

# REPENTANCE

**MATTHEW 3:1-12**

## What is man's biggest problem?

- Some say, "It's a lack of education."
- Others say, "Well, it is poverty or man's environmental surroundings."
- Others would say, "It is really prejudice. It's racism, hatred or contempt for our fellowman."
- Still others would say our major problem is religion.

## So, what is man's biggest problem?

- God has made Himself very clear on this question in **Romans 1:18-3:23**, man's major problem is sin
- Rebellion towards God
- Our own sinfulness
- Not just the lost but every born-again Child of God as well

## **We are very much like the nation of Israel during the time of Jesus**

- Everyone seems to be talking about God and how He wants us to live
- But not many are actually letting God speak to them so He can speak through them
- We seem to be taking God's Word and we will decide what we will apply to our lives
- We will argue and get mad at those who think differently

## **We are very much like the nation of Israel during the time of Jesus**

- So, what did God do with Israel?
- He sent forth a mighty prophet to call His people to repentance

- **Matthew 3:1-12 NIV**

- 1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

## Matthew 3:1-12 NIV

- 4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

## Matthew 3:1-12 NIV

- 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

## Matthew 3:1-12 NIV

- 11 “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

## So how did Israel get here?

- **Deuteronomy 4:23 NIV** Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you
- **Deuteronomy 4:26 NIV** I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed.

## So how did Israel get here?

- Prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah warned Jerusalem that if they continued to break their covenant with the Lord, the city and temple would be destroyed

## So how did Israel get here?

- **Psalms 137:1 NIV** By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. 2 There on the poplars we hung our harps, 3 for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” 4 How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?

## So how did Israel get here?

- After Babylon, a remnant returned to rebuild the temple, the Jews rejected the Samaritan's help
- The Samaritan's built an alternate temple and offered competing claims of priesthood authority  
(John 4:20)
- This revival did not last long and after Malachi, as the prophet Amos had prophesied, the Lord sent a "famine on the land"

## So how did Israel get here?

- **Amos 8:11-12 NIV** 11 “The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. 12 People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.

## So how did Israel get here?

- Over the next nearly 500 years the people attempted to understand and live the Law without a prophet's authoritative teachings and interpretations
- People divided into groups with varied political, religious and social agendas
- Each claimed for themselves the right to interpret scripture and apply it to daily lives

## So how did Israel get here?

- The result – the true understanding of who the Savior would be became confused
- This is the environment where the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and several others arose
- The only thing they had in common was their desire to control the Messiah and ultimately the rejection of Jesus

## So how did Israel get here?

- In this context, God sent an Old Testament type prophet called John the Baptist
- His purpose was to draw people to the coming Messiah, the Kingdom of God
- **Isaiah 40:3 NIV** “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”

## So how did Israel get here?

- **Matthew 3:11 NIV** But after me comes one who is more powerful than I
- He understands his place
- **Matthew 3:11 NIV** whose sandals I am not worthy to carry
- **John 3:30 NIV** He must become greater; I must become less.”

## So how did Israel get here?

- His message is one of repentance
- **Matthew 3:2 NIV** “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
- He is speaking to believers in the Messiah, not the Gentile nation
- It is the same message we need to hear today

## So, is repentance really important?

- Repent was the first word of John the Baptist's gospel (Matt. 3:1-2)
- Repent was the first word of Jesus' gospel (Matt. 4:17)
- Repent was the first word in the preaching ministry of the twelve disciples (Mark 6:12)

## So, is repentance really important?

- Repent was the first word in the preaching instructions Jesus gave His disciples after His resurrection (**Luke 24:46-47**)
- Repent was the first word of exhortation in the first Christian sermon (**Acts 2:38**)
- Repent was the first word in the mouth of the Apostle Paul through his ministry (**Acts 26:19-20**)

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- It is not education alone – you wind up with an educated sinner
- Not wealth alone – you wind up with a wealthy sinner
- Not empowerment alone – you wind up with powerful sinners
- The only answer to sin in your life is true repentance

