

**“THE OTHER HALF OF JOHN’S GOSPEL:
THE OFTEN OMITTED PART OF A MESSAGE THAT HAS NEVER CHANGED!”¹**

Text: Acts 20:21 – “*repentance toward God and faith in our Lord...*”

Illustration: Car salesman who emphasizes and points out all the positive features of the vehicle e.g. A/C, power windows & door locks, automatic unlocking & starting, sky roof, air bags on sides as well as front, steel bars in the doors so if you get ‘T-boned’ you will survive, etc., etc. **But what’s the one thing you keep wanting to ask??**

Answer: “How much is it?!?” And that’s the one thing he doesn’t want to talk about, because he wants to make a sale. And so it is with this part of the gospel message.

IN REGARD TO THIS TRUTH, IT’S NOT SO MUCH ITS FORGOTTEN, AS IT IS DELIBERATELY OMITTED! Many years ago William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army said:

“I fear there is coming a time when we will be preaching a salvation without repentance, and a gospel of grace that is a disgrace.” Well... that day is now here!

You see... beginning several decades ago, a lot of preachers, churches, evangelists and ministries wondered how they could get a larger and more positive response. And they came up with a solution. Dr. Peter Masters saw it and stated it quite clearly way back in the early 1970’s, at a huge conference of independent Baptists held at Temple Baptist Church right off of Telegraph Road in Detroit, Michigan:

“They’ve asked themselves, ‘How can we get people to respond to our message and have it well received? Well, let’s go light on the cost and heavy on the benefits.’”

Compare that with what Paul says he preached (Acts 20:21) – “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord...”

What’s the very first message that John the Baptist preached? – Repentance!

- Mt. 3:2 – “*repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*”
- Mk. 1:4 – “*preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (The message has never changed!)
- Lk. 3:3 – “*preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*”

What is the very first message that Jesus Christ preached? – Repentance!

- Mt. 4:17 – “*repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” (This was the exact same message John the Baptist had preached!)
- Mt. 3:8 – “*bear fruit in keeping with repentance*” cf. Luke 3:8
- Luke 13:3 & 5 – “*I tell you no, but unless you repent...*”
- 5:32 – “*call the righteous but sinners to repentance*”

What message did the apostle John preach to believers as well as unbelievers? – Repentance!

Let’s look at a 3rd part of the apostle John’s emphasis. You don’t find it in his Gospel, but in his last book, the last thing that he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. **This is the third part of the gospel triangle. The first side was to “believe” i.e. faith. The second side was the fact that saving faith must have “the right object” i.e. Jesus Christ alone. The final side of the gospel triangle is “repentance.” Without it, there can be no salvation!**

Believers:

- Rev. 2:5 – “*...*” (to believers! –Believers often need to repent too!)
Spurgeon quote: “***I repented when I came to Christ, and I’ve repented far more since!***”
Illustration: The closer you get to the sun or a bright light, the more your imperfections are revealed.
- 2:16 – “*therefore repent or else I am coming...*” (to believers)

¹ From a sermon by Mike Edwards, Bible Baptist Church, Madison, Ohio, March 2, 2014 (am service). Note: All verses are from the NASV.

- 2:21 – “I gave her time to repent” & “she did not want to repent of her immorality” (to a believing church that was tolerating sin)
- 2:22 – “unless they repent of their deeds” (to believers?)
- 3:3 – “and keep it, and repent” (to believers)
- 3:19 – “therefore be zealous and repent” (to believers)

What about unbelievers?

- 9:20 – “nor repent of the works of their hands”
- 9:21 – “and they did not repent of their murders”
- 16:9 – “and they did not repent so...”
- 16:11 – “and they did not repent of their deeds”

What message did the apostles Peter & Paul preach repeatedly? – Repentance!

Peter:

- Acts 2:38 – “repent and let each of you be baptized...”
- Acts 3:19 – “therefore repent and return...”
- Acts 5:31 – “a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel”

Paul:

- 13:24 – “a baptism of repentance to all the people...”
- Acts 17:30 – “that all men everywhere should repent...”
- Acts 19:4 – “John baptized with the baptism of repentance”
- Acts 20:21 – “...of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Acts 26:20 – “they should repent and turn to God...”
- 26:20 – “performing deeds appropriate to repentance”

Note: There’s more than one kind of repentance... But only one that will get us to heaven!

- 2 Cor. 7:9-10 – “made sorrowful to the point of repentance... God produces a repentance without regret”

What message did the OT prophets Isaiah & Jeremiah preach w/o success? – Repentance!

Jeremiah:

- Jer. 8:6 – “no man repented of his wickedness”
- Jer. 5:3 – “they have refused to repent”
- Jer. 15:7 – “they did not repent of their ways”

Isaiah:

- Isa. 30:15 – “in repentance and rest you will be saved, but you would not!”

Obviously repentance is not necessarily a popular message—even when preached by God’s greatest servants!

Worse yet is the fact that we can reject God’s mercies to the point He finally lets us go our own, hopeless way:

Isaiah:

- Heb. 12:17—“for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears!”

Nevertheless the fact is, we must repent if we will obtain eternal life. Note Peter’s statement:

- Acts 11:18: “repentance that leads to life”

So... right about now you’re probably saying: The word “Gospel” means good news. But where’s the “good news” in all of this? RIGHT HERE: God is gracious, wants us to repent and appeals to us to do so:

- Rom. 2:4 – “the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”
- II Pet. 3:9 – “not willing that any perish but for all to come to repentance.”
- II Tim. 2:25 – “if perhaps God may grant them repentance”

So what should we do? What should YOU do? Most of all... what should any unsaved person do?

- Ezek. 18:32 – “Therefore repent and live”
- Mk. 1:15—“repent and believe in the gospel”