

TURN FROM SIN, TURN TO GOD

SERIES: JESUS IS KING | WEEK 2 | 10.25.2020

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. King Jesus – He is King and we lift Him up today. You have lifted Him up today in this place. We look forward to the day when He reigns and rules, and we are anticipating that day. Yes, the King has come! Yes, the King has transformed our lives. Yes, the Kingdom is here. And yet it is yet to come. There is so much more. I gotta read this to you, the book of Malachi, end of the Old Testament, last prophet that would speak till Jesus would arrive on the scene, makes this statement about the Kingdom of Heaven. He says:

¹ "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."

– MALACHI 4:1 (ESV)

Boy, does that sound good! That the evil, the wickedness, the darkness that we experience, that we see that is all around us – done, gone! That day is coming. We look forward to it. That day's not yet. Yes, we have Jesus. Yes, we have forgiveness of sin. Yes, we are living in the Kingdom today—and yet there is so much more when God comes to set up His physical Kingdom here on earth. Jesus is King. And that's what we come here to celebrate, it's what we come here to talk about, and I believe that there is something happening among us right now; there is something going on in our world right now that is causing us just like at the time that Jesus came into this world 2,000 years ago, causing us to long for that Kingdom to be set up here on earth. The things to be made right for Jesus to reign and rule forever and ever.

Reading from the book of Matthew right now, we're in Matthew Chapter 3, a book written about the gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, by a guy by the name of Matthew who started his life as a tax collector, one of the most hated people in all of Israel. He worked for Rome, he took extra money from the people, and as a result they hated him—until Jesus calls him and says listen, you come and follow me. Transforms, changes his life, he steps out and life is never the same again. He sits down to write what he knew about the life of Jesus, the Good News about Jesus Christ. Chapter 3 of his gospel, we were in the first two chapters up till now and today we get into the third chapter, listen to these words in Chapter 3 it says this, first verse:

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

***"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths
straight.'"***

– MATTHEW 3:1-3 (ESV)

A voice cries:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way of the LORD; make
straight in the desert a
highway for our God."
– ISAIAH 40:3 (ESV)

Malachi, we read from it a moment ago about this kingdom that is about to burst onto the scene, but that was 400 years before these words that I just read were spoken. This is 400 years before this guy John the Baptist comes to pave the path for Jesus Christ, and in those 400 years there's not a word spoken, there's not a prophet in the land. In fact, listen to – I'm just going to turn a couple pages back to Malachi again, listen to the world of which Malachi was speaking. When this is described at the end of Chapter 2 of Malachi, I'm just going to tell you, I don't think you'll hear a world much different than the one we live in today. Listen to verse 17 of Chapter 2 of Malachi:

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¹⁷ You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

– MALACHI 2:17 (ESV)

And then he says this, so in the midst of this darkness people are going, "Hey, what I'm doing is fine. I don't get what the big deal is. I'm fine, everything's good, everything I do is good, everything you do is good [GESTURES TO HIS LEFT], everything you do is good [GESTURES TO HIS RIGHT], everyone's good, everything's fine. All is good." And he says in the midst of that time there's coming a time in the future—it's Chapter 3 of Matthew we just read with John the Baptist—listen to what Chapter 3 of Malachi says, this is a prophecy:

¹ "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts."

– MALACHI 3:1 (ESV)

That's the prophecy—nothing happens for 400 years. People are doing their own thing, they don't really care, and then Matthew Chapter 3, John the Baptist comes onto the scene and everything starts making sense to them. At the end of Malachi the last words we see written by the prophet, the last prophet to speak until John the Baptist shows up, Malachi Chapter 4, verse 5 says:

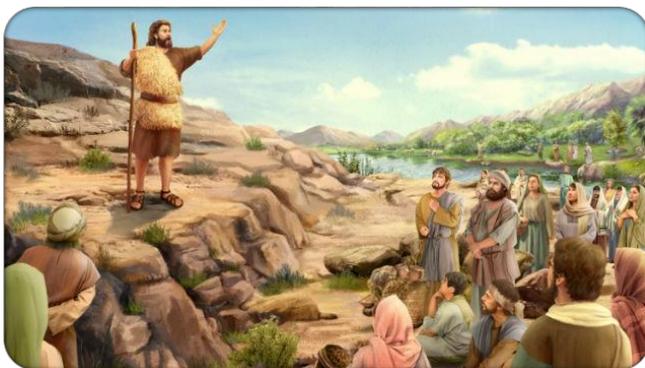
⁵ "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes."

