

Part One: **Sin and Repentance**

Matthew 3:1-12

In John's ministry, two mega themes are apparent - sin and repentance.

If we don't understand sin and repentance, the Bible just becomes a story book losing its power.

John called people to repent of their sin. Sin is a major theme throughout the Bible. The Bible speaks of it so loudly, openly and without any apologies.

- Sin is going too far outside the parameters that are set by God.
- Sin is living with anyone or anything other than whom, or what God allows.
- Sin causes us to omit - where we fail to do that which is right unto God.
- Sin causes us to commit what is evil - where we oppose and dishonour God.

We are sinners by nature and by choice. The Bible says, in fact, from our mother's womb we are born into sin. (*Psalm 51:5*)

If we don't deal with the root problem of sin, our attitudes, our lives, our relationships, our cultures, and the world around us will never change!

John is going right to the heart of the matter with his preaching. He's addressing the issue of sin, and he is compelling people to repent of their sin.

... Counterfeits of True Godly Repentance

➤ **True Repentance is not "*Religious Repentance.*"**

Religious people tend to be self-righteous, and think they are often better than everyone else. Thinking they are good, and everyone else is bad.

Luke 18:9-14

Religious people are notorious for overlooking their own sin, and talking about everyone else's, sometimes camouflaging it in the form of a prayer, so that it looks particularly holy when it really is sinful.

➤ **True Repentance is not "*Pagan Repentance.*"**

Paganism assumes that God isn't good, and we have to manipulate God, to make God be good.

Pagan repentance goes like this, "*If I tell God I'm sorry, then, he (God) has to do something for me.*"

God cannot be manipulated! God is not obligated to anyone! We cannot twist God's arm to justify our wrong actions! God is good and only rewards good!

- **True Repentance is not “Blame Shifting.”**
- **True Repentance is not “Minimizing” the impact of our sin.**

What often happens is, someone challenges us to repent and we find someone who's done something worse.

Ephesians 4:22-24

- **True Repentance is not “Excuse Making.”**
- **True Repentance is not motivated by “Worldly Sorrow” but genuine “Godly Sorrow.”**

Worldly sorrow is largely self-centred. Its real concern is not *“what have I done to others and how can I correct the harm I have done to them – including God.”* Instead it focuses on *“What a failure I am.” “What will everyone else think of me?”*

Godly sorrow focuses more on the people we have hurt or injured including God. It's not as concerned with our failures as it is the damage done to others!

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

...Conclusion

God gave us a conscience which is fuelled by the Holy Spirit – to know wrong from right. Our conscience is our moral rudder and referee.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convict us of sin.

That means that the Holy Spirit highlights our sin to us. And when he does we are to ... *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* **2 Corinthians 7:1** (kjv)

The question is *how will we respond to our wrong doing?*

With worldly sorrow to save face? Or, with Godly Sorrow that leads to true Godly repentance?

1 John 1:9

Jesus is our Great High Priest and only He can forgive us of our sins!

Romans 5:8-11