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**THE SURE WORD** By Jonnie Hutchison

### **WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

Repentance is a command of God that all must obey in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. Acts 17:30 reads, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." Repentance stands between the sinner and salvation. Jesus taught, "...unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3b). In Acts 2:38 the apostles of Jesus told those seeking salvation from sin, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Repentance is a change of mind which results in a change of direction in life. Jesus illustrated what it means to repent in the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-29, "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward **he repented**, and went." It is obvious that this son had a change of mind which resulted in a change of his actions. No one can truly repent of sin while continuing in the practice of it. A thief who repents does not continue to steal. An adulterer who repents does not continue to commit adultery.

Genuine repentance is produced by what the Bible calls "godly sorrow." 2 Corinthians 7:10 tells us, "For **godly sorrow** produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." Godly sorrow is experienced when one recognizes and admits to the guilt of his or her sin, offering no excuses but only regret and sorrow for what he or she has done in violating the will of God. Godly sorrow is not simply being sorry that one has been caught in sin, or that one's sins have been exposed to others. It is sorrow that one's sins have separated him from his God. This godly sorrow is what creates the desire to make the necessary changes in one's life essential to receiving God's forgiveness which leads to repentance.

Repentance has always been the message of God to men. From the Old Testament prophets (Jer. 25:5; Eze. 14:6), to John the immerser (Matt. 3:1-2), to the personal ministry of Jesus (Mark 1:14-15), to the preaching of the apostles (Acts 2:38; 3:19), and down to the present time. The need for such an emphasis on repentance is obvious and stated clearly in the words of Acts 3:19, "**Repent** therefore and be converted, **that your sins may be blotted out**, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." [greenplain@greenplainchurchofchrist.org](mailto:greenplain@greenplainchurchofchrist.org)