

# What is Repentance? What Did Jesus Say About It?

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Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, today we turn our hearts and minds to a vital foundation of our faith: repentance. This is not merely a religious term or an emotional moment—it is the gateway to transformation, to forgiveness, and to fellowship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Repentance is central to the message of the Gospel. It is the very first command Jesus proclaimed as He began His ministry, and it is essential to our salvation and sanctification.

Repentance, from the Greek word 'metanoia,' literally means a change of mind. But it is far more than mental—it involves a deep turning of the heart, a sorrow over sin, and a turning toward God in obedience and trust. True repentance is not simply regret or remorse; it is the abandoning of our way and submitting to the way of the Lord.

The first recorded words of Jesus in His public ministry were these: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). This was not a suggestion—it was a command. Jesus, echoing the voices of the prophets, was announcing that God's reign was arriving and that entrance into this Kingdom required turning away from sin and self-rule and turning toward the righteousness of God.

In Luke 13:3 and 5, Jesus declared twice for emphasis: “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” He spoke this in response to tragedies that had befallen people, making it clear that sin is not always judged immediately, but all are accountable. The urgency of repentance is not tied to outward events but to the certainty of God's coming judgment and the precious opportunity for grace.

Jesus illustrated repentance beautifully in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15). The younger son, having squandered his inheritance in reckless living, comes to his senses and returns to his father, saying, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.” This is a picture of humble repentance—a broken spirit, a willing heart, and a turning homeward. And what do we see? The father, watching from afar, runs to meet him. So does God respond to the truly repentant heart.

Repentance is not a one-time event; it is a way of life. Jesus commended ongoing repentance in His message to the churches in Revelation. To the church in Laodicea, He said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

Repentance is a fruit-bearing act. In Luke 3:8, John the Baptist cried out: “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.” Jesus echoed this when He warned, “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 7:19). True repentance produces visible transformation: forgiveness received, sin forsaken, righteousness pursued.

Beloved, let us not put off repentance. Jesus calls us now to turn—before the door is shut. Let us fall on our knees and turn from our sins with full hearts. Let us confess before the Father and accept the grace poured out through the cross of His Son. For in repentance, there is hope, restoration, and joy everlasting.

### **To God Be the Glory**

Thanks be to God for His mercy and grace, who has granted us repentance leading to life. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). May all glory be to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ, forever and ever. Amen.

### **Reference Scriptures**

Matthew 4:17 – From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Luke 13:3 – I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Luke 13:5 – I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Luke 15:21 – And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

Revelation 3:19 – Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

Luke 3:8 – Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

Matthew 7:19 – Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.