**Jesus Give Me a Heart to Believe**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Acts 3:1-21**

**Sunday Morning**

**February 20, 2022**

**Acts 3:1-21**

1 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;

3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. 4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 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, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before…

**How many times have you confessed the same sin to the Lord, and each time you feel sorry and tell Him you won’t do it again?**

Yet deep inside, you doubt that you’ll follow through. We’ve all been there, haven’t we? Perhaps the problem is that despite our confessions, we haven’t entered into genuine repentance.

Saints, repentance is vital for salvation and growth in holiness. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He commissioned his disciples saying:

**Luke 24:46-49**

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

**The Bible has much to say about Repentance**

**Matthew 3:1-2**

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

**Matthew 4:17**

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

**Luke 5:32**

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

**Acts 2:38**

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**2 Peter 3:9**

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

**What is repentance?**

Since the message of repentance is prominent throughout the Scriptures, it’s important to accurately understand the biblical meaning of this term.

**The Definition**

**In the New Testament, repentance includes recognition of sin, godly sorrow for that sin, and a commitment to change direction. Regret, grief, and remorse accompany repentance but are not evidence of it if there is no change in behavior**

**In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for repentance is “turn.”**

Saints, when one repents, he turns from his sinful way of life to head in the direction of obedience to God. The Process Repentance begins with the Holy Spirit’s conviction of wrongdoing.

Saints, at that point, we become painfully aware of our sin against God and feel the guilt of it. But it doesn’t end there. Genuine repentance results in a change of mind, heart, direction, conduct, and attitude.

Instead of tolerating that sin, we now hate it and turn to a life of obedience to almighty God. The Role of Repentance in Salvation are various words and are used in the New Testament to refer to salvation.

Jesus and Paul called people to repentance, but John emphasized belief. The reason he wrote his gospel account was:

**John 20:31**

but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Saints, the writers of Scripture weren’t led by the Holy Spirit to use all possible words referring to salvation each time they spoke of it.

The terms faith, believe, and repent all refer to conversion and can be used interchangeably. You could think of faith and repentance as two sides of the coin of salvation, both required; but even though you may only see one mentioned in a particular passage, the other is also implied.

Saints, genuine salvation always results in a changed life. Baptism is a fitting picture of this conversion. We die to sin, are buried with Christ, and are raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

**Romans 6:4**

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Saints, death to sin and new life in Christ is the evidence of genuine salvation. If nothing has changed in our lives, then there has been no repentance, and our faith is merely intellectual.

**Misconceptions about Repentance**

Saints, when we don’t understand that faith and repentance are two sides of salvation, both of which are required, we’ll try to separate them.

Some people claim that repentance is unnecessary for salvation. They see it as self-generated works, but salvation is only by grace through faith.

They fail to recognize that both faith and repentance characterize genuine salvation. True believers turn by faith to God and from sin through repentance.

Saints, salvation and cleansing are the work of God. His Spirit draws us to repentance by bringing conviction of sin and awareness of our need for a Savior.

The gospel explains that Christ paid the penalty for our sins with His death.

**Romans 2:1-10**

1 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

Saints, when we believe and trust Him as Savior, our sins are forgiven, and God cleanses us as He promised in

**1 John 1:9**

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Repentance brings an instant change at salvation, but it’s a continual process thereafter. We were radically changed at the moment of salvation, but the cleansing process of God in our lives is usually slow.

As He brings an area of sin to mind, we must turn from it by the power of His indwelling Spirit.

Since the Lord will never stop cleansing us, we must never stop confessing and repenting.

**Confession and Repentance**

Saints, confession isn’t merely listing our sins to God, thanking Him for His forgiveness, and going on with life. It means we say the same thing or agree with God about our sin and what we should do about it.

It’s seeing our wrongdoing from His perspective. Since He is holy and hates sin, so should we. The Lord wants us to lay it down and walk away from it.

True biblical confession includes an attitude of repentance. We are not to confess lightheartedly, but in a repentant way that produces victory over sin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 10:9-15**

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Saints, repentance is necessary for everyone. For an unbeliever, it’s an essential part of salvation, and for believers, it’s needed for daily cleansing and continuing fellowship with God. When we refuse to repent, sin gains an increasingly stronger hold on our lives.

**1. If you’re struggling with overcoming a particular sin even though you’ve confessed it repeatedly, what changes are you going to make now that you’ve learned about the importance of repentance?**

**2. Sometimes the problem is that we still enjoy the sin we repeatedly confess.**

**3. What benefit are you deriving from your particular sin?**

**4. What does God say about it in His Word?**

**5. How would freedom from it improve your life and your relationship with the Lord?**

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**