

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 7 – Turning Point – Bible Study Helps

Title: Turning Point

Sermon Summary: This sermon from the "Mission Rescue Souls" series focuses on the critical importance of genuine repentance in salvation. The sermon emphasizes that true salvation involves more than simply repeating a prayer or saying the right words—it requires a genuine turning toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. The message distinguishes between worldly sorrow (feeling bad about sin) and godly sorrow (which leads to genuine repentance and transformation). The sermon stresses that while believers have the responsibility to faithfully preach the gospel and point people to Christ, it is ultimately the Holy Spirit's work to convict hearts, and each individual must make their own genuine decision to trust Christ as Lord and Savior.

Key Points:

- Repentance is more than feeling bad about sin; it involves a genuine turning toward God
- True repentance and believing faith are two sides of the same coin—you cannot have one without the other
- The goal of evangelism is not getting someone to repeat words, but helping sinners understand why they need a Savior and leading them to genuinely repent and trust Christ
- Conviction is the Holy Spirit's work; our job is to faithfully preach the gospel and point people to Jesus Christ
- God prepares both the witness and the listener for divine appointments
- Salvation cannot be forced—it must be a genuine response of faith and repentance toward God
- There is a difference between worldly sorrow (regret over consequences) and godly sorrow (which produces repentance leading to salvation)
- Faith is not saying the right words; faith is trusting the right Savior
- Believers are called to sow the seed of the gospel, but only God can give the increase

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 17:30-34 (primary text)
- Acts 20:21 (repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ)

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- Luke 13:1-5 (Jesus' teaching on repentance)
- Psalm 119:59 (turning one's feet to God's testimonies)
- 2 Peter 3:9 (God's will that all come to repentance)
- Romans 10:9-13 (confession and belief leading to salvation)
- 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 (godly sorrow vs. worldly sorrow)
- John 16 (Holy Spirit's work of conviction)
- Acts 10:24-48 (Peter and Cornelius)
- Matthew 27:3-5 (Judas' regret without true repentance)

Stories:

- The Prodigal Son (Luke 15) - demonstrating true repentance as he recognized his sin against God
- Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10) - illustrating how God prepares both the messenger and the hearer for salvation
- Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) - showing divine appointments and God's preparation of hearts
- Nathan confronting David about Bathsheba (2 Samuel) - example of confrontation leading to genuine repentance
- Judas Iscariot - contrasting worldly sorrow (regret) with true repentance
- Illustration of someone driving the wrong way on a highway - repentance means turning around, not just feeling bad or admitting a problem
- Illustration of a burning house - salvation is not about saying the right words but trusting the Savior to rescue you
- Gardening illustration - believers plant and water the seed, but God gives the increase

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Discipleship Questions

How does the distinction between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow in 2 Corinthians 7 help us understand whether someone has truly repented or is simply feeling regret about consequences?

In what ways might we unintentionally give false assurance to people living in sin by pointing them back to a prayer they prayed in childhood rather than examining their current spiritual condition?

Why do you think Jesus used the word 'repent' so directly and repeatedly when modern Christianity often prefers softer language, and what might we lose by avoiding this term?

How does the example of Judas versus the prodigal son illustrate the difference between remorse over actions and genuine repentance toward God?

What does it mean practically that repentance and believing are 'two sides of the same coin' rather than separate steps in salvation?

How should the reality that conviction is the Holy Spirit's work change the way we approach evangelism and our expectations when sharing the gospel?

In what ways might focusing on getting someone to repeat a sinner's prayer create false converts rather than genuine believers who bear fruit?

How does the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10 demonstrate God's sovereign work in preparing both the messenger and the hearer for a divine appointment?

What does the burning house illustration teach us about the difference between teaching someone correct words versus helping them understand their desperate need and where to place their trust?

If someone claims to be a Christian based on a past religious experience but shows no fruit of repentance in their life, how should we lovingly challenge them to examine whether they truly know Christ?

Small Group Discussion Guide: Turning Point - Understanding True Repentance

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you had to make a complete turnaround in your thinking or direction. What prompted that change?

Key Scripture

Acts 17:30-31 - "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness..."

Main Takeaways

1. Repentance is More Than Feeling Bad About Sin

- True repentance involves turning from sin and turning to God
- Godly sorrow leads to repentance; worldly sorrow leads to death (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)
- Repentance and believing are two sides of the same coin

2. Conviction is the Holy Spirit's Work

- God is already at work in people's hearts (John 16:8)
- Our job is to join God at work by faithfully sharing the gospel
- We plant and water; God gives the increase

3. Grace Invites Sinners to Come to Christ

- True salvation cannot be forced or manufactured
 - Faith is trusting the right Savior, not just saying the right words
 - People must genuinely respond to Christ on their own
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Discussion Questions

Understanding Repentance (15-20 minutes)

1. **What's the difference between "feeling bad" about sin and true biblical repentance?** Look at the examples of Judas (Matthew 27:3-5) and the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).
2. **Read Psalm 119:59** - "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." How does this verse illustrate the connection between thinking and action in repentance?
3. **Why do you think Jesus used the word "repent" so directly in Luke 13:3-5, even though it might make people uncomfortable?**

Salvation and Evangelism (15-20 minutes)

4. **The sermon mentioned that repeating words doesn't necessarily mean someone is saved. How can we tell if someone has genuinely trusted Christ?** What fruit should we look for?
5. **Discuss the "burning house" illustration. How does this help us understand the difference between reciting a prayer and genuinely trusting Christ?**
6. **Read Acts 10:34-48** (Cornelius's salvation). What does this passage teach us about God's role and our role in evangelism?

