord used these two scriptural examples in particular. Because what He is saying to the angels of the seven churches in Revelations; He is saying that same thing to us (individually and collectively).

*Repent, or else ... I cannot forgive you.*

*Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG*

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV)

<sup>(1)</sup> 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8

<sup>(2)</sup> Revelation 2:12-16

<sup>(3)</sup> Revelation 2:18-22

<sup>(4)</sup> Romans 5:20