

Level 1 Lesson 6

REPENTANCE

By Don Krow

Some people have a misunderstanding of what repentance is. Repentance is not perfection but a change in direction. We're going to talk about the parable of the prodigal son, or the lost son. Jesus is telling a story that perfectly illustrates what it means for an individual to repent. In Luke 15:11-12 Jesus said, "*And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.*"

The younger son wanted his inheritance before his father died, which is quite unusual, but his father granted the request and gave his sons their inheritance. Verse 13 says, "*And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.*" The younger son took all of his wealth, his part of the inheritance, went into a distant country, and wasted it in riotous living. One translation says, "partying and spending the money on prostitutes."

Verses 14-15 read, "*And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land [The land became destitute and people were starving]; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine*" (brackets mine). He got a job working for a man in that country and was sent to feed the pigs. Verse 16 says, "*And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks of that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*" He was so hungry, at the point of starvation, and he said "Just give me the pig's food—anything," but no one gave him anything. He had squandered all of his inheritance. Verse 17 continues, "*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*" One translation says, "when he came to his senses." In other words, his father's servants had more than enough food, and he was dying from hunger.

He made a decision; he repented. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of heart that causes a person to turn around and move in a new direction. In verses 18-19, he said, "*I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*" "Just make me a slave, father. I've sinned against you, squandered your living, and sinned against God. Just make me a slave." Then he rose and went to his father. Repentance is more than just a change of attitude, a change of mind, and a change of heart; it leads a person to act on what they believe, to turn around (or return) and go in a new direction. We've all turned away from God, our Father, and from heaven, our home. The Bible says in Isaiah 53:6 that "*all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way,*" but God in His mercy took our sins and laid them on Jesus.

The story continues in verses 20-24. *“And he arose, and came to his father.”* One night I was telling this story to a man who had never heard it before, and he just knew that when the son returned, his father would say, “Son, look what you’ve done. You’ve wasted all my wealth, all I accumulated in my life. Be one of my slaves.” Most earthly fathers would probably be very angry and have an attitude like that, but notice the attitude of this father: *“But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion [love came out of his heart for his son], and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry”* (brackets mine). They began to have a party.

I once told this to a man who said, “I see what Jesus is saying. If I’ll just turn to the heavenly Father for mercy and say ‘Father, I’ve sinned against you, and I’m not worthy to be your son,’ He’ll accept me.” Our heavenly Father will have compassion, and He won’t make you a slave. He’ll restore you to full sonship with Him. God is waiting. Have you turned away? Why don’t you turn to God, your Father, and to Heaven, your home, today?

Discipleship Questions

1. Define Repentance.

2. Read Luke 13:1-5. What must one do in order not to perish? _____

3. Read 2 Peter 3:9. What is God’s desire for all people? _____

4. Read Luke 16:19-31. In Luke 16:28, why did the rich man want someone to come back from the dead and speak to his brothers? _____

5. Read Luke 16:30. What must these brothers do in order to avoid this place of torment (hell)? _____

6. Read Acts 26:18. Although it doesn’t specifically say, this verse is talking about repentance. What will happen to those who repent?

7. Read Acts 26:20. In the last part of this verse, three things are stated that the Gentiles should do. What are these three things? _____

8. Read Matthew 7:21-23. What did Jesus say these people practiced instead of the will of God? _____

9. What does this show you about the importance of true repentance versus lip service toward God?

10. Read Isaiah 55:7. What must the wicked do? _____

11. What two things must the unrighteous do? _____

12. What will God do for the person who does those things stated above? _____

13. Read Luke 15:7. What is heaven's reaction to one sinner who repents? _____

14. Read Acts 3:19. If you repent and are converted, what will happen to your sins?

Scriptures to Use with Questions

Luke 13:1-5 – “[1] *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [2] And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? [3] I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. [4] Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? [5] I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”

2 Peter 3:9 – “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*”

Luke 16:19 – “[19] *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: [20] And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, [21] And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. [22] And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; [23] And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. [24] And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. [25] But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. [26] And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. [27] Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: [28] For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. [29] Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the*

prophets; let them hear them. [30] And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. [31] And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

Luke 16:30 – “And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.”

Acts 26:18 – “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

Acts 26:20 – “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.”

Matthew 7:21-23 – “[21] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Isaiah 55:7 – “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Luke 15:7 – “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

Acts 3:19 – “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

Answer Key

1. Define Repentance. **(A) It is an “about face” to a new commitment.**
(B) It is a change of mind.
(C) A change of heart that results in one turning to God, from one’s old ways to God’s ways.
(D) A change of direction, not perfection.
(E) To make a decision that changes the total direction of one’s life.
(F) Turning from old ways and totally committing to God and His ways.
(G) Turning to a Person, to God through Jesus Christ.
2. Read Luke 13:1-5. What must one do in order not to perish? **Repent.**
3. Read 2 Peter 3:9. What is God’s desire for all people? **That all come to repentance.**

4. Read Luke 16:19-31. In Luke 16:28, why did the rich man want someone to come back from the dead and speak to his brothers? **So that they could avoid coming to this place of torment.**
5. Read Luke 16:30. What must these brothers do in order to avoid this place of torment (hell)? **They must repent.**
6. Read Acts 26:18. Although it doesn't specifically say, this verse is talking about repentance. What will happen to those who repent? **(A) Eyes will be opened.**
(B) Turn from darkness to light.
(C) Turn from power of Satan to God.
(D) Receive forgiveness of sins.
(E) Receive inheritance.
7. Read Acts 26:20. In the last part of this verse, three things are stated that the Gentiles should do. What are these three things? **(A) Repent.**
(B) Turn to God.
(C) Prove their repentance by their deeds.
8. Read Matthew 7:21-23. What did Jesus say these people practiced instead of the will of God? **Iniquity or lawlessness.**
9. What does this show you about the importance of true repentance versus lip service toward God? **Salvation is from the heart, not lip service.**
10. Read Isaiah 55:7. What must the wicked do? **Forsake their way.**
11. What two things must the unrighteous do? **Forsake their thoughts and return to the Lord.**
12. What will God do for the person who does those things stated above? **Have mercy and pardon abundantly.**
13. Read Luke 15:7. What is heaven's reaction to one sinner who repents? **There is rejoicing in heaven.**
14. Read Acts 3:19. If you repent and are converted, what will happen to your sins? **My sins will be blotted out.**

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