Personal Application (15-20 minutes)

7. **Have you ever relied on a prayer you prayed or a religious experience from your past rather than on a genuine relationship with Christ?** How can we examine ourselves to ensure our faith is real?
8. **The sermon emphasized that we can't force genuine love or faith. How does this affect the way we share the gospel with others?**
9. **What fears or obstacles keep you from sharing the gospel more often?** How does understanding that "God is already at work" help address those fears?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to put into practice:

1. **Prepare Yourself**
 - Get gospel tracts and read through them
 - Practice explaining the gospel message in your own words
 - Memorize key verses (Romans 10:9-13, Acts 17:30-31)
2. **Pray Specifically**
 - Make a list of 3-5 unsaved people in your life
 - Pray daily for God to prepare their hearts and give you opportunities

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- Ask God to show you if you're already seeing Him at work in their lives
 - 3. **Take Action**
 - Give out at least one gospel tract this week
 - Have a spiritual conversation with someone
 - Invite someone to church or an evangelistic event
 - 4. **Self-Examination**
 - Read 2 Corinthians 13:5 - "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"
 - Journal about the evidence of genuine salvation in your own life
 - If you have doubts, talk to your pastor or group leader
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Group Activity (Optional)

Role-Play Exercise: Pair up and practice sharing the gospel with each other. One person plays someone who is interested but has questions. The other practices explaining:

- The reality of sin and judgment
- God's standard of perfection
- The gospel message
- What it means to repent and believe

Switch roles and discuss what was helpful or challenging.

Closing Reflection Questions

1. What is one thing God spoke to your heart through this sermon?
 2. How will you be different this week because of what you've learned?
 3. Who is one person you can share the gospel with this week?
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Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer

- Share specific people you're praying will come to Christ
- Pray for boldness and opportunities to share the gospel
- Ask God to help you be faithful in planting seeds, trusting Him for the increase

Close by praying together for:

- Upcoming evangelism opportunities (parade, VBS, etc.)
- Boldness to speak up for Christ
- Hearts to be prepared (both believers and unbelievers)

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- God to save souls in your community
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Additional Resources

- Previous sermon series: "Field Evangelism"
 - Gospel tracts available from the church
 - Schedule time with your pastor if you have questions about your own salvation or how to share the gospel effectively
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Memory Verse for the Week: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." - Acts 20:21

5-Day Devotional: The Journey to Genuine Repentance

Day 1: Understanding True Repentance

Reading: Luke 13:1-5

Devotional: Jesus makes it clear that repentance is not optional—it's essential. When confronted with questions about others' sins, Jesus redirects the focus: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." True repentance isn't about comparing ourselves to others or feeling superior because we're "not as bad" as someone else. It's about recognizing our own desperate need before God. Repentance means acknowledging that we've sinned against a holy God and choosing to turn from our sinful path toward Him. Today, resist the temptation to evaluate others' spiritual condition. Instead, examine your own heart. Have you truly turned to God, or are you still walking your own way while claiming His name?

Day 2: Two Kinds of Sorrow

Reading: 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

Devotional: Not all sorrow leads to salvation. Paul distinguishes between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow regrets consequences—getting caught, facing embarrassment, or experiencing loss. Godly sorrow grieves over offending God Himself. Notice the fruit of genuine repentance: carefulness, clearing of yourselves, indignation at sin, fear of God, vehement desire for righteousness, zeal, and a determination to make things right. Judas felt worldly sorrow—he regretted his actions but never turned to God for forgiveness. David experienced godly sorrow—he cried out, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Which kind of sorrow characterizes your life? True repentance produces visible change, not just emotional regret. Ask God to give you a heart that grieves over sin because it offends Him.

Day 3: Repentance and Faith – Two Sides of One Coin

Reading: Acts 20:17-21

Devotional: Paul summarized his entire ministry in one phrase: "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." These aren't separate requirements but two aspects of the same response. When you truly believe the gospel, you turn to God and run to Christ. When you genuinely repent, you're demonstrating that you believe. Think of someone driving the wrong way on a highway. Feeling bad isn't enough—they must turn around! Repentance is that turning. It's not merely intellectual agreement or emotional response; it's a decisive change of direction. You cannot come to Christ while continuing in the same direction away from Him. Salvation requires both turning from sin and turning to the Savior. Have you experienced this complete turnaround, or are you simply feeling guilty while heading the same direction?

Day 4: The Holy Spirit's Convicting Work

Reading: John 16:7-11

Devotional: We cannot manufacture genuine conversion. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Our responsibility is to faithfully proclaim the gospel—God's responsibility is to bring life. Like a gardener who plants seed but cannot force growth, we prepare soil, plant truth, water with God's Word, and wait on Him to give increase. This should both humble and encourage us. We're not responsible for someone's salvation—that's between them and God. But we are responsible to speak, to share, to point people to Christ. God orchestrated Philip's meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch, preparing both hearts for a divine appointment. He's still working today, arranging encounters, softening hearts, drawing sinners to Himself. Your job is simple: be faithful to speak when He opens doors. Trust Him with the results.

Day 5: Responding to Grace's Invitation

Reading: Matthew 11:25-30

Devotional: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus extends the most beautiful invitation ever offered. He doesn't force anyone to come—love cannot be coerced. But He graciously calls, demonstrating His love through the cross, offering forgiveness, rest, and eternal life. How will you respond? Some mock and reject. Others delay, saying "maybe later." But some believe and are saved. Faith isn't merely repeating correct words; it's trusting the right Savior. Like someone trapped in a burning house who must trust the firefighter enough to jump into his arms, salvation requires genuine trust in Christ alone. If you've been relying on a prayer you prayed years ago while living unchanged, examine yourself. True salvation produces transformation. But if you've never truly trusted Christ, today is your day. He's calling you. Will you come?