

## Doctrine of Repentance (Thomas Watson, Banner of Truth)

- The two wings by which we fly to heaven are faith and repentance.
- “Moist tears dry up sin and quench the wrath of God.” (7)
- “Either sin must drown or the soul burn.” (8)
- “It is better to go with difficulty to heaven than with ease to hell.” (8)

### 1. A Preliminary Discourse

#### 1. Repentance is necessary for salvation

1. “Repent and turn to God” (Ac. 26:20)...(not clear if faith or repentance comes first)
2. “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mt. 3:2)
3. “Repent therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out” (Ac. 3:19)
4. “Repent of this thy wickedness” (Ac. 8:22) [imagery, as Paul swam to shore on planks of ship in Ac. 27:44, so with Adam we suffered shipwreck and plank of repentance is only way to heaven.]
5. Christ’s first sermon/word “repent” (Mt. 4:17)
6. Christ’s last word “repent” (Lk. 24:47)

#### 2. How does repentance come about?

##### 1. By word

1. Word preached brings it about (Ac. 2:37)
2. Word like hammer to heart (Jer. 23:29)

##### 2. by Spirit

1. Spirit takes repentance to some and not others (1Jn. 2:20).
2. Some are like Jonah: their heart is tender and tears fall. Some are like dead to music

### 2. Counterfeit Repentance

#### 1. Terror

1. Ahab and Judas were troubled of mind. They felt some guilt.
2. Repentance depends on a change of heart.

#### 2. Resolution against sin

1. They say “I won’t sin anymore” (Jer. 2:20). Then watch what follows

#### 3. Leaving of sinful ways

1. But he may part with some but not others, like Herod and incest
2. He may part some sins only to find new ones
3. He may part with a sin because it is prudent at the time.

### 3. Nature of true repentance

1. This is gospel repentance. It is spiritual medicine made up of six ingredients
2. **Ingredient 1: Sight of sin**

1. You see sin for what it truly is. Prodigal came to himself (Lk. 15:17)

### 3. **Ingredient 2: Sorrow for sin**

1. “I will be sorry for my sin” (Ps. 38:18)
2. “Mourn” when they look upon him who they have pierced (Zech. 12:10)
3. “Sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart” (Ps. 51:17)
4. Signs of this: beating breast (Lk. 18:13), sackcloth (Isa. 22:12), pulling of hair (Ez. 9:3). Outward signs of inward sorrow.
5. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” (Ps. 126:5).
6. Six qualifications of godly sorrow
  1. It is inward. It is sorrow of the heart. Hypocrites disfigure their faces (Mt. 6:16). Ahab’s sorrow was outward (1Kings 21:27).
  2. It is ingenuous. It sorrows for the offense, not the punishment. Pharaoh was more concerned about the frogs and river of blood. David said “my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51:3), not the punishment for his sin.
  3. It is trustful.
  4. A great sorrow. But not all have same degree of sorrow. Some more rugged in disposition than others. Knotty piece of timber needs greater wedges driven into it. Also, sorrow should be suitable to the sin.
  5. It is joined with restitution. Zach restored fourfold (Lk. 19:8).
  6. It is abiding. Some weep like an April shower. Gone before you know it.

### 4. **Ingredient 3: Confession of Sin**

1. “Children of Israel stood and confessed their sins” (Neh. 9:2). Self accusing (2Sm. 24:17).
2. Some wicked men like Judas and Saul have “repented.” Not real.
3. 5 marks of genuine repentance
  1. **Voluntary**. the prodigal charged himself with sin before his father did (Lk. 15:18). Balaam only said “I have sinned” when he saw the angel’s sword (Num. 22:34).
  2. With compunction. He feels it and resents it. A heavy burden (Ps. 38:4).
  3. Sincere. Augustine confessed sin and heart whispered “not yet Lord.” Didn’t want to leave his sin too soon.
  4. Particularizes the sin. The wicked generalize. We go to the doctor and give the surgeon specifics.
  5. With resolution not to do them again. “Cease to do evil” (Isa. 1:16). Pharaoh “repented” but kept on sinning (Ex. 9:27, 34). Vomit of the soul. Conscience eased of burden. Now, don’t return to it.
    1. Confession is crucial. **Four kinds of wrong confession**

1. Those that hide their sins. Like Rachel hid her father's images (Gn. 31:34). If you cover, you'll not prosper (Pr. 28:13).
2. Those that confess by halves. You just confess parts.
3. Those that lessen their sins. Saul kind of confessed (1Sm. 15:24). Eve made excuses too (Gn. 3:12). They try to vindicate their sin (Jon. 4:9).
2. The Right kind of confession (that says, "indeed, we are condemned justly" Lk. 23:41)
  1. Confession giving glory to God (Josh. 7:19)
  2. Confession purges out sin
  3. Confession makes a way for forgiveness (Lk. 15:24; 2Sm. 12:13; 1Jn. 1:9).
  4. Confession should be easy. "Only acknowledge thine iniquity" (Jer. 3:13).
  5. **Confession should be to others.** Not like Catholics. In three circumstances:
    1. Scandalous sin that has or could make others fall. Confession should be as visible as the scandal (2Cor. 2:6-7).
    2. Confessed to God but conscience still burdened and has no ease of mind (Jms. 5:16). Confess to friend.
    3. Slandered another (Mt. 5:23-24).

