

# REPENTANCE

Repentance is absolutely essential to one's salvation (Acts 2:38; 2 Pet. 3:9). It is universal in its import (Luke 13:3, 5). Without doubt, however, the hardest command to obey in becoming a child of God is the command to repent of one's sins. Human beings as a rule do not like to be told that they are wrong about anything, especially when it comes to their moral conduct. To be criticized about anything seems to "cut against the grain" in our mental make-up. Yet, it is precisely the humbling of ourselves--so as to recognize we are wrong *when* we are wrong--that lies at the very heart of genuine, heart-felt, and life-changing repentance. It is the lowering of ourselves in our own eyes, not only to acknowledge with both mind and lips "I am wrong,"--but the steeled determination to do something about it, regardless of what may be required by the Lord, that is the essence of true repentance.

Repentance is produced by "godly sorrow," but it is more than this (2 Cor. 7:10). While it recognizes the fact of wrongdoing and creates in the human heart genuine sorrow "after a godly sort," it proceeds to motivate the penitent to do something about the wrong—to try in some fashion to correct it or, at the very least, to change his behavior about it. Where restitution is possible, it seeks to make it. It is a change of life itself, produced by a change of mind! Repentance is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32. The first son refused to go into his father's vineyard to work, but then "afterward he repented, and went" (v. 29). It is also demonstrated in the wonderful account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who went on to preach the faith which he once destroyed.

Some years ago, I was studying the Word of God with a young man. He soon came to understand God's plan of salvation. When it came time to press the matter and call upon him to obey what he now knew to be true, he backed away from the Gospel by claiming that he simply could not bring himself to stop doing certain things, such as drinking alcoholic beverages, dancing in the nightclubs, et. al. He ultimately rejected the Gospel because it demanded more of him than he was willing to do! Invariably when people reject God's plan of salvation, the key point is repentance. I am convinced that more people get hung up on that command far more even than the command to be baptized for the remission of sins. In fact, if the truth be known – in all cases where the latter is rejected, the former has never begun really to take place! True faith and repentance demand nothing less than full compliance with God's Word in becoming a Christian. The biggest obstacle is not getting into the water to get into Christ, it is getting out of self so that the other can occur! The first requirement of discipleship is a denial of self (Mat. 16:24). Repentance is the proper expression of such radical change in one's focus in life.

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Newport News, VA

## BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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### Oh, for the Faith of Jonah

If folks had a Biblical person who they desired to be likened to, the man Jonah probably would not top that list. Yet, as members of the church of Christ, we should note that Jonah's problem of refusing to carry out God's will is oftentimes our shortcoming as well. For example, Jonah was told to go preach to a foreign people (Assyrians), yet we also so very often fail to carry out God's instructions.

Ironically, the reason that we fail to teach as we should is for the opposite reason that Jonah failed to teach the Ninevites. Jonah's reason for hopping the first ship to Tarshish was, in a way, connected to the church's reason for failure to adequately evangelize.

For example, Jonah did not flee from God's presence due to a lack of confidence in the power of God's Word. Quite the contrary; he knew that if the Ninevites heard God's Word that they would repent and be saved by God (Jon. 4:2) Like the apostle Paul, Jonah recognized that God's Word was his power unto deliverance (Rom. 1:16). He also knew that the Word of the Lord would not return to God void (Isa. 55:11).

Jonah did not flee from God's presence due to a lack of courage. In fact, such backbone had Jonah that when the great storm from God came upon the ship that was carrying him away from Nineveh, he said, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea" (Jon. 1:12). These are not the words of a coward! Also, Jonah did not lack confidence in the power of God's Word. These were not the reasons that caused him not to want to preach to them.

The reason that Jonah initially refused to preach to Nineveh was prejudice. The Assyrians were a savage, militant people much like the American Indians of the 1700-1800s – and like the Indians of our recent history, they were much disliked. Jonah did not lack courage to go to Nineveh; he merely did not want to preach to the lost souls there.

How paradoxical then, that we so often do as Jonah initially did – and fail to fulfill God's instructions in the area of evangelism. Our problem is not prejudice, for most members of the church truly want all souls to be saved. Our problem is a lack of courage (2 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:10) that is caused by a lack of confidence in the power of God's Word (Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:15; Jam. 1:22; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:25).