– MALACHI 4:5 (ESV)

There's going to be this one that comes before Jesus arrives and he says this is going to be Elijah. And you sort of ask yourself, Okay, I'm reading Matthew Chapter 3, verse 1, it says, "*In those days John the Baptist came.*" But they kept on asking him, "Are you Elijah?" "Is this Elijah?" And here's how you can know why they might have been asking that question, if you look down to verse 4 it says:

⁴ Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

– MATTHEW 3:4 (ESV)



John the Baptist

Okay, you picture this guy? He steps in – even in that time that's a radical look, a radical lifestyle; even in today's times you see that guy out in the woods and he speaks out and you go, "That's not one of us. That's weird. That's crazy." But in this time there is this hunger, this longing for the Kingdom of God where everything would come and everything would be made right, and the people are realizing this darkness is overwhelming me—and onto the scene shows up this guy dressed in camel's hair and a leather belt. Here's why they know that this is the guy that Malachi, the last

prophet to have spoken, was prophesying of. Listen to 2nd Kings Chapter 1, verses 7-8, and one of the

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things you realize throughout the Bible when these allusions are made to previous Scriptures – people then knew their Bibles. If we want to understand what's going on in the world around us, we need to be studying our Bibles. We need to be digging into it. Listen to what 2nd Kings says:

⁷ He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?" ⁸ They answered him, "He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist."

— this is not at this point talking about John the Baptist, this is many, many years before that; and they said, "Who was that?" —

And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."

– 2 KINGS 1:7-8 (ESV)

And so that's why all of a sudden the prophet Malachi says there's gonna be coming a guy—Elijah is gonna come later on—when John the Baptist comes they go, "Are you Elijah?" They're saying this guy is like Elijah. When they see him dressed up like Elijah here in Chapter 3 of Matthew you realize, *Oh, my goodness, this guy is the real deal!* And they begin to talk with him. I read to you these verses a moment ago, *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"* Again, understanding their Bibles they understand what this guy is shouting out, that he's doing. This is something that the prophet Isaiah had spoken of years before.

The first 39 chapters of the book of Isaiah – judgment, judgment, judgment, judgment. When you get to Chapter 40 of Isaiah the opening words of Chapter 40 of Isaiah says:

¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

– ISAIAH 40:1 (ESV)

You go, "Yes, I could use that comfort. I hear a lot about judgment, that freaks me out, but I could use the comfort." And right into that spot he says there's one who's coming who will take the roads, who will straighten them out, will smooth them out, will take the mountain tops and fill in the valleys, is going to take the areas that are rough and going to smooth them out. And you have here a picture in Isaiah of the dirt roads of that time, and even when John's coming and he's referring to this they all get a dirt road.

If you've ever lived down a dirt road you know that after a while the rains and the winds and the traffic over that creates ruts and this stuff blows across it and it builds up and it gets uneven and you eventually have to take some sort of a big tractor or something across it to smooth that out. And in Isaiah Chapter 40 and now here in Matthew Chapter 3 there is this statement there is one coming who is going to prepare the way for the King. They got that imagery because in that time if a king was coming to your town everyone headed out to the roads and they began to clear the roads, they cleared off these high spots and these low spots, smoothed it off, so that the king could have clear passage to arrive uninhibited. And they were out there crying, "The king is coming, let's get ready."

³ A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

– ISAIAH 40:3-5 (ESV)

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They're shouting out, John's shouting out, "Messiah is here. It's our time to be prepared." And that's why we read in Chapter 3, verse 2, it says this, "Repent," this is what John's crying out:

² *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

– MATTHEW 3:2 (ESV)

John's crying out saying the King is coming! I'm smoothing out the roads, we're getting ready for Him, but you're not ready for Him. The King's almost here—we're not ready. Now most of us aren't having people into our homes right now, it's sort of weird. I mean, you used to have people over and spend time, and people come in from out of town and stay with you. Now we're all worried that they'll kill us if they come and stay in our house. But imagine if the person, if you could think of one person in this world that you just think of so highly, that if they could just come stay a night in your house, if they could come eat at your dinner table—what would you prepare for them? What would the table look like? How would you set it? How would the decorations be on the table? What would be the food that you would cook to prepare for them? After all, you want to be ready for them.