#### 5. **Ingredient 4: Shame for sin**

1. Shame for their iniquities (Ezek. 43:10); "I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face" (Ez. 9:6). Prodigal: I'm not worthy to be called son (Lk. 15:21).
2. Nine ways sin is shameful.
  1. Every sin makes us guilty. Adam only sinned after sin.
  2. In every sin there is much unthankfulness.
  3. Sin makes us naked.
  4. Sin puts Christ to shame
  5. It is by special temptation of the devil
  6. Sin turns men into beasts. Isn't this shameful. Sinners called fox (Lk. 13:32), wolves (Mt. 7:15), asses (Job. 11:12), pigs (2Pt. 2:22). "A sinner is a pig with a man's head."
  7. Our sins may be worse than heathen
  8. Our sins may be worse than devils (they never sinned against example. First to sin, now example). How shame is ingredient for repentance:

1. Some have sinned away shame. "The unjust knows no shame" (Zeph. 3:5). Shameful to be shameless (Jer. 6:15).
2. Some glory in their shame (Phil. 3:19; Isa. 5:22).
3. We must blush over our sin (Ez. 9:6). The more we are ashamed now, the less we'll be ashamed on the final day.

#### 6. **Ingredient 5: Hatred of sin**

1. "Christ is never loved till sin be loathed." (45)
2. **How can true hatred of sin be known?**
  1. When a man's spirit is set against sin - if a great meal with great sauce is prepared, you still won't eat it if you hate the meat. When Satan dresses up sin with pleasure and profit, the humble won't take it if they are disgusted by the sin.
  2. **We'll oppose sin in others too**
    1. Rev. 2:2 - "you cannot bear with those who are evil."
    2. Jn. 2:15 - Jesus whipped the tax collectors
    3. Neh. 5:7 - Nehemiah rebuked the nobles for usury
    4. Ps. 101:7 - "He that works deceit shall not dwell within my house."
    5. To the godly, sin is like a thorn in the eye; to the wicked it is a crown on the head. Jer. 11:15 - "When they do evil, then you rejoice."
3. What is it about sin that should make us hate it?
  1. Sin is worse than sickness, poverty, death: "The sword of God's justice lies quiet in the scabbard till sin draws it out." (49)
    1. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (Ps. 119:71)
    2. And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to him, and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God. (2Chr. 33:12-13)
    3. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. (1Cor. 11:32)
    4. "When we commit sin, God withdraws his love."
      1. When David sinned, he felt displeasure of God. "Clouds and darkness are round about him" (Ps. 97:2).
      2. Greatest judgment God can give is to let man sin without control. "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust" (Ps. 81:12).
      3. This is like the man in the iron cage in Pilgrim's Progress. He was a flourishing professor and on his way to heaven but he

was pulled away by the pleasures of this world and now in despair and can't get out. Like Spira according to Watson.

2. Sin is worse than hell

1. God made hell. God didn't make sin. Sin is the devil's creature.
2. The torments of hell are a burden only to the sinner; sin is a burden to God.
3. Hell has some good: it executes divine justice. No good in sin.

7. **Ingredient 6: Turning from Sin**

1. Turning from sin is forsaking sin (Isa. 55:7), just as Paul put away the viper by shaking it into the fire (Ac. 28:5).
2. It should be so clear that others can discern it.
  1. Thus, it is called turning from darkness to light (Eph. 5:8).
  2. After Paul's conversion, all wondered at the change (Ac. 9:21).
3. So what really is turning from sin?
  1. Turning from sin with the heart. "Turning from sin is like pulling the arrow out of the wound; turning to God is like pouring in the balm."

