

## Needed Today—Genuine, Biblical Repentance

Acts 20:20 & 21

Evangelist Doug Lowery

### Introduction:

Wabush, a town in a remote part of Canada was completely isolated for some time. But in recent years a gravel road was cut through the wilderness to reach it. **Wabush now has 1 road leading into it, and thus, only 1 road leading out. If someone would travel this unpaved road for about 6 hours to get into Wabush, there is only one way he or she could leave—by turning around. Each of us, by birth, arrives in a town called—Sin. And there’s only way out of. This complete “about face” is what the Bible calls repentance—and without it, there is no way we can escape our sin and its eternal consequence of God’s wrath.**



**Society doesn’t want preaching on sin, judgment, hell and repentance! They want self-esteem and self-fulfillment preached to them—and that is what Robert Shuler (the Crystal Cathedral), Bill Hybels (Willowcreek) and Rick Warren (Saddleback) have given to them!**

### **Repentance. It is amazing the hard time this doctrine is getting today.**

There is a movement that completely rejects repentance as part of the message of the Gospel. There are those who say that if you tell someone that they must repent- you are telling them either (1) they must do a good work to get saved, or (2) they must change (clean up their lives) before they can get saved. The Biblical teaching on repentance tells the sinner neither of those things!!

First, repentance is a result of the conviction of the Holy Spirit as He uses the Word of God in our hearts! Also, Romans 2:4 tells us—“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” **It is not a good work on our part—it is the working of God in our hearts!**

Second, the Bible does not teach reformation (the sinner changing himself); but rather it teaches regeneration and conversion—God doing His work of mighty transformation in our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit. True repentance is genuine, godly sorrow—a changing of the mind.

**Turn ahead to Acts 20:20 and 21**

- ❖ When I accepted Christ as my Saviour in April of 1963 at the age of 14, I had a very deep sense of my sin through the Holy Spirit’s conviction. I knew that I had sinned greatly against God, and there was a godly grief in my heart. The

agony of heart over my sin was met head-on by the blood of Christ, and my godly sorrow was turned into great joy.

❖ We need preachers to cry “Repent” in our land. The message of repentance is vastly lacking from the religious landscape of our nation. (That is obvious by the condition of our country.) **Today, everything is a “syndrome” instead of a sin, or a sickness instead of a sin. Examples**

❖ **Paul told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:20 and 21 (today’s text)** *“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Everywhere Paul went he preached repentance and faith. Paul was in Athens in chapter 17, and had an opportunity to speak with the philosophers and religionists of that Greek city—a hotbed of idolatry of all types. After bringing a powerful message, he wraps it up in verses 30 and 31: *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*



## Prayer



**Let’s get some background on repentance...let’s lay down a Biblical foundation. Is the reference we gave from Paul in Acts 20 an isolated verse on an obscure doctrine?!! Not at all. Going to the Gospels and Acts- note the following**

1- **Christ’s forerunner (John the Baptist) preached repentance.**

*“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* Matthew 3:1 & 2

2- **Christ’s preaching emphasized repentance.**

*“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* Matthew 4:17 Luke 13:5 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

3- **Christ’s disciples - during His earthly ministry- went everywhere preaching repentance.**

*And they went out, and preached that men should repent.”* Mark 6:12

4- **Christ's Great Commission included the preaching of repentance. (Notice with me)**

*“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46 & 47*

5- **Christ's Apostles carried out that command in the Book of Acts.**

*Note 2 references in 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;*

**DEFINITION:** metanoew/ metanoeo *met-an-o-eh'-o*

The Greek word for repent is METANOEO, and signifies “to change one’s mind.” This changing is serious in nature. The sinner is changing his or her mind about sin, about self, about eternity and about God. The sinner who is repenting is changing his mind about these all-important matters!! Meta- you’ve heard that before! Metamorphosis! (The Caterpillar changes entire body types to the Butterfly. A Change of Body/ Metanoeo= a change of mind.)

The person who is without Christ is going down a broad way that leads to eternal destruction according to Matthew 7:13 and 14. Through the Word of God, the unsaved sees himself headed on the road to hell—and has a change of mind. This change of mind will result in a change of direction (which God brings about)!

**2 Key Words Involved In Repentance:**

1. **CONVICTION: The Sinner With True Repentance Has A Deep Sense Of His Sin**

*“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Ps. 51:3-5) “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)*

When the unsaved person is under conviction he sees God—maybe for the 1st time—as a holy God Who cannot bear to look on sin. He has a change of mind about God Himself. He also sees his own sinful condition in a whole new light!! He knows the blackness of his heart and the “wrongness” of his life. Because of the goodness of God working in his heart, the sinner in the process of repenting sees his own sinfulness, blindness, depravity and spiritual bankruptcy.