What would your kitchen look like? How would the dishes be laying around or not laying around? What would that bedroom look like? What would the bedspread over the bed look like? What would that little basket sitting beside the sink look like in the bathroom? As you were getting ready for this most desired guest that's ever come to your home, you'd be going crazy for weeks and months ahead. You'd be painting, you'd be cleaning, you'd be redoing, you'd be buying all sorts of decorations, you would be on all these different websites trying to make it just perfect so when they came they knew that you had prepared and you could just sit back and rest and relax and enjoy their presence and enjoy them enjoying themselves.

John is saying the King of kings, Jesus, King, He is coming, and you need to know that we need to get ready. And as he is shouting out to the people you need to get ready, he's yelling out the word *repent*. It's a word that I don't know if we understand too well. It's a word that we don't talk about a lot. It is a church word and it ought to be a church word, it's a word we ought to say in this room over and over and more often, it needs to be part of our vocabulary. It needs to be more than just a preacher word. It needs to be a personal word. John's saying hey, listen, as we're preparing for the King, to set up His Kingdom, the subjects in the Kingdom, the King is coming, we're going to be ready, we need to be repentant.

And here's what repent means, it means "to turn from something and to turn towards something." Very specifically, it's to turn from our sin and turn towards God. The story of the Bible is this over and over cycle of people turning from their sin toward God, that's repentance. Unfortunately, the repentance went the other way, too, they turned from God and they turned back to their sin. And over and over you see this in the Bible, you see these deliverers God raises up because the people are, I mean, things are going bad, it's going dark, it's going downhill. They're screaming out, "God, help us! Where are You? We need You in this time." And they're screaming out and in the middle of that time God says, "Okay, okay, I'll send you a deliverer. I'll send someone to help you." And He would send someone to help them, then they would turn away from God again. And it was just this back and forth, back and forth.



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And that same thing is the case in our world and in our lives today. Repentance says hey, I'm going to come to a place where I'm going to reconsider who I am and where I'm at and the life that I'm living, and I'm going to turn to a new way of living, a new person and new choices and new actions. Now listen, when we talk about repenting you turn from sin, turn towards God. We often say repent, repent from your sin, repent from your sin. Ask someone, well, what would that be? We go back to what it said there in Malachi 2:17 where there's this constant drum beat of we're all good, we're all good, and so then there's this little thing that happens once in a while in our society. I mean, there's some bad things that happen, or we create something that becomes our big deal, you know, you drive a vehicle that pollutes like crazy and you're just a really bad person. And that's the most people can think of in our time, and you sort of beat each other up online over stupid stuff like that. But God gets to define sin. There are the things that are an offense in the sight of a Holy, Almighty God and He defines that in His Scriptures.

Hey, you know, you're gonna go, "Okay, what are those things? I need to know where I'm at. What are those things I need to turn from and to turn towards God on? I mean, let's get simple, let's go to the Ten Commandments. You know what they are? Actually, if you don't know what they are, you ought to get them in your – Exodus Chapter 20.

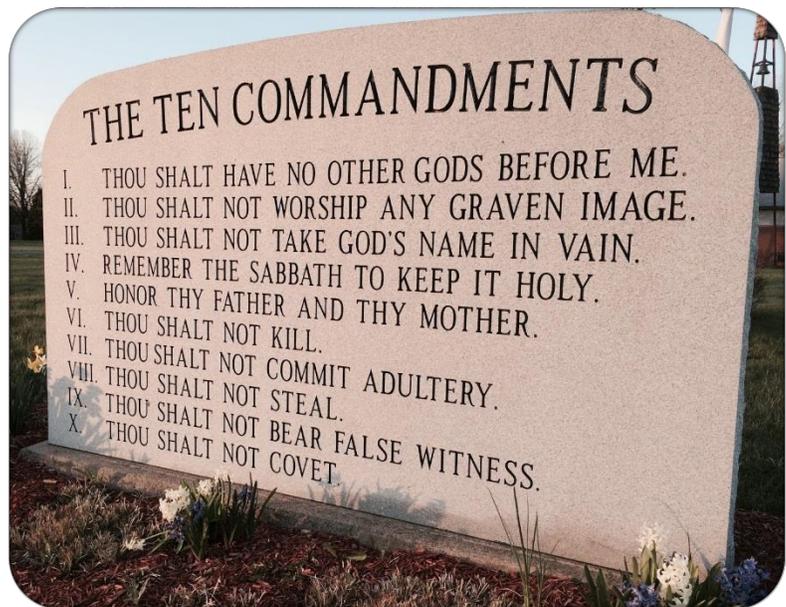
Begin to start thinking through where do I stand and where am I lined up with what God wants. I don't want to be doing things that are an affront to God. Things like having other gods before Him, having idols before Him. Misusing the name of God, the third commandment.

