

The Right Place for Repentance

NB: This is a 'touchy' topic because of fear and the teachings within all branches of the churches.

While ever the Spirit takes us forward, there is a huge amount of religious inertia pulling us back to where we were. This was the case with the Reformation, as it was with the Charismatic Renewal movement.

Religion always works from the place of safety: the Spirit wants us to 'walk on water'.

I read a Charisma Magazine article recently that was bemoaning that fact that some churches had lost their focus. The author wrote this statement:

*“Of course, repentance and the cross must be the primary driver of any church, movement or ministry. Sadly, today that is not always the case.”*¹

It's true, Jesus did preach repentance. That's undeniable. The author cited this as his proof text:

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV) – *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*²

Why did Jesus do that? Why did John the Baptist do that?

They were both speaking to unrepentant people wherever they went. New people they interacted with needed to hear the same message that they taught previously. This is an ongoing process of getting the message out.

However, to focus on this verse and ignore that whole record of the 4 Gospels is religious sidestepping. To the point, Jesus didn't always talk about repentance. Note this:

- “Repent” is only mentioned 10 times in all of the Gospel narratives (NKJV).
- “Repent” is **not** mentioned at all in John's Gospel
- “Repentance” is only mentioned 10 times in all of the Gospel narratives (NKJV).
- “Repentance” is **not** mentioned at all in John's Gospel

But:

- “The Kingdom” is mentioned 99 times in all of the Gospel narratives (NKJV).
- “The Kingdom of God” is mentioned 54 times in all of the Gospel narratives (NKJV).
- “The Kingdom of Heaven” is mentioned 31 times in all of the Gospel narratives (NKJV).

Let's use a different text as a reference point instead of Matthew 4:17. It recounts the same situation as the Matthew reference used in the magazine article, so it is quite suitable for the exchange:

Mark 1:14-15 (NKJV) – *Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*

Depending on which 'glasses' you read through – either evangelicalism/religion or the Kingdom – this passage says something different. The religious perspective sees 'repentance' as repentance from sin in this verse. The Kingdom worldview sees 'repentance' as 'changing your thinking to God's way of thinking'. A Kingdom citizen reads this Mark verse as: “Change the way you think from a religious way to a Kingdom way and embrace the good news of the new King and his Kingdom that has come to be established.”

1 – John Butron (17-7-2016) “A Holy Ghost Party Can Be Dangerous Without This Key Element ”
(www.charismanews.com/opinion/58647-a-holy-ghost-party-can-be-dangerous-without-this-key-element)
2 – Quoted by John Butron in “A Holy Ghost Party Can Be Dangerous Without This Key Element ”

Can you see the difference in which of the 2 verses you choose to focus on and which worldview the passages are filtered through?

The magazine author also stated:

*“I was stunned when I heard about a pastor that no longer preaches the blood and the cross because, as he stated, they are pre-resurrection. His focus is now the benefits and the bonuses we can experience on this side of Calvary. While this may shock many of you, the truth is that many are abandoning a keen focus on repentance, the blood and the cross, though they may never be so bold as to announce it.”*³

Well, I will announce it! I have been teaching from this perspective for a few years now.

There is a proper place for repentance and here it is: **“Kingdom citizens are to live a repentant lifestyle”**.

What does this entail?

The Kingdom Life is lived like this:

1. Repentance from a life of sin is part of coming into the Kingdom (being born-again).
2. This repentance has a focus on the Cross, the Blood and the sacrifice of the Messiah.
3. Focus then changes to the Kingdom, the resurrected life and the life of the Spirit.
4. The life of the Kingdom citizen is founded and maintained in an intimate relationship with Father and King Jesus.
5. This relationship becomes one of 'oneness' over time.
6. The life of the Kingdom citizen is based on sonship and partnering with Heaven to fulfil destiny.
7. Sons desire to please Father and their Beloved out of love for them.
8. When a son doesn't align with God in speech, action or thought, this is immediately identified as sin.
9. Sin is acknowledged.
10. Sons change the way they think, do and say and align themselves with heaven's way.
11. Finally, sons simply ask for forgiveness in each instance of sin.
12. Sons make mistakes and are free to do so.
13. Father deals with sons' iniquity one item at a time, with no overriding time frame.
14. Occasionally sons will ask for blanket forgiveness for unconscious sin and sins not dealt with.

The author of the article moves on to celebratory dancing (which he enjoys) and problem of not living a repentant lifestyle:

“We enjoyed a Holy Ghost party atmosphere that was wonderful and legitimate. The celebration was joyous!

*However, what grieves me to this day is that among the dancers were a few who were living very dark lives—and they were convinced that God affirmed those lifestyles. This is why they could dance and rejoice with such "freedom". None of this came to the surface until God hit me hard one day. He told me it was time to shift the message from rejoicing to repenting, from dancing on our feet to crying out on our knees, and to let the Holy Spirit move in a very different way. God had set us up and it was time to marry true freedom with brokenness and surrender. This was the only way faux⁴ freedom could be exposed.”*⁵

3 – John Butron (17-7-2016) “A Holy Ghost Party Can Be Dangerous Without This Key Element ”

4 – 'fake'

5 – John Butron (17-7-2016) “A Holy Ghost Party Can Be Dangerous Without This Key Element ”

This form of licentiousness should not occur within small Kingdom Communities where everyone is accountable to each other. In a group where elders are fully functional and the apostolic and prophetic are very active, there should be a better focus on righteous living without the need to have to preach repentance. Large organisations in the church system don't have these safeguards.

Genuine discipleship, proper pastoring and the teaching of sound doctrine is essential for Kingdom citizens to mature in all areas, including righteousness.

The author also stated:

“God instructed me to preach with great unction and urgency on the cross, hell, holiness and the blood of Jesus. This ended the Holy Ghost parties and opened the door to Holy Ghost conviction.

This led to many rushing to the altars to allow God to break them, heal them and set them free.”⁶

In his experience, many came forward to repent, but many left because of sin that was not dealt with in their lives. However – and note this – true repentance occurs in the quiet time with God, where genuine sorrow rather than dread/terror is the person's mode of response.

Father loves us to repent because he wants us to be more perfect as an *imager* of him, even though he is holy and he doesn't tolerate sin.

NOTE: Please bear in mind that every believer sins, even if we don't think we do. We do it deliberately, despite the Spirit pointing it out. The Blood of Jesus covers all our sins, so the important thing is to live a repentant lifestyle where we deal with sin every time we recognise it in ourselves.

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