

Everyone, Everywhere Must Repent

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Date: 02 April 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Now let us turn in our bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read and as God would help me I would like to, that's the Book of Acts chapter 17 and as God would help me I would like to concentrate on verses 30 and 31. The Book of Acts chapter 17 verse 30 and 31.

The times of ignorance God overlooked but now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and all this he has given assurance to all by raising them from the dead. But now God commands all people everywhere to repent. Paul is concluding his sermon. He's preaching to highly intelligent well educated Greek philosophers. He has just given them a thorough review of history and providence with God at the center. Now as he concludes he tells them they have no alternative but to repent. Then you see Paul repent repent of what? You see Paul has not mentioned sin in his sermon. In fact he hasn't even mentioned the law of God in his sermon and he says repent. Repent of what?

Good question. Repent of what? Repent of not worshiping God. If I was to ask you make a list of your sins. I'm assuming there's no one here who would say that never done anything wrong.

Make a list of all really bad things you've done. Am I right? You would write down things you've done.

Am I right? Well I bet is there anything there maybe there's maybe there is. I shouldn't put you in my category. We think the great sins are things we've done wrong. God is different. We think acts of co-mission are more serious than acts of omission. Things we haven't done but God's different. Here he is complaining as it were about things that were not done. And you know in that great day of judgment the only real question that will be so important for us with regard to where we'll see the rest of a never ending eternity will be not what have you done but what have you not done. Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? Because you know there's nobody here. There's nobody in this building that will ever go to a lost eternity for something you've done.

[4 : 4 6] Do you know that? You, no one here in Jesus now will ever go to a lost eternity for something you've done. Because everything you've done that is wrong can be forgiven. And it can be forgiven in one moment.

In one moment by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ everything you've ever done wrong instantly forgiven. So when you land a lost eternity it's because of what you've not done. You've not believed on Jesus Christ.

You've not worshipped God as you should. You see Christianity is not really technically, technically, it's not technically the worship of Jesus Christ. It's actually the worship of the triune God through Jesus Christ.

The only mediator between God and man. The Lord Jesus Christ. So sin is not merely doing what's forbidden to do but sin is not doing what is commanded to do. And we're commanded to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you don't do that, that's sin. And it's to be forgiven. And it can only be forgiven by repenting and believing.

[6 : 51] You remember when Jesus spoke in John chapter 16 when he was to leave the disciples and they became so distressed. And he said, ah, but don't worry. When I leave I'll give you the Holy Spirit.

And he said, I'm going back up to heaven so I can send down the Holy Spirit in my place. And when he, the spirit of truth will come, he will convict the world of sin because, because what? Because they believe not on me.

And they were back again to sins of omission. Things were not done. And that one thing you must do and I must do and every soul must do to get to heaven is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The greatest sin is unbelief, not believing on Christ. Whatever you get, get that. Understand that.

Now, notice our text tells us, but now God commands all people everywhere. That's pretty wide. All people everywhere. That's quite broad.

[8 : 36] Previously our text tells us God overlooked things, but now, now there's a command. Now that Christ has come into the world. Now that Christ has atoned for sin at Calvary. Now there's a command.

The period of God's forbearance with an ignorant age has now passed. Now there's no excuse. Now that light has come into the world. Now that the gospel has been preached.

Now there's a command and we've got to lay hold of that. Now, it's not advice that God is giving. It's not a recommendation he's making. It's a command he's issuing from heaven. Repent.

So, what does it mean to repent? Well, it simply means a change of mind, a change of heart.

But essentially, a change of mind and a change of heart regarding God, regarding Christ, regarding the gospel, regarding sin, which leads to a change of lifestyle.

[10 : 18] I'll just repeat that. What is repentance? It's a change of mind and heart regarding God and sin, which leads to a change of lifestyle.

There's a negative aspect. There's a positive aspect in it. The negative aspect is we grieve over our past behavior. We put to death sin in the present and we resolve to live righteously in the future.

We're grieving over what we've done wrong. Endeavouring to destroy sin in the present and we're resolving to live righteously in the future.

That's the negative aspect. But you know, there's a positive aspect as well. I've mentioned it already. There is no genuine repentance of the Holy Spirit without also faith in Christ.

This is the positive aspect. The negative is grieving over sin, regretting sin, hating sin, turning from sin. That's a negative aspect of repentance.

