

07. Repentance

Repentance means an about-turn in our lives. That is what helps us to turn towards God. God has to see that a man chooses Him before He can forgive his sin. God doesn't force anyone to accept what he does not want. God has given you a free will. If you don't want what He offers, He won't thrust it down your throat. The Bible says that Jesus stands at the door of your heart and knocks. He waits for you to open the door because He is a gentleman. He will never force you to do anything that you don't want. He wants you to respond to His invitation.

To be united with Christ is something like getting married. Here is a man who says 'Yes, I am willing to marry you' to a girl, but the marriage is not complete until the girl also says, 'I am also willing.' When both express their willingness, then only does the marriage take place. Now a man may have said he wants to marry the girl and he may have to wait five years before the girl says, yes. That is how it is with God. He says to you, 'I want to be united with you. I want to forgive your sins, I want to come and live in your heart and I want to bless you. I want to change your life, and I want to deliver you from your bad habits.' But He won't do it until you say, yes. He is not going to force Himself into a marriage with you if you are not interested. That is why so many people in the world live without God.

Now you see a lot of people in this world living with religion. To live with a religion is not the same as living with God. There is a tremendous difference. There are so many religions including the Christian religion. People usually have a religion because they were born into it. They were born into a particular family and so they go to a particular place of worship. But there is a lot of difference between that

07. 悔改

悔改的意思是,回轉。這個回轉,使我們轉向神。神需要看到一個人選擇了祂,才能去原諒那個人。如果人不願意,神不強迫任何人接受祂。神給了你自由意志。如果你不願接受祂所提供的,祂不會硬塞進你的喉嚨。《聖經》說耶穌站在你的心門口敲門。祂等著你開門,因為祂是一位紳士。祂永遠不會強迫你做任何你不願意做的事。祂希望你能夠回應祂的邀請。

與基督的結合是類似于婚姻的。男人對一個女孩說,「是的,我想要娶你」,然而只有當女孩也說,「我也願意」,這婚姻才可能完成。當兩人都表達他們的意願,他們的婚姻才能進行。現在,這個男人已經說他願意娶這位女孩,但直到她說「我願意」以前,他可能得等上五年。我們與神就是這樣。祂對你說:「我願意與你結合,我想要赦免你的罪,我想要住在你的心裡,我想要祝福你。我想要改變你的生活,我想要使你脫離各種壞的習慣。」然而,直到你說「我願意」之前,祂是不會去做的。如果你不感興趣,祂不會來強迫你和祂結婚。這就是為什麼世上這麼多人,活著卻沒有神。

你其實看到,這世上很多人,是有宗教的。然而,有宗教的生活,和有神的生活,是有巨大區別的。這世上有許多宗教,也包括基督教。人們經常因為出生在某種宗教的環境裡,而有一個宗教。他們因為出生于某種家庭,因而去特定的地方去敬拜。但這和與神結合是不同的。耶穌基督來世上,不是為了開始一個新的宗教。不是的!這是個誤解。耶穌基督的確通過很多東西來教導我們,像是儀式或每個主日去教會之類的。

and being united to the person of God. Jesus Christ did not come to start a new religion. No, that is a misunderstanding. Jesus Christ did not come to teach us to go through many rituals, and to go to Church every Sunday. No. He primarily came to bring us into a relationship with God as our Father; into a personal relationship with Him; into a marriage, like I said. He has already said yes when He died on the cross for you, and rose up from the dead. Now He is waiting for you to respond to Him just like the girl had to say yes to the waiting boy. And the moment you say yes, your marriage is over. You are united with Him, forever. But in order to do that (say yes to Him), you have to do what the Bible calls you to - repent.

Repent is a very simple word which just means 'to turn about'. Now you have seen a military parade. You have seen perhaps the leader of the parade saying 'about-turn'. When that command is given, all the soldiers turn 180 degrees to the opposite direction of what they were facing before. That is an about-turn and that is basically what repentance really means. We are born with our backs to God. We are not really interested in God. The Bible says that no one in the world seeks out for God. A lot of people are religious, but to seek for God is something quite different from being religious. We are born seeking our own profit and gain. Even the religious people are seeking their own profit and gain. Think of all the people who go to various places of pilgrimage. What are they going there for? They are going there to get some benefit for themselves. And there we see that it is really selfishness; they are no different than the non-religious businessman who is also seeking his own interest when he seeks to make money in the marketplace.