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- We need a Biblical definition of repentance
  - Many understand this term as a “turning away from sin”
  - Regretting sin and turning from it is related to repentance

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- The Biblical word means, “to change one’s mind resulting in a change of actions”
- You hear it strongly in John the Baptist’s words in **verse 8**, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- True repentance changes a person deeply
  - Changes the way you see God and His Word
  - Changes the way you see yourself in relationship to God
  - Changes the way you see the sin in your own life

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- This is what John the Baptist was preaching to the people in **verse 2**
  - “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
  - **Vs. 3**, “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”

## **God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance**

- Confessing your agreement with God is the only way to make a straight path for God to touch your heart
- There are so many people who come to the alter because the circumstance of the sin in their life has become hard
- Or they got caught and their sin has become open and visible

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- They are sorry for the results and wished it was different
- Sorrow is not repentance
- Asking God to forgive you is not repentance
- Only when we think like God thinks and responds to the sin in our life as God would respond can true repentance come into your life

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- Repentance in King David's life
- **Psalms 32:3-4 NLT** 3 When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.  
4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- Repentance in King David's life
- **Psalms 51:3-4 NIV** 3 For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. 4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- Repentance in King David's life
- **Psalms 32:5 NLT** Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

# God's only answer for the sinfulness of mankind is repentance

- Repentance in King David's life
- **Psalms 51:10 NLT** Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.
- **Vs. 12 NLT** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

## True repentance will bring a brokenness into your life

- Brokenness, in God's eyes, is to be broken, crushed, and torn in spirit over our sin
  - Broken = To be torn in pieces like a wild beast
- **Psalms 51:17 NLT** "The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God."
- **Psalms 51:4 NIV**, "Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight."

## **True repentance will bring a brokenness into your life**

- It is then and only then that the warmth of God's truth and forgiveness can rush in
  - God will first agree with and forgive you completely
  - God will then restore the relationship with Him
  - God will then begin to work repentance into your life and relationships

## **True repentance will bring a brokenness into your life**

- This is why John the Baptist spoke against the religious leaders
  - They wanted to appear to agree with John the Baptist without any repentance or change
  - They were leading others away from following the message being spoken by John the Baptist
  - John the Baptist tells them if there is no change in their acts, there is no true repentance

## True repentance will bring a brokenness into your life

- God does not play games-there will be severe consequence of an unrepentance heart
- **Luke 22:61-61 NLT** 61 At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord's words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me." 62 And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.

## **True repentance will bring God's peace into your life**

- A truly repentant heart never has to hide from the Lord because there is no longer any fear of judgment
- We have been made right with God
- After this, you can begin to be made right with others
- There is a certain comfort when we can finally set our foolish pride aside and walk in newness of life

## True repentance will bring God's peace into your life

- **Romans 6:4 NLT** 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

## True repentance will bring God's peace into your life

- **Matthew 11:28-30 NIV** 28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest (*peace*) for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
- Peace today is not out of reach, it is still found in the person of Jesus Christ

## True repentance will bring God's peace into your life

- **Luke 19:1-9 NIV** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

## Luke 19:1-9 NIV

- 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.
- 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

## Luke 19:1-9 NIV

- 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”
- 9 Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.  
10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

**Psalm 139:23-24 NLT** “23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

- **MSG 23-24** Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about; See for yourself whether I’ve done anything wrong—then guide me on the road to eternal life.

## Get Rid Of The Spider

- A man was praying with his pastor at the altar. He prayed a prayer the pastor had heard many times before. “Lord, take the cobwebs out of my life.” Just as he said this the pastor interrupted, “Kill the spider, Lord.”

## Get Rid Of The Spider

- Many times, we ask the Lord to forgive us of some sin, yet we leave the source of temptation in our life
- Do you have the courage to ask God to, “Kill the spider, Lord.”

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