

April 12, 2021

*From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Matthew 4:17*

What does it mean to repent? The verb, repent, is an action that occurs deep within the human heart. It is to feel sorry, self-reproachful, or contrite for one’s conduct. Dictionary.com offers this definition: **to feel such sorrow for sin or fault as to be disposed to change one’s life for the better.**

Jesus was calling a world to repentance, to a place where each individual would be willing to change one’s life for the better and willing to accept the beautiful gift of redemption that He was making available to all through the cross.

Repentance is not something we can give to another person; it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is modeled through meekness and deference; encouraged through love and kindness, and activated only through the power and strength of Jesus Christ. *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9* Repentance occurs at a heart level within each individual – to allow Jesus to change the trajectory of their life rather than to reject His power and hold on to self will.

Repentance may be a gift, but it is one that we can pursue, just as we pursue joy, hope and love. Jesus said: *If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! Matthew 7:11.* The New Testament also states in John 1:9 that if we confess our sins, He is willing to **not only forgive us, but also to cleanse us** from all unrighteousness. Repentance is part of that cleansing, that Holy work of God that instills in us the regret and contrition for our former ways, along with the yearning desire to follow and obey Him. In His unfathomable mercy, Jesus offers us everything we need to live eternally with Him.

*This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In **repentance** and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. Isaiah 30:15*