但祂來世上首要的,是為帶領我們與神建立個人的親密關係,使神成為我們的父,就像我之前說的,讓我們接受這個婚姻。當祂在十字架上的時候,祂已經對你說了「我願意」,爾後從死裡復活。現在祂在等著你的回應,就像是姑娘要對那個還在等待的男孩說「我願意」。當你說出「我願意」的時候,這個婚姻就成了。你和祂永遠的結合了。但是,為了說這個「我願意」,你必須要像《聖經》裡告訴你的,去悔改。

悔改是個非常簡單的詞,就是「完全轉向」的意思。當你看閱兵的時候,領隊的說「向後轉」。當這個口令一出,所有的士兵都會轉 180 度,轉向和原來完全相反的方向走。基本上這就是「悔改」的意思,就是向後轉。我們生下來都是背向著神的,都對神不感興趣。《聖經》說這世界上沒有人尋求神。這世上有很多人是有宗教的,但是這與尋求神是非常不同的。我們生下來,就一直尋求自己的利益。甚至有宗教的人也是在尋求自己的利益。想想所有那些去不同地方朝聖的人。他們是為了什麼去?他們去是為了給自己帶來好處。從這我們能看出,這是多麼的自私,他們和沒宗教的生意人,是沒有差別的,生意人為了尋求在市場中賺錢,同樣都是在為了尋求自己的利益。

So to turn to God means to turn away from seeking just my own way in life; to say, 'Lord, I want to turn around from everything that dishonours you and displeases You. I want to turn around and face You. Till now my back was to You and my face was towards the world, towards sinful pleasures; having my own way, pleasing myself. Now I want to turn around and put my back to all those things and face You, and seek to please You.'

The Bible calls repentance in 1 Thessalonians, 1:9 as 'a turning to God from idols.' If we worship anything other than the true God - it could be money, it could be self - that becomes like an idol in our life and that turns me away from God. That thing becomes my God, that thing is uppermost in my mind. Repentance is to turn away from all those things and turn to the one true God. A pretty girl whom you love could be your idol; who could be like God in your life to occupy so much time. It could be money, your job, your house, your car; it could be anything. Unless we are willing to turn from the worship of these things and say, 'God, Creator of the Heavens and my Creator, I want You to have the first place in my life' (that is repentance, to turn around and make God central in our life), we cannot have a relationship with God.

Now, very often, we find it easy for us to deceive ourselves. We can think that, because we have said these words, we have repented. But the Bible also says that we must bring forth fruits that are in keeping with our repentance. How do we prove that we have really turned from our old way of life? One way would be, if you have stolen money from someone in the past, or if you have cheated the government of taxes, then once you have repented of it, you are going to return it. You are going to go to that person and say, 'I am sorry, I stole some

所以,「轉向神」的意思是,轉離尋求只有自我的生活方式,說「主,我想要轉離一切有損你的名和不討你喜悅的事。我想要轉而面對你。一直到今天以前,我一直是背對著你,面朝向這個世界,面向著這罪惡的快感,任憑著自己的方式,取悅自己。現在我想要轉向,把背轉給這個世界的各種亂七八糟,而把面朝向你,來尋求使你喜悅。」

《聖經》在帖撒羅尼迦前書 1 章第 9 節裡說悔改是「離棄偶像,歸向神」。如果我們敬拜除了真神以外任何東西——可以是錢,可以是你自己——那都變成我們生活的偶像,而使我們遠離了神。那個東西就成了我的神,那個在我心裡佔據最重要位置的東西。悔改,就是離棄一切這樣的東西或事情,而歸向獨一的真神。你愛的漂亮姑娘可以成為你的偶像,成為像是你生活的真神,佔據大量的時間。這東西也可能是錢財,你的工作、房子,你的車,可以是任何東西。除非我們願意停止崇拜這些東西,並說:「神,天地的創造者,我的創造者,我想要你在我生命裡佔據第一的位置」,否則我們就無法與神建立關係。這就是悔改,轉向神,爾後以神為我們生活的中心。

很經常地,我們發現自我欺騙是非常容易的。我們可能會想,因為我們說了這些話,就是已經悔改了。但《聖經》還說,我們要結出果子,與悔改的心相稱。用什麼能證明我們真從原來的生活方式裡轉向了呢?有一種方法,比如你曾經偷了某人的錢,或是騙過政府的稅,如果你悔改了,就要還回去。你要去對那個人說:「對不起,我曾經偷了你的錢。你可能還不知道這事,這是那筆錢,和利息,一併還給你。」如果你騙了政府的稅,就意味著要把錢還給政府。如果你坐火車沒買票,就要去把票錢給火車站。這樣,就能夠證明你是真心要悔改。否則,就只是耍嘴皮子罷了。

money from you. Perhaps you didn't know about it. Here is the money with interest that I am returning to you.' If you have cheated the government of taxes, it would mean returning that money to the government. If you have travelled in the railways without buying the ticket, it would mean repaying that money to the railways. Then, it would prove that you are serious about your repentance. Otherwise they would be mere words.

Now a lot of people turn to God with mere words. There is a verse in the Bible where God says, these people turn to me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me and their worship is a mere tradition. That is how it is with most religious people in the world; their religion is one which never causes them any inconvenience. Do you know how inconvenient it is to go back and return money which you have taken wrongfully from somebody? It is humiliating, but that is the proof that you really want to give up that way of life. It also means that if you have lost your temper at somebody, and shouted at somebody, or called somebody by a bad name, you should go to that person and say, 'I am sorry for what I did. That was my mistake, please forgive me.' See, those are just a few words. It takes only fifteen seconds for you to say it to somebody. But you will discover it is so difficult for you to do it.