[12 : 03] But the positive aspect is faith in Christ that He will forgive if you only believe. There's no despair in repentance. The gospel is repent and believe, not repent and despair.

Do you know Satan conflicts of sin? Do you know that? So how can you tell if your conviction of sin is from the Holy Spirit above or from Satan below? How can you tell? You tell by what your conviction leads you to.

Satan will convict you of sin to make you despair of mercy. To say to you things like, oh, you've blown it now. It's too late. You're too bad. You can't be changed. You can't be forgiven.

You did that intentionally. You planned it. You knew it all. You've done it time and time again. What point in you praying? That's temptation. That's conviction from Satan.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit leads you to hope in Christ. Some of you have been brought up in the confession of faith. And there's that term that always flops me as a kid. An apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ.

[13 : 50] That term just simply means realising there's hope in Christ. Yes, you've been evil. Yes, you're far worse than you ever dreamt you were. But all can be forgiven.

Just confess your sins to Christ. Just believe that His death at Calvary paid God for all the sins of everyone that will be in heaven.

That's the work of the Holy Spirit to lead you to Christ. I'm sure those of you who do some evangelising will have experience, what most of us have. You speak about these things to non-Church people.

They just say, ah, it's not my thing. I'm not in their religion. Not my thing. There's no interest in spiritual things as we are by nature. It's got to be given to us. It's got to be worked in us.

And the Holy Spirit's purpose of convicting us of sin is to make us interested in Jesus Christ. Why did He come into the world? Could He not stop Himself from being crucified? Of course He could.

[15 : 24] With one thought He could have escaped. But this is why I have come. That I would pay the price of other people's sins through crucifixion.

Christ has paid for sin and a genuine repentance believes that. Yes, you're wicked. Yes, you've done horrible, filthy, evil, wicked things that all can be forgiven through faith in Christ.

I have come that you might have life. And if you're not a Christian, what a challenge that is to you. Christ is saying to you, you don't know what life's all about. You've missed the whole point.

I've come that you might know what life really is. And you can't know that. You can't even taste it until your sin is forgiven.

So repentance has a negative aspect and a positive aspect. And it's also important for us to remember that repentance is not merely something that's performed once at the beginning of our Christian lives.

[17 : 01] It's something that continues to go on throughout our Christian lives. With an ongoing practice, an ongoing behaviour for the Christians, Christians continually need to confess and repent why those Christians are still sinning.

You know, sin cannot be cured. Sin cannot be cured. But it can be conquered. It can be conquered. And only Christ can conquer it.

No sin and my sin, it's conquered with regard to his objective. Sin's objective is to get you in the hell with Satan and his demons.

The Christian will know nothing about that. Because his sin is conquered. His sin is forgiven. His sin has been paid for by Christ at the cross. And God being a just God and Saviour will not punish Christ at the cross for your sin if you're a believer and then require you to pay for it again.

He's just, He's holy. He only requires total payment and Christ paid total payment for sin at the cross.

[18 : 47] It's interesting, there's two chapters in the Bible, one after the other, and eight times, eight times in these two chapters Christ says repent. Christ says repent eight times in two chapters.

Who to? To the church. To the church. Revelation chapter two, chapter three, there's no perfect church. There's no perfect person. There are devoted Christians.

There are people whose sins are forgiven, but there is no sinless person. There's no sinless church. Some are better than others. Some are not as good as others. But there's no perfection in this world.

But there is the forgiveness of sin. There is the conquering of sin. Now, why? That's verse thirty. That's only that's verse thirty.

Note, why? Why must we all repent? Well, he tells us in verse thirty one, because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world.

[20 : 29] It is appointed unto men, the Bible says elsewhere, once to die and after this the judgment. They tell me death itself is painless. It might be through a painful disease, but death itself is painless.

The awful thing about death is what comes after. After death, the judgment. There's a date in God's diary that's unalterable. And you and I are navigating toward that date.

That date will never be cancelled. It will never be changed. It will never be delayed. It will never be put off. And we cannot avoid it. The only thing we can do is prepare for it.

How do you prepare for it? As I said, ensure you have Jesus Christ as your advocate. It's a court. The day of judgment is a court. Who's your advocate? Jesus Christ the righteous.

