

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 1

Repent!

REPENT OR PERISH

Scripture Text: Luke 13:1-5

A warning and a promise are opposites, one speaking of danger to be avoided, and the other of good to be sought. Warnings and promises, the negative and the positive, the unpleasant and the pleasant. The Bible contains both. We have our choice: destruction or safety, death or life, severity or goodness. We must heed the warnings to enjoy the promises.

This quarter we will study some warnings and promises alternately. Warnings alone might discourage, promises alone might cause us to relax our efforts. Taken together as God gave them, they equip us for the Christian life. Let us pray as we study.

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

All Must Repent

Luke 13:1-3 They **told him of the Galileans**. No more is known of that incident. Apparently, Pilate had killed some Jews who came to Jerusalem to worship, did it while they were in the very act of sacrificing. Tellers of the story reasoned those were especially wicked people since they met such tragic death.

Jesus said, **Nay**. Those were not worse than other sinners. Suffering in this world is not a measure of sinfulness. **Except ye repent**. Jesus brought the issue personally to His hearers. **THEY** must repent—acknowledge, have a godly sorrow for, and turn from their sin. Their need for repentance was as great as that of the greatest sinner. Repentance is essential to salvation. Without repentance, **ALL** are lost from God eternally, damned in hell. **ALL** includes each of us. **WE** must repent or perish.

What conclusion do you think these people who talked to Jesus had reached concerning their spiritual condition and that of the Galileans? It is easy for us to let our image suffer from comparison with others. We learn it is not good to do so by reading **2 Corinthians 10:12**.

There are some instances in the Bible where sufferings came as punishment for sin. At other times suffering came to good people such as Job and Paul. We should come to the conclusion that suffering is part of salvation when reading **1 Peter 4:12-19**.

The Tower of Siloam

Luke 13:4-5 Jesus recalled another tragedy with which these people were familiar—the falling of a tower, killing eighteen people. That is all we know of this. Jesus drew the same conclusion and gave the same warning as before. Not excessive sinfulness necessarily, or sin at all, brought tragic death to those. The most respectable ones are sinners as much as they. The **FACT** of sin, **NOT** the **AMOUNT** of it, requires repentance. **ALL** must repent, for **ALL** have sinned (**Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22**). Sin is essentially rebellion against God, the disposition to do ones **OWN** will rather than His. All have this naturally. To repent is to drop rebellion and surrender to the will of God.

Except ye repent. Jesus repeated the warning to burn it deep into our minds as well as theirs and to make very plain the fact that repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation.

Since there is no solution **except ye repent**, shouldn't this be part of all Gospel teaching that it can be known by all? There are those who have joined a church, thinking this makes them saved, but have never repented. Some think one is saved by faith and nothing else; just accept Jesus as their Savior, and all is well for eternity. Some following this teaching no doubt does repent, but many do not. They need to know it is necessary. The unsaved and untaught ones need to be told this requirement too.

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Repent and *believe* are frequent words in Jesus' teaching and the rest of the New Testament. Jesus said, **Repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15)**. Repentance and belief joined reach the Savior. Either alone cannot save. Next week we will study the requirement of believing.

What Is Repentance?

Repentance is the strait gate, the narrow way, that leads to life (**Matthew 7:14**). Few find life because they don't repent and will not go through the strait gate. Repentance is a change in one's thinking, in one's attitude. It is brought about with conviction by the Holy Spirit (**John 16:8-9**). Conviction shows one his sinful condition. Seeing his corrupt heart brings godly sorrow (**2 Corinthians 7:9-11**). He is sorry, not that his sin has been found out—this is the **sorrow of the world**—but sorry that he has sinned. He acknowledges to God his guilt and need. He turns his back on his sins, hating and renouncing them. He desires to and does make right his wrongs, as far as is possible. God meets this repentance with forgiveness and cleansing. Any sorrow or conviction which does not produce action is not godly sorrow. It is incomplete. Repentance includes acknowledgement of guilt, sorrow, renunciation, restitution, and surrender to God, plea for forgiveness, and faith and trust in the shed blood of Jesus.

Repentance is painful. Some years ago a farmer was helping shred corn. The rollers caught his hand and quickly drew his arm into the machine, tearing the flesh. He pulled out his penknife, asked one to open it, and he cut the few cords still joining arm to body. Painful? Yes, but he did it to save his life. Repentance is like that—cutting loose the damning sins to save the soul (**Mark 9:43-48**).

Repentance is not a thing once experienced and over with. It is a permanent attitude of heart. A saved person depends upon God, for repentance has taught him he cannot depend upon himself. A saved person has a hatred of sin, a continual shunning of any appearance of sin. We could say a saint is not always repenting but always repentant.

God is merciful. Immediately following our lesson Scripture (**Luke 13:6-9**) is a parable showing the loving mercy of God which waits, giving the sinner every chance to repent. Our loving Father hates to punish. He longs to save everyone. It is His **goodness that leadeth thee to repentance (Romans 2:4)**.

JUST A THOUGHT

Wrong methods are bad, wrong doctrine is worse, a wrong spirit is worst.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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