

# What Is Repentance? Why Is It Important? Matt 12:43–45

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Sunday, March 5, 2023  
Covenant Church  
Pastor Zack Phillips

## Matthew 12:43-45

<sup>43</sup> “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. <sup>44</sup> Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup> Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation.”

### A. Introduction

Despite the centrality of repentance in the Bible and its being preached so often in ages past, it may well be underemphasized today. Today, we explore what it is and why it is important.

### B. What Is Repentance?

Repentance is a turning *from* self/sin *to* God. More specifically, it is often said to have the following components:

1. Recognition of sin
2. Remorse

**2 Cor 7:10-11** <sup>10</sup> For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. <sup>11</sup> For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment!...

**Luke 18:9-14**

**Psalm 51:1–5**

- <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.
- <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.
- <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.
- <sup>4</sup> Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgment.
- <sup>5</sup> Indeed, I was born guilty,

a sinner when my mother conceived me.

3. Confession

**Jas 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. Turning from

5. Restitution

**Luke 19:8-10** <sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

6. Turning to

	Peter	Judas
<b>Sin</b>	"Denying" Jesus three times (Matt 26:34, 69-70, 71-72, 73-74 ), including lying and swearing a false oath (Matt 26:74)	"Betrays" Jesus to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver (Matt 26:14-15)
<b>Recognition</b>	...he went out and wept bitterly (Matt 26:75b)	Judas "repented" and said to the chief priests and elders "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood" (Matt 27:3-4)
<b>Remorse</b>		Hanged himself? (Matt 27:5)
<b>Confession</b>		Judas "repented" and said to the chief priests and elders "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood" (Matt 27:3-4)
<b>Turning from</b>	Presumably, would not do it again?	Presumably, would not do it again?
<b>Restitution</b>		Returns the 30 pieces of silver (Matt 27:3)
<b>Turning to</b>	Didn't leave the eleven, didn't run when Jesus appeared, answered Jesus' questions (John 21:15-19), did indeed "follow" Jesus afterwards (John 21:19, 22)	

**Luke 22:31–32** <sup>31</sup> "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

### C. Why Is It Important?

1. To not repent is dangerous to your soul

“Just as an opium-eater needs a larger and larger doses—so does the man who seeks happiness in anything except in God need greater excitement every year that he lives, and after all is never really happy” —J.C. Ryle

“Now, sinner, are you not afraid to go on in your sins? If you put it off to-night, to-morrow evening you will not be at the prayer-meeting, but somewhere else; and next Sunday, perhaps, you will not go to a place of worship at all” —Charles Finney

**Rom 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?**

Going to Sinai, hearing about the ten commandments, looking at hell, thinking about the terrors of damnation—all this may make people afraid, and has its use. But no repentance ever lasts in which a man does not look at Calvary more than at Sinai, and see in a bleeding Jesus the strongest motive for contrition. Such repentance comes down from heaven. Such repentance is planted in man’s heart by God the Holy Spirit. —J.C. Ryle

2. To repent is to live in relationship

3. To repent is to begin to experience Eternal Life

*Question: What is one thing that God may have said to you through this sermon?*