Brethren, with the desire that most Christians have for all souls to be saved, imagine what we could do if we had Jonah's confidence in the power of God's Word and his courage to act when necessary. Why, brethren, we would again be accused of turning the world upside down!!! **Oh, for the faith of Jonah!!**

Author Unknown

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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## AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Recently, we have heard the term. “An inconvenient truth” many times because of the documentary(?) movie, “An Inconvenient Truth.” This article is not being written to discuss the matter of climate change or global warming but it is important to state that there is much disagreement among scientists as to whether global warming is actually taking place caused by man’s use of fossil fuels etc. or whether we are simply seeing a cyclical change that has been seen before. Interestingly enough, a statement recently appeared on the Internet to remind us that the same NASA scientist who has been in the vanguard of those who claim that humans are causing global warming is the same scientist who a little over twenty years ago was proclaiming we were entering a new Ice Age brought about by the use of fossil fuels. Thus whether there is “an inconvenient truth” – as the movie puts forth as scientific fact – has not been proven by science.

However, there is a **real** “inconvenient truth” when it comes to the matter of the teaching of the Bible. That “inconvenient truth” is the words of Jesus Christ, “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6). Jesus here claims that He is “*the way, the truth and the life*” **NOT** “**a way, a truth and a life.**” Jesus clearly claims that He is the **ONLY** way to God. This is an “inconvenient truth” to many as they would like to believe there are many ways to heaven and many truths. Either Christ, told the truth when He stated these words, or His word is not to be trusted in any way.

Jesus also said, “*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*” (John 8:24). Without Christ, there is no forgiveness of sins. Scripture teaches that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). To find the way to heaven, we must go through Christ – Who makes the forgiveness of sins possible.

How can we get to Him Who is the Way? This becomes “an inconvenient truth” to many religious people. The Bible teaches that in order to have the forgiveness of sins – which only comes through Christ – we must be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Belief alone is **not** enough (Mark 16:16). We get “*into Christ*” Who is “*the way*” by being baptized into Him (Galatians 3:26).

Jesus also said: “*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*” (Matthew 7:13-14). Are you in the narrow way of Christ? Have you been obedient to His will. He is **THE ONLY WAY** to heaven. Don’t be deceived into following the broad way.

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Kathy Treadway’s mother and Bronwen Gibson’s mother (Lavonne McClish) – who has continued health – related issues and who is undergoing pain management therapy, Linda Chumbley is also undergoing pain management therapy; and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Jack Peebles has been moved to the NHC facility in North Augusta, room 311. Please keep Jack and Jean and their family in your prayers.

Myrtle Grimsley was sick Sunday and unable to be out but was doing better on Monday.

Our sympathy is extended to Michael Farmer in the passing of his uncle in Tuscon, Arizona.

This bulletin was prepared early as Ken Chumbley was scheduled to leave for England on Thursday. Please keep his labors for the Lord there in your prayers.

### Faith Against Odds

What war tactic had usually proven successful? The ambush. Joshua had used it, at God’s instruction, with great advantage in the second attack on Ai. Once the men of that city were lured out into the open—by what they undoubtedly considered would be another rout of Israel—they were hemmed in on both sides. All the people of Ai were killed (Jos. 8:26).

In 2 Chronicles 13, Abijah – the son of Rehoboam – is facing the experienced king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He does not seem worried, however; in fact, he is confident of victory. No, he is neither an optimist nor someone who is depending on his feelings or a hunch.

The basis for his assurance of victory is something liberals and “grace only” advocates would never understand—obedient faith. Abijah tells Jeroboam in advance why Israel will be defeated:

*And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you are a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods. Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD,...and made for yourselves priests,...of things that are not gods? But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD are the sons of Aaron (2 Chr. 13.8-10—NKJV).*

He also added: “Now look, God Himself is with us as *our* head” (v. 12). Jeroboam, however, tried an ambush—but even with 400,000 in front of Abijah’s 400,000 and 400,000 behind them, he could not win; he suffered the loss of 500,000 men in the battle.

Abijah’s trust in God was more than sufficient to conquer an army of superior numbers. The king’s faith was not misplaced, nor did it go unrewarded. Abijah knew that God would be with them in the battle.

We face an enemy that outnumbers us, too. The devil and his emissaries know several excellent strategies. But when we fight the Lord’s battles (whether large or small), we too can be confident of victory. Those on the side of God, and Truth always win.

*Gary W. Summers, Winter Park, FL*