Like texting
"OMG"

Now, you talk about stuff that's like heavy and yet prevalent in our time, and yet things that no one ever thinks anything of.

Keeping the Sabbath, honoring your father and mother, commandment #6 – do not murder, 7 – adultery. You know, the New Testament really puts a stamp on these very things again where it says hey listen, let's go a step further, because we live in a time where we're like, "I've never murdered anyone," you know. And Jesus says¹ wait a minute, no, stop, back up a minute, if you've hated someone, you've murdered them; if you've lusted after someone, you've committed adultery in your heart. It says don't steal, don't bear false testimony, do not covet.

The Apostle Paul in the New Testament, Galatians Chapter 5 starting at verse 19, I mean, he gives a – it's almost an exhausting the list. I read this verse earlier, I'm going to read it again right now because I almost wanted to stop halfway through because it was like, whoa, this is getting heavy. Because this is what *should* happen—our sins *should* get heavy, they *should* get weighty, they *should* get so weighty that it causes us to go, "I need a Savior. I need Jesus. God, I'm not who I ought to be." That's why these people were coming to John it says here² they were coming in from "Jerusalem and all Judea and



¹ See Matthew Chapter 5

² Matthew 3:5-6

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the region all around Jordan"—we're talking about a big area—and they're all coming in "confessing their sins" because they realized something was going on. Some move of the Spirit was happening to let them know that no, I am a sinner, I need to confess those, I need to turn from my sins and turn towards God. Let me read this verse in Galatians 5:19:

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh

— Remember, when we get saved we still carry around this old body of flesh. We need the Spirit of God to move in our lives and to change it. In and of ourselves we'll never change, but when you come to Jesus, God gives you His Holy Spirit; it transforms you, it changes you, you're never the same again. If you've never had that happen and you've just been beat up by sins and you keep on going around the same circle, give your life to Jesus. Listen to these:

are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries,

— at this point I want to say can we stop now? —

dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

— all sorts of other things, then he says:

I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things

— and this is the part of the verse we hate to read:

will not inherit the kingdom of God.

– GALATIANS 5:19-21 (ESV)

What do I need? I need the transforming work of Jesus Christ in my life to forgive me and to save me and to transform me.

I love Titus Chapter 2, verse 12. If you write notes, write that one down. You're going to cover a bunch of this stuff in your group this week, but write down Titus 2:12 which is:

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

– TITUS 2:11-12 (ESV)

At what point have we ever come to the place in our lives where we go, "I'm horrified by this ungodliness; I'm horrified by these worldly passions and these desires in me"? It's why those verses from Galatians earlier in Chapter 5 say this:

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

– GALATIANS 5:16-17 (ESV)

Turn from sin, turn towards God can only be done when Jesus has forgiven you and given you new life and His Spirit resides in you, which comes at the time of salvation and transforms you so that you're able to overcome those things.

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And here's a great illustration. You've probably heard the story of the prodigal son, well known, Luke Chapter 15, Jesus telling the story. Father has two sons, younger son says, "Dad, give me the money; I want my inheritance, I want it now. I just – I can handle it, I've got this." He takes his money, takes his inheritance, he goes out and he lives crazy, wild life. You talk about worldly passions, everything he could ever imagine he did. And guess what, when he does that he has the money to buy friends and buy influence, go where he wants, do what he wants, and he has the time of his life.

And then Jesus tells them the story and says hey, famine hits the land, the money's used up, the kid's hungry and, you know, he's too proud to do, you know, go home to his father so he begins to feed the pigs. And he finds himself so hungry he ends up eating the pods that the pigs are eating, and it's there as he's in this pig mess he realizes in his mind, *I could go home; the servants in my dad's estate are better taken care of than I am here in this pig mess.* And he says you know what I'm going to do, I'm going to go home and I'm going to say Daddy, Father, I have sinned. He's not even going to ask to come back to as a son, he says I'm just going to say this, make me a servant. He's thinking to himself I've lived my life long enough to know that I've got to live in subjection to him, I can't expect anything.



And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. – Luke 15:16 (ESV)

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

– LUKE 15:17-19 (ESV)

Now here's what's not said in the story. The story does not say he takes a couple of days to clean the mess off of his feet and to get his act back together. No, it says he heads home, he heads home to his daddy. And here's the message I want you to hear here brilliantly is just that his dad is waiting – waiting for him to come home. It's a picture of the Father in Heaven waiting. And the son says father, I have sinned. I'm no longer worthy to be called a son, make me a servant. I can't do this, I need to be under your care, I need to be under your watch care, I need to be under you. I need to be under authority. The beauty of this thing is the father accepts him in—this is Jesus sharing this story so we understand—the father accepts him in and throws a party for him.