Because he himself, the advocate, has atoned for your sin, paid God for it, and he offers instant forgiveness to all people everywhere on faith in him.

[22 : 16] Turning from your old life, trusting, depending on Christ for everything in the future.

The Gospel of John was written so that people would believe. The epistle of John was written to believers.

First John 5.13. These things I have written, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

He wrote, you see, the Gospel of John was not written in me. It was written that you would believe. Well, some of them did believe. And then some of them weren't very sure if believing was enough.

So you write the right to them in the epistle. These things, John, 1 John 5.13. These things I write to you who believe that you who believe might know you have eternal life.

[23 : 38] And he says in chapter 2, if any of you sin, if any man of you Christians, if any of you believers sin, don't despair.

If any of you sin, we Christians have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our sins. And that's all you need. That's all you need.

That day of judgment is definitely coming. But it will be a day of judgment when things will be done in righteousness. Now think about it.

These mass murderers, these child rapists, do they get off scot-free? Those that have escaped the authorities, escaped prison, do they get off scot-free? No, no, no.

There is a day of judgment in which he will judge the world in righteousness. Now God is righteous. If there's no day of judgment, then God's not righteous.

[25 : 06] You see, he's a just God and a savior. If people get off scot-free, he's not a just God. Of course there's justice at the end in the next world.

There is justice. Finally, there is justice eventually. That judgment will be fear. And it's not simply, there'll be no appeal. There's no one to appeal to.

But there'll be no appeal because there'll be no grounds for appeal. That will be absolutely accurate. Dead through all. If you've never done anything wrong, you're not to fear.

But of course you've done something wrong. But your sin is forgiven by the Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

We are to repent because he's fixed the day in which he'll judge the world in righteousness by a man who he has appointed. Elsewhere the Bible tells us, the Father has committed all judgment to the Son.

[26 : 38] Who is the man that he has appointed to judge the world? Isn't it fitting? Isn't it fitting who it is? Isn't it fitting that the person on the phone is the person who said, Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish. Isn't it fitting? Isn't it fitting that the man on the phone is the man who said, All can be forgiven. You just repent and believe. Doesn't matter how serious your sins are, it doesn't matter how many of them there are. All can be forgiven. Isn't it fitting that the man is on the phone?

Isn't it fitting that the man who's on the phone is the man who said, Come to me. I will give you rest. Come to me. Isn't it fitting?

He's the one who made the final analysis. The one who said, Come to me. All you who live are on the phone. And I will give you rest.

But maybe you're someone saying, I didn't know that's true. That's just your idea. And you know it's true. Good question. Perfectly good question.

What's the answer? The answer is verse 31. The last sentence in verse 31. I'll read it again. And all this, he has given assurance to all by what? By raising him from the dead.

[28 : 55] What's, how do we know the Bible's true? How do we know there's a dear judgment? How do we know Christ can forgive us our sins and will stand in for us if we trust Him? How do we know that?

By because Christ rose from the dead. And you say, Oh, well, I know Christ rose from the dead. Well, if you don't know that, you don't know anything.

There is more reason to believe that Christ rose from the dead than there is reason to believe that Napoleon ever lived. Do you believe there's a person to believe?

As far as I know, there's no respected historian worth his salt who doesn't believe in the existence of Napoleon. But how do you know newly lived? What evidence do you have when you get to the nitty gritty?

Well, there is plenty. But there's hundreds of times more, if you want to call the evidence common evidence, there's hundreds of more reason to believe that Christ rose from the dead than there is to believe that Napoleon ever lived.

[30 : 25] That's worth thinking about seriously. There are far, far higher level of credibility to believe in the resurrection than to believe in anything else.

I've read, I can't remember if we were from the life of me, but I've read that the most attested thing in history is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And it passes the criteria of flying colours.

We're talking about truth. We're talking about reality. We're talking about facts. It has to be dealt with. It has to be believed.

Well, we're finished. Just one final thing. That man who will judge the world in righteousness.

Verse 27, that man is not far from any one of us right now. He's not far away. That's the gospel. He's only a prayer away.

[31 : 56] He's only a look away. In fact, you can say he's only a sigh away. You think of your life, you think of your sin, you sigh.

Or sigh to Jesus, sigh to Christ, and he will forgive if you only believe. May God, the Holy Spirit, make his word effectual to every one of us.

Let's bow our heads in prayer.