

Sermon Discussion

23 August 2020

Read Acts 2:37-41 together.

Dig Deeper

Repentance involves a change of mind and heart first and secondarily a change of conduct. The Greek word translated repentance (*metanoia*) literally means a change of outlook (from *meta* and *noeo* meaning to reconsider).

When people speak of repentance they may mean one of two different things. We use this English word in the sense of a conduct change (turning away from sinful practices). We also use it in the sense of a conceptual change (turning away from false ideas previously held). These two meanings also appear in Scripture. This has led to some confusion concerning what a person must do to obtain salvation.

If a person just thinks of repentance as turning from sinful practices, repentance becomes a good work that a person does. This kind of repentance is not necessary for salvation for two reasons. First, this is not how the gospel preachers in the New Testament used the word. Second, other Scriptures make it clear that good works, including turning from sin, have no part in justification (see Ephesians 2:8-9). God does not save us because of what we do for Him but because of what He has done for us in Christ.

1. Invite four people to read Acts 2:38, Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, and Acts 19:5. What is the phrase that is repeated in these four verses? What does that phrase mean? What does this phrase indicate about baptism?
2. What is the primary reason that we should be baptized?
3. Why is identifying with Christ through baptism a difficult action for many to take?
4. Ask someone to read Matthew 3:13-17. Remember that John the Baptist had been preaching a message of repentance to the Jewish people and that the baptism they experienced was an illustration of their repentance. Because baptism with John was about repentance, why would Jesus seek to be baptized by John? How did Jesus' baptism help to identify Him with humankind?
5. Read Matthew 28:18-19. What did Jesus command His followers to do? Why was baptism included in Jesus' command to His followers? How would baptism help accomplish Jesus mission to the world?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. How does baptism signify the unity of Christ's body?

7. How does Jesus' baptism provide an example for believers? How can we incorporate baptism in our idea of God's mission?

Application & Prayer

- This series is designed to encourage us to spend time reading the Bible. How has this sermon encouraged you to spend more time in the Bible? What one thing can you do differently this week?
- Pray about how our church celebrates baptism. Should we view baptism as a witnessing opportunity for unbelievers or just a celebration for believers? Can it be both?
- Although baptism does not make us right before God or save us from eternity apart from God, it does demonstrate the repentance offered through faith in Christ alone and our identification with Christ through that faith. Pray that we would view it and encourage it this way as we walk in obedience and learn to trust Christ in deeper ways.