

LESSON 2

**EXCEPT YE REPENT**

Scripture Texts: *Psalm 38:3-4; Psalm 34:18; Matthew 5:23-26, 7:13-14; Luke 13:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7*

In the last lesson we studied about being born again, the new birth. There are steps that must be taken to gain this experience of a new birth. In this lesson we learn about the first steps—repent of and forsake sin.

MEMORY VERSE: *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* *Luke 13:3*

What Is Repentance?

Our first step to salvation is repentance. There is no salvation without it. It is difficult for the flesh to yield and humble down, but it yields a reward of forgiveness, peace, and joy. Psalm 38:3-4 tells us that sin is a heavy burden. Nothing else can hurt one as much as the pain of a guilty conscience. All understand this, for all have felt it. David was overwhelmed by his sin and by the frown of God. Conviction held him as it holds men today. Thank God, we can be free. By confessing, repenting, forsaking sin, and trusting in the only Savior, Jesus Christ, this is possible.

In Luke 13:1-2 Jesus was impressing upon His disciples the equality of need for repentance, which ALL humanity shares. Some of these Galileans appear to have more sin than others, but any sin damns the soul. God's verdict is the same for all—repent or perish. God measures the repentance, not the sin. Matthew 7:13-14 points out that we all enter in at the strait gate unto life. Both the strait and the broad gates are before us early in life. We begin life or destruction here. Why is it that few find life? It is not because God hides the gate. He has given us the Gospel. It is because repentance is the gate, and repentance is hard and painful. Repentance is to become tired of the ways of sin and to be sorry that we have ever sinned against God.

Confession of Sin

In 1 John 1:9 we are told that to have our sins forgiven, they must be confessed. We know that we cannot name out every sin that we have committed. We simply acknowledge our guilt and humbly ask forgiveness for all our wrongs, and God is faithful and just to forgive us of all our sins and make us clean from all unrighteousness. To be rid of guilt, confession must be made to those who were wronged. Before God, the heart must be laid bare and the sin owned.

Proverbs 28:13 reminds us that he that covers his sins shall not prosper. He may feel that he has his sins covered, but God will uncover them for all to see. The only cover for sins is the blood of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the souls of mankind. Psalm 34:18 tells us that a broken heart and a contrite spirit are a part of repentance.

Forsaking of Sin

In 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 we are told that godly sorrow has a part in repentance to salvation. Heartfelt sorrow causes one to hate and turn from sin. It breeds carefulness. There is a clearing of yourself. You clean up your conduct, make restitution, feel indignation at your wrong acts, and have a fear of God's wrath. You also have a

vehement desire to be free of guilt and to do right in the future, a zeal to make a thorough change, and a revengeful desire to destroy the works of Satan.

In Isaiah 55:7 we see that at the heart of repentance there is a forsaking. A change of direction, of conduct, of living, of goal, of masters—without this, confession and sorrow are fruitless. The change is outward and inward. Beware at this point of going along on your own efforts, which would end only in failure.

Put your full trust in God to begin the work of salvation and return to Him each day to continue the work in you. You will experience then His loving mercy, abundant pardon, peace, and joy. God and His angels rejoice with us when one finds true salvation. True repentance is found only where there is a complete change of heart toward God.

JUST A THOUGHT

Regret for sin or remorse over sin is not repentance.

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