

Demands Of Repentance - The Seven Churches Of Asia

Luke 3:7-14

Demands of Repentance

Paul understood to preach the gospel meant the call to *“repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.”* (Acts 26:20)

John demanded, *“Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.”* (Luke 3:8)

Understanding such demands should prompt the questions: *“Then what shall we do? ... And what about us, what shall we do?”* (Luke 3:10-14)

The demands of repentance depend on the sin involved – the multitudes, soldiers, and tax-gatherers understood that.

Jesus’ Message To The Seven Churches Of Asia – Revelation 2-3

Said to all the churches:

1. *“I know your deeds (works; ESV) ...”*, Jesus sees as no one else.
 2. *“To him who overcomes ...”*, we are in a spiritual battle we can win.
 3. *“Repent ...”*, said to 5 of the 7, however ...
 4. *“He who has an ear, let him hear ...”*, it’s up to us to listen.
- Jesus is inviting us to listen. Revelation 2:7, *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*



The Demands of Repentance in Ephesus

1. Sin of having *“left your first love”*
 - The church in Ephesus *“at first.”* (Acts 18:19, 24; 19:8-10, 17-20). Still had positive attributes.
 - They had *“fallen.”* (2:5; 1 Corinthians 10:12)
 - Are we aware of the effect of the world on our love? (Matthew 24:12). Symptoms include:
 1. Growing weary of service and worship: (Malachi 1:13)
 2. Serving and worshipping w/o the heart: (Isaiah 29:13)
 - Repentance demands:
 1. Put God first. (Matthew 6:33)
 2. The need to *“do the deeds you did at first.”* (2:5)
 3. Remember and start loving again. God remembers. (Jeremiah 2:2)

The Demands of Repentance in Smyrna

2. Temptation of focusing on **treasures on earth rather than in heaven** and being unwilling to suffer.
 - In terms of physical wealth, they were in *“poverty.”*
 - In terms of the treasures in heaven, they were *“rich.”*
 - They suffered *“tribulation”* because of their faith and were *“about to suffer”* yet more. (Matthew 5:10; 1 Peter 3:14-15)
 - What if they allowed their suffering and tribulation to take their focus away from their spiritual treasure?
 - If they did, or we do, then repentance demands:
 1. That their focus return to be on their spiritual wealth and their *“treasures in heaven”* (Luke 12:33-34) and the things above (Colossians 3:1-2).
 2. Investing themselves in the cause of Christ and making spiritual investments (*“sweat equity”*).
 3. Remembering what you’ve already entrusted to the Lord (Hebrews 10:32-39; 2 Timothy 1:12).

The Demands of Repentance in Pergamum

3. The sin of *“hold(ing) to”* false teachers/teaching.

- Repentance demands they stop *“holding”* to such teaching. (cf. Matthew 14:4).
- Repentance is having the conviction to:
 1. **Silence false teachers** (Titus 1:11) and no longer give them a forum to spread it (Galatians 2:5).
 2. **Refute their false doctrine** 2 Timothy 2:24-26
 3. **Expose the error and its consequences** and refute, silence, and expose them. (Titus 2:16)
- The demands of repentance include:
 1. To personally search the scriptures. (Acts 17:11)
 2. To test the spirits. (1 John 4:1)
 3. To love truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:10)
 4. Immediate return to the pattern. (2 Timothy 1:13)

The Demands of Repentance In Thyatira

4. The sin of tolerating sin and immorality. (2:21-22)

- *“Tolerate”*- “permit, allow, not to hinder” (Thayer) - Interesting, Greek word most often translated “forgive.” (1 Corinthians 5:1-7)
- Demands rejection of the standards of the world.
- We can’t forgive or tolerate what God has defined as sin. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- Repentance demands distinction and separation. (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1)
- *“Walk no longer ...”*(Ephesians 4:17)
- Repentance through salt and light.

The Demands of Repentance in Sardis

5. The sin of living on reputation only while being **spiritually asleep**. (3:1-6)

- Repentance demands we
 1. *“Wake up”*- (Mark 14:38; 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8)
 2. Strengthen what remains - warning of atrophy. *“About to die ...”*(3:2)
 3. Complete our work and finish our race. (2 Timothy 4:7; Luke 14:28-30)
 4. Remember what you have been taught and heed. (2 Peter 1:12-15)
 5. Stay hungry! (1 Peter 2:2; Matthew 5:6)

The Demands of Repentance in Philadelphia

6. The brethren in Philadelphia were also not told to repent.

- But what would they need to do if they failed to take advantage of *“open doors”* that were put before them?
- Repentance demands we learn and grow to exercise wisdom and *“make the most of the opportunity”* (Colossians 4:5) and that we *“lift up your eyes and look”* (John 4:35).
- Failing to take advantage of open doors will hamper our ability to *“hold fast”* (3:8, 11)

The Demands of Repentance in Laodicea

7. The sin of **indifference** - of **becoming lukewarm** and feeling that we have need of nothing.

- Buy gold refined by fire and become properly clothed. (3:19)
- Repentance demands we either choose to serve the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, or serve someone else. (Mark 12:30; Joshua 24:15)
- Repentance demands we:
 1. Look in the mirror and recognize our nakedness. *“So that you may see ...”*; *“See clearly ...”* (Matthew 7:5)
 2. *“Run in such a way that you may win”* (1 Corinthians 9:24).
 3. We become *“zealous”*- *“according to knowledge”* (Romans 10:2)

Demands of repentance

- It’s not a matter of if we need to repent, but whether we *“hear what the Spirit says to the churches”* and bear the fruit God expects of us.
- Repentance demands of us that we:
 - Return to our first love.
 - Focus on our spiritual wealth.
 - Maintain doctrinal purity, moral purity, and spiritual alertness.
 - Make the most of our opportunities.
 - Run our race with zeal.

The spoils of victory

- The tree of life which is in the paradise of God (2:7).
- A crown of life ... will not be hurt by the second death (2:10-11).
- Will not erase his name from the book of life (3:5).
- Will grant to sit with Jesus on His throne even as He sat down with His Father on His throne (3:21).