And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. – Luke 15:20 (ESV)

Now I want to explain something to you that's on my mind, was on my heart this week. My concern in our current-day Christianity is Christianity is all about a party. It's all about God's good, He's got you, everything's all happy-clappy, and all this kind of stuff, and we skip this first part where we come back and we go, "Father, I have sinned. I am not worthy to be a son. I am so far from what You have called me to be, and what I've done has been an affront in your face. What I have done is I have wasted what You have given to me. Father, forgive me, I want to be under your authority." We skip all that, we don't like that, we don't want that. We want to come basically going, "I'm good, but hey, if I can have a

little bit more, maybe that kingdom, maybe I can have blessings in my life, bring it on, God." But that's not the story in the Bible.

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repent, repentance - to turn away from sin and start to follow God completely. To repent means to change the direction of one's life.
Jeremiah 5:3-4
Matthew 3:1-12
Mark 1:14-15
Acts 20:21
2 Corinthians 7:10

The word repentance is written over and over in the New Testament of our Bible—you're going to get to do it in your group this week, it's just to google that word "repentance" in the Bible and to just begin to list down all those places. Following Jesus, following God begins with repentance; coming before God saying, "I am a sinner." When we read about these people coming to be baptized for repentance with John, this was new. The Jewish people in that time they hadn't done that; the Gentiles came to do it, that's how they entered into Judaism, but the Jewish people didn't do that. They had it all together. They had Abraham, they came up through this religious line, everything was fine.

Hey, here's something I know about a lot of us in this room, a lot of people in this area, there is a lot of false security under the guise of "I grew up in this religion," "I grew up in this religious system, I'm fine," and Jesus wants us to come before Him in repentance and confession and to say, "Jesus, I need You. I need You for everything inside of me." The ruling class at that time is just like Exhibit A of this type of thing. The Pharisees keep all the laws and all the rules and they actually believe in the supernatural. Sadducees—by the way, these two ruling classes of religious people were always against each other until Jesus comes along and becomes the thing that unites them—the Sadducees, they're not much interested in the supernatural.

So, hey listen, please understand, among the religious elites of our time, the religious people who are depending on their heritage, there are some that believe in the supernatural and the spiritual but they're only just believing in it because it was their heritage. There's others who say there is no God, they don't believe in the supernatural, nonetheless their credentials are not legit; just because they can point to something somewhere in history does not mean that they are walking with God today and have a work of the Spirit in their lives today. And when they arrive these Pharisees and these Sadducees in Matthew Chapter 3 we read in verse 7:

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism,

— by the way, they're coming to figure out what's going on. They were sent, they were saying what's going on out there in the wilderness of Judea. John looks at them and he calls it the way it is:

he said to them, "You brood of vipers!"

— snakes, you're not legit, you're fakes. You don't say that to the religious elite! You don't say that to the church fathers and powers of the time! John doesn't care because he knows what the heart is. These aren't repentant people, these aren't people that realize that I am nothing without Him. They think they are *everything* with their rules. They think they're everything because they've thought out all their system and all their plans. Our society creates systems and plans that say this is how you behave, this is how you look good, this is when you can get the opportunity to be seen appropriately on social media. The society dictates that and the society at that time led by these religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, dictated that and John yells out, "*You brood of vipers!*" —

Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

— and then he says these words, they're fascinating, and words that we need to keep in our mind, he says:

⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

– MATTHEW 3:7-8 (ESV)

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You see, the problem we have is we have this very small view of sin. It's like it's not that bad, it's no big deal. I've read off those Ten Commandments, I read those verses from Galatians 5, and by the way, there's a whole bunch of other lists, you can google those lists, too, lists about sins in the Bible. And we're yeah, no big deal. Those sins were the offenses that we had against God that hung Jesus on the cross. The only way to overcome them so that we could have relationship with God was that He would hang and die and suffer and take on death on the



He sacrificed himself for all people to free them from their sins.

- 1 TIMOTHY 2:6a (GW)

cross to pay the penalty that would have come to us otherwise because of that. When we belittle our sin we make the cross very, very small. It's why for many it's not real moving when we take communion, "Okay, yeah, He forgave my sin, no big deal." No, it's a real big deal.

Jesus paid it all and without Him I am nothing.