(EXAMPLE: The Publican)

*“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” (Luke 18:13)*

**No one will ever get saved until they first see that they are lost. And no Christian will ever go forward in their Christian life until they acknowledge that they have backslidden and drifted from God!**

**- The Sword of God reveals sin**      *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:12, 13*



**IT ACTS AS A SIN-MAGNIFYING GLASS & A SPOTLIGHT!!**

**- The Spirit of God reproves of sin**



*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” John 16:7-11*

**Yes, He is the COMFORTER, but He doesn't always make us comfortable!! He is also the CONVICTER.**

## **2. CONTRITION: The Sinner With True Repentance Has A Deep Sorrow Over His Sin**

2 Corinthians 7:9 and 10- talks about being made sorry after a godly manner. To quote verse 10...

*“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”* Those who are in a prison ministry see these 2 sorrows all the time.

When dealing with the prison inmate about his soul, you can tell right away whether or not there is genuine repentance. “Is he sorry for the crime he committed- or is he sorry he got caught?!”

**Contrition may not always produce tears- but it will exhibit genuine grief over sin committed.**



One time there were two brothers—one was an outstanding citizen and the other a convicted criminal. The convict brother killed a man, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. His brother, who was well respected, went to the governor and pleaded for a pardon for his brother. Since the governor respected the murderer’s brother, he issued the pardon and gave it to his friend to deliver to the warden.

The brother went to the prison and went to see his brother before he saw the warden. He asked him, “What would you do if you were to escape or get released?” His brother replied from his cell, “First, I would kill the judge and then I’d murder the chief witness against me.” Upon hearing this his brother ended the conversation—walked out of the prison with the pardon still in his pocket and took it back to the governor.

*“For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.” Psalm 38:18*

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17*

Contrition (from contrite) will lead to confession. (1 John 1:9) Does one have to stop sinning and quit all his bad habits before he can be saved?! No - but, there is a knowledge of sin, an acknowledgment of sin, a genuine godly sorrow over sin- which leads to a change of mind about sin!! **The repentant sinner (or repentant Christian) has a desire to stop the sins he is involved in!! There is a willingness to turn from them.** Listen to these verses: *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Prov. 28:13 “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.” (Isaiah 55:7) Repent, Christian, of your thought life!!*

1. **CONVICTION: The Sinner With True Repentance**  
**Has A Deep Sense Of His Sin**
2. **CONTRITION: The Sinner With True Repentance**  
**Has A Deep Sorrow Of His Sin**

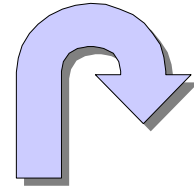
The next C is the result of genuine repentance.

4. **CONVERSION: The Sinner is Transformed by the Power of God**  
**(Because of their repentance and faith)**

Conversion! **The RESULT of Repentance.** God does the work! And what a work He does. He changes us from the INSIDE OUT!! When our young church-plant (Faith Baptist Church in Corona, Queens) was ready and able to get out of our temporary meeting place (the basement of a 3-family house), God wonderfully provided a building for us in 1977 for only \$65,000.00. The Catholic men’s club, The Knights of Columbus, sold us their building that was 45 x 90 feet and had 3 high-ceilinged floors. But, we had a lot of changes to make! There was a large oak bar that had to come out, and directly under the bar in the basement was a cooler that stored the beer and kept it

cold. Those two areas just didn't fit in with what we were trying to accomplish as a Bible-believing church teaching our folks a holy lifestyle! We had fun turning those areas into a nursery and a classroom. They also had two manual bowling alleys in the basement that had to come out to make room for more classrooms. (We hated to remove them!) We converted our building into a facility suitable for a Bible-believing, Christ-honoring local church.

Listen to this verse: *“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 26:18)* By the mighty hand of Christ- we are turned!!



When we turn from sin & turn to Christ—He turns us around!!!

**4 Supernatural Changes:** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

A Change of Families: Turning from Satan to God  
 A Change of Masters: Turning from Self to Christ  
 A Change of Conduct: Turning from Sin to righteous living  
 A Change of Purpose: Turning from the Temporal to the Eternal

Zacchaeus, the tax collector, was saved in Luke 19. When he got saved—he was willing to return what he had stolen through extortion!! Saul of Tarsus had been killing Christians—now he is giving the Gospel to all he sees so they can become Christians.

♪♪♪♪♪ What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, since Jesus came into my heart. I have light in my soul for which long I have sought, since Jesus came into my heart!!

### **Application to Unsaved**

**Do you know of this wonderful change?!** If not- perhaps you have never truly repented of your sin!! Unsaved friend- God has commanded that you repent. I am admonishing you to repent. Will you continue on the broad way—or, will you repent and choose the narrow way? (Matthew 7:13 and 14)



### **Application to Christians**

When you read the messages of Christ to the 7 churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3, you see that 6 times He tells these believers in the first century church to Repent!

Here are two of those verses:

**To the Ephesians He said in Revelation 2:5** *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

**To the Laodecians He said in Revelation 3:19** *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

**The Ephesians had left their first love**

**The Laodecians were lukewarm**

Christian friend- are you miserable? Are you have little or no victory in your life? I can guarantee you there is a sin- or sins- that you are practicing that are robbing you of joy and peace with God. **Remember David's prayer? Restore unto me the joy of my salvation. (Psalm 51:12)** **Repent of leaving your first love. Repent of being lukewarm. Repent of your disobedience. Repent and be restored to fellowship, victory and service.**

*Has your belief changed your behavior?! REPENT*