Why is it so difficult for you to say those ten or fifteen words to somebody? - Because of pride, we are so proud. That is the reason why many people cannot turn to God. Christ has died for our sins, but we have to turn towards Him in order to receive that forgiveness. We have to turn away from that old way of life that we have chosen. And we have to say, 'Lord, I want to receive what you give.' To say that, I have to repent - there should be a turnabout. Otherwise, if I just say with my words to God that I

現在很多人歸向神,都僅僅是口頭上的。神通過《聖經》說,有些人只是嘴上歸向祂,心卻離祂很遠,敬拜只是個傳統而已。這世界上大部分有宗教的人,其實都是這樣;他們的宗教從不會給他們帶來一點的麻煩。你知道回去退還那些不該拿的錢有多麻煩嗎?而且非常丟臉,但那能證明你真的想要放棄原來的生活。這也意味著,假如你曾經對誰發脾氣,對人吼,或是給別人罵名,你需要對那個人說:「抱歉我曾經做過的。那是我犯的錯,請原諒我。」你看,這就只有幾個詞。也就是需要十五秒。但是你將發現,它有多難。

為什麼對人說十幾個詞有這麼難?原因是驕傲,我們都太驕傲了。這就是很多人沒法歸向神的原因。基督為我們的罪而死了,但我們需要轉向祂,從而收到那份寬恕。我們需要從以前舊的生活方式轉向。我們還需要說:「主啊,我想要接受你給予的。」說這個,就需要悔改,需要完全的轉向。否則,如果我只是嘴上對神說對不起,卻不願意把對別人做過的錯事糾正,那只能說明,我們歸向神的心不是認真的,也可能說明我們只是想很便宜地得到神的寬恕。你知道嗎,這份寬恕不是廉價的?你知道嗎,神必須把祂自己的兒子耶穌基督

am sorry and I am not willing to set right with man the things I have done wrong to man; it would only mean that I am not really serious about turning from my old way of life. It would mean that I want to get forgiveness from God cheaply. Do you know that forgiveness is not cheap? God had to send His son Jesus Christ to earth to die? And he had to go through all that suffering to purchase our forgiveness. If you want it cheaply, if you don't even want to acknowledge your sin before man and confess to that person, then you cannot get that forgiveness.

So, repentance means that I acknowledge the guilt of worshipping things other than God. I need to come to God and say, 'Lord, You alone are worthy to be worshipped. You, whom I cannot see with my eyes - the Invisible Creator of this universe - You are the One worthy to be worshipped. I am sorry that I have spent my life worshipping created things. I want to turn to You.' Repentance doesn't mean that you have to give up your job and become a hermit or give up your family or any such thing. It is not giving up earthly things as much as giving up an attachment to earthly things. There is a lot of difference. God may still allow you to have your home, your job, your family, but don't be attached to them, don't make them your god. In fact, making them your god destroys you. It is not a sin to use the comforts that modern civilization provides us, but it is a sin to love those comforts more than we love God.

See, God has created our bodies in such a way that we can experience the pleasure of food, sleep, and many other things like that. There is nothing wrong in experiencing these pleasures. But if we make these things more important than God, then those things have become idols in our lives. One more

送到地上來為此而死?而且祂必須經歷各種折磨來為我們換回這份寬恕。如果你試圖要便宜地得到它,連對人坦白承認自己的過錯都不肯,那麼你根本得不到這份寬恕。

因此,悔改意味著承認自己愛慕其它事物超過神。我需要來到神面前說:「主,你是唯一值得敬拜的。雖然我不能用肉眼看到你,無形的宇宙創造者,你是唯一值得敬拜的。對不起在過去的日子,我愛慕那些你所創造的東西。我想要歸回你。」悔改不是說要你放棄工作去做隱士,或是放棄家庭之類的。悔改是要你放棄對這些事物的依戀,而不是放棄這些事物本身。這兩個有很多區別。神仍然允許你擁有房子、工作或家庭,但祂不要你依戀這些東西,不要讓這些東西成為你的神。實際上,把這些東西當作神會毀了你的。利用現代文明所提供的方便不是罪,但如果你愛這些舒適方便勝過愛神,就是罪了。

你看,神造我們身體的方式,使我們能夠體驗到食物、睡眠,和許多事物的美好。體會這些美好是沒有錯的。但**如果我們把這些感受看得比神本身更重要**,這些事物就成了我們生活的偶像。另外還有一件事:如果我們不饒恕別人,那麼耶穌和我們在天國裡的父親也不會饒恕我們。所以這就是我們要做的另一件事。

thing: if we don't forgive others, then Jesus said that our Heavenly Father will also not forgive us. So that is another thing we need to do. If we are really repentant, we will forgive every single person who has harmed us, just like God, our Heavenly Father, has forgiven us.

我們如果真的悔改,就要寬恕曾經傷害過我們的每一個人,就像神,我們天國裡的父親,寬恕了我們每一個人一樣。