4. Reasons to enforce repentance

1. God's commands it
  1. "He commands all men everywhere to repent" (Ac. 17:30).
  2. "Though God is more full of mercy than the sun is of light. yet he will not forgive a sinner while he goes on in his guilt."
2. God's nature will not allow communion with unrepentant sinner
  1. "What communion does light have with darkness" (2Co. 6:14).
  2. **Two kinds of sinners that will have difficulty repenting**
    1. Those long under Christian influence but no better (Hb. 6:8; Mt. 21:19).  
"There is little hope of the metal which has lain long in the fire but is not melted and refined."
    2. **Frequent sins while under conviction of the word and checks of conscience.**
      1. "They are of those that rebel against the light" (Job 24:13)
      2. "It is one thing to sin for want of light and another thing to sin against light."
      3. "It is not falling into water that drowns, but lying in it. It is not falling into sin that damns, but lying in it without repentance." (62)

5. Another exhortation to repent

1. It is necessary
  1. "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:5)
  2. ***"There is no rowing to paradise except upon the stream of repenting tears."* (63)**

3. "Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet."
2. It is for all people
  1. "Now God commands all men everywhere to repent" (Ac. 17:30)
  2. It is for great people. "Say unto the king and to the queen, humble yourselves" (Jer. 13:18)
  3. "None will find it more difficult to repent than hypocrites." (69)
6. Powerful motives to repent
  1. Great sins repented of shall find mercy
    1. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. 1:18)
    2. Saints often do same sins. Abe lied twice. Lot committed incest twice. Asa sinned twice at creature confidence. Peter twice feared. If Christ commands to forgive 70 times, he will too (Mt 18:22).
  2. Repentance is inlet to spiritual blessings
    1. "When their heart shall turn to the Lord their veil shall be taken away (2Cor. 3:16).
  3. Repentance ushers in temporal blessings
    1. "I will send you corn, and wine, and oil..." (Joel 2:19)
  4. Repentance staves off judgments from a land (Jon. 3:10; 1Kings 21:29)
  5. Repentance makes joy in heaven (Lk. 15:10)
  6. The day of judgment is coming (Ac. 17:30-31)
7. Reasons to repent speedily
  1. God commands all to repent (Ac. 17:30). Many are in hell now that purposed to repent.
  2. Now is the time (2Co. 6:2)
  3. The sooner you repent, the fewer sins you will have to answer for
  4. Dangerous to put it off (plants can be pulled up when young, but not with roots)
8. Seven results of repentance from 2 Cor. 7:11
  1. Carefulness
  2. Clearing of ourselves
  3. Indignation. David calls himself a fool and a beast (Ps. 73:22)
  4. Fear
  5. Vehement desire
  6. Zeal
  7. Revenge. Holy malice of sin. Seeks revenge against sin as Samson avenged on Philistines for eyes)
9. Comfort for Repentant sinner
  1. Your sins are pardoned
    1. When God pardons, he crowns (Ps. 103:3-4)
    2. Sins are many but forgiven (Lk. 7:47)

2. God will send to oblivion

1. "I will remember your sin no more" (Jer. 31:34)
2. He's cast sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19)
3. Sins are like lead, not cork.
4. He blots them out of the book (Isa. 43:25)

3. Conscience will now speak peace (2Cor. 1:12)

10. Ten impediments to repentance

1. You don't think you need it

1. "You say, 'I am rich, and have need of nothing.'" (Rv. 3:17)
2. "Wherein shall we return?" (Mal. 3:7)

2. People conceive it an easy thing to repent

3. Presuming thoughts of God's mercy

4. A supine (weak/spineless) sluggish attitude

1. "The had rather go sleeping to hell than weeping to heaven."

5. The tickling pleasure of sin

1. He who delights in sin can hardly pray against it.

6. An opinion that repentance will take away our joy

7. Despondency of mind

1. "There is no hope for me." They say, "there is no hope" (Jer. 18:11-12)
2. The Father of mercies (2Co. 1:3)

8. Hope of impunity (no consequences)

1. "He has said in his heart, 'God has forgotten: he hideth his face, he will never see it'" (Ps. 10:11).
2. "My Spirit will not always strive with man" (Gn. 6:3)
3. "I gave her space to repent and she repented not" (Rv. 2:21)
4. "Behold, I will cast her (Jezabel) into a bed (Rv. 2:22).

9. Fear of reproach

10. Love of the world

1. I have oxen to take care of (Lk. 14:18-19)

11. Means for Repentance

1. Serious Consideration

1. "I thought on my ways..." (Ps. 119:59)
2. You must think about how serious sin is. 20 evils in sin
  1. Recession from God (Jer. 2:5)
  2. Walking contrary to God (Lv. 26:27)
  3. Injury to God (New. 9:26)
  4. Ignorance

5. Desparateness
6. Filth (Jms. 1:21; like menstros cloth, Isa. 30:22)
7. Ingraditute (Hos. 2:8)
8. Debasing (Nah. 1:14)
9. Damage
10. Burden (Ps. 38:4)
11. Debt (Mt. 18:24)
12. Deceit (Pr. 11:18; like Jael with Sisera; first courts, then kills, Jud. 5:26)
13. Sickness
14. Bondage
15. Malignity
16. Vexatious
17. Absurd "When lust or anger burn in the soul, Satan warms himself at the fire."
18. Cruel (sin like crazy man who cut himself for jailer to kill himself, Mk. 5:5)
19. Spiritual death (Eph. 2:1)
20. Final damnation (Rm. 6:23)

2. Think on mercies of God