Now I wrote that phrase down this week, looked up the exact words of that old song, "Jesus Paid It All":

*Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.³*

Matthew Chapter 3, verse 8, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance." Listen to Luke 15, verse 7:

[JESUS SPEAKING]

⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

- LUKE 15:7 (ESV)

And the church, I'm afraid to say, we're that ninety-nine who come in and we go through spiritual actions, behaviors, and activities, and we have no repentance. We think we're pretty good. We sing the songs and we go through the motions. And I believe God is calling us to repentance to realize that we are sinners saved by grace and that we need a Savior and we come to Him. Second Corinthians 7:10 says:

¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

- 2 CORINTHIANS 7:10 (ESV)

You see, the only way we can come to Jesus is to say, "I'm a sinner. I need You." C. S. Lewis said it so well: "As long as he does not convert it into action, it does not matter how much he thinks about this new repentance."⁴ We can talk about it, but until we come to a place going, "God, I need You." For these Pharisees and Sadducees it was a commitment to their historical origin of their faith, and Jesus is calling us to Himself. And John, as he's making straight the path for the Messiah, for the Savior, for Jesus, as he puts into motion His Kingdom he says we need to get ready and we need to be like that prodigal son and say, "Father, I have sinned. I can't figure this thing out on my own. Look what I made of myself. It looked like it was fun for a while, looked like it was all figured out for a while, everyone thought I was the top of the world, but I've come to this place in my life." And it normally happens, you

³ Lyrics accessed at https://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/r/religious_music/jesus_paid_it_all.html#!

⁴ C. S. Lewis quote accessed at <https://novels80.com/the-screw-tape-letters/chapter-13-136528.html>

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know, all of a sudden you get sick, or all sudden, you know, you have a relational blow up, a job failure, something going on in your life where all of a sudden you go, "God, I need you." And all of a sudden you realize God, I've tried this thing all by myself. I'm a sinner and I turn from my sin and I turn toward God.

And each of us in this room this morning we sit here we – I just beg us to be a church that is confessing our sins. A church that is repentant, a church that is broken over our sinfulness, and yet a church that understands this verse from Corinthians that I love. It's your kindness, O God, that leads us to repentance.⁵ Because He loved us so much that He hung and died on a cross to forgive us because He loves us so much. He doesn't want to be separated from us.⁶ We come legitimately saying who we are and where we find ourselves.

We say Jesus, I want all of You. I want all of You. I want to turn from my sin – and you name that sin. And maybe something's popped up in your mind this morning, something's come into to your heart and you're going [SHAKES HIS HEAD, EXHALES]. He's forgiven that sin, you don't have to live with it anymore. You repent of it, you turn from it, and you live your life turning to God with the fruits of repentance. It's game changer. It's a thing that we don't talk about enough in this room. We've got to talk about it. It's part of salvation, it's part of living the godly life, it's part of living victorious in Jesus Christ.



Here's what I picture, there's a moment coming and we as a church are getting excited about it, we're seeing signs everywhere that Jesus is about to come and set up His Kingdom. And oh, that will be a glorious day! Oh, when all this darkness, when all this fighting, when all this enmity, when all this yuck is over and King Jesus comes and sets up His kingdom and sets up His throne and everything is made right. I want to be ready for Him. I want to be a child following Him. Let me pray for you.

Jesus,

I pray for each person in this room, may we be a church that's repentant. May we be children of yours saying, "Father, I've sinned, I can't do this on my own." Lord, I pray for those who have never made that decision to follow You. I pray this morning they'll do it for the first time and say, "Father, I've sinned. I hear your glorious gospel of grace through the cross, forgive me of that sin. I want that forgiveness of sin. I want Jesus in my life. I want your Spirit to help me overcome this. I want to turn from my wicked ways. I want to turn to You, God."

Lord God, for the rest of us, it was as if we accepted that forgiveness of sin and then went back to living the way we were. And You never wanted to leave us the way we were, You want us to become who You want us to become more like You every day. And so we long to become more like You, Jesus, today. And so, Lord, I pray as each one of us makes very specific decisions in

⁵ Romans 2:4 (ESV): Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

⁶ 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV): The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

TURN FROM SIN, TURN TO GOD

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our life to turn away from sin and turn towards God, I pray that our repentance would be lifted up to You as our worship before You knowing that we all need You. O Jesus, I need You. You paid it all; all to You I owe.

O Lord, let that well up inside of us – let it change us. We love You, Jesus. It's in Your Name we pray. Amen.

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