Repentance and remission of sins preached

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Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Alex Murdo Macleod

[0:00] We may now turn to words in the chapter we read in the gospel according to Luke chapter 24, and we may again read verse 46.

Luke chapter 24, verse 46. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.
And ye are witnesses of these things. Especially the words in verse 47, from the beginning of verse 47, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.
These two blessings are the special subjects that I should like to fix our attention on this evening. They were spoken, as we have read, they were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ at the time of his departure from this world.
[1:32] That is, his departure as to his human and bodily presence. And surely a very special significance attaches to these words for that reason.

That as we read in this chapter, they appear to be just about the last words addressed by Christ passionately.
And in the flesh in this world to his disciples. And in order to save time, we shall just address ourselves to these special blessings of which the Lord spoke to them.
When he said that it was written. Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.
And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.
[2:59] First of all, then, a little on the blessing of repentance.

And I should like to look first of all at the importance attached to repentance in the word of God and by the word of God.
God. We find in scripture warnings issued against the hardness and impenitence of men's hearts. God. God. Points out. To men.
That they are hard of heart. Because in, as he says in one place, sentence. Against an evil work is not executed speedily.
[4:15] Therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. And now he says through the prophet Jeremiah.

Because ye have done all these works. And I speak unto you, rising up early and speaking.
But ye answered not. And he goes on to warn his people concerning the awful judgments that would follow upon their hard and rebellious resistance against so many warnings that he had sent to them by his servants, the prophets.
Therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers as I have done to Shiloh.
And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole city of Ephraim. Therefore he warns his servant, pray not thou for this people.
[5:40] Neither lift up crying or prayer for them. Neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee. That was a terrible judgment denounced upon any generation of people who were called by the name of God, who were known in the world as the people of God.

Do you remember when Christ went about preaching and performing miracles in the cities and villages of Judea and Galilee in the days of his flesh and humiliation?
On one occasion he began, we are told, to abrade the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done because they repented not.

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Woe unto thee, he said Korazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which were done in thee had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented in sackcloth and in ashes.
Because they repented not. He that being often reproved, says the wise man in the Prophets, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.
[7:16] And we often find in the Prophets, God issuing very positive warnings.

These were warnings against impenitence. We find him also issuing invitations, I should say, to sinners to come to himself in penitence.
In that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning and to baldness and to girding with sackcloth. And you remember how when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the world himself and began his preaching, he began by calling people to repentance.
Repent ye because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye therefore the same message, burden, comes through in the preaching of the apostles.
Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted up, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.
[8:26] We find in Scripture also the significance of the blessing of penitent hearts set before us in the way of promise. Divine promises uttered to those who turn from sin unto God.

The Lord is nigh unto them. What a precious promise must that be to a sinner who had been under threat, not only of condemnation, but of being cast forever from the presence of the Lord.
The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and savest such as be of a contrite spirit. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.
Lord, thou wilt not despise. And therefore we find that this blessing has been common in the experience of all God's people in every age and generation.
Remember how David wrote under the influence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit as a man convicted of his own sinfulness before God.
[9:45] Those psalms known as the penitential psalms, such as Psalm 32 and Psalm 51. These are probably the best known of David's penitential psalms.

And they bring to light to us the effects upon that man's heart of the spirit and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in bringing him to a condition of sorrow and mourning over his own personal sins as one who tasted of the grace and love of God and was made to realize in a very deep, profound sense the heinousness of sin in the light of God's goodness and who had his heart broken before God so that he poured out his sorrow to the Lord and came to a renewed discovery of the wonderful grace of God in the free pardon of all his sins.
Job answered to the Lord and said wherefore he said I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.
Scholars tell us regarding the nature of this blessing of repentance that there are two words in the Old Testament original languages in the Hebrew one of which in its root meaning means to sigh or to pant or groan and it came as a result to be used for someone lamenting something or being grieved over something and from there it naturally came to be used for penitence as a verb for repenting but the other word shuv is the one most generally used in scripture for the scripture idea of what is genuine repentance and the idea we are told by those who truly understand these original languages the essential idea in that word now it is very important that we should know and have a clearer understanding of these very meaningful and weighty teachings in the Bible because that is a way in which we can be enabled to discriminate between what is real and what is counterfeit and there is no duty more dining upon us than to try and learn as far as we are able to the distinction between reality and falsehood and that is especially in the area of salvation and of spiritual blessings that is what we ought to be bent upon in using whatever talent
God has given us with his own blessing that we should be enlightened in order to discover the difference between what is genuinely gracious work of God's spirit and of what is only a mixture of truth and falsehood having the appearance perhaps of reality the prominent idea in this other word which I referred is that of a radical change we are told in one's attitude towards sin and God it implies a conscious moral separation and a personal decision to forsake sin and to enter into fellowship with God it is employed often for turning from sin to righteousness if thou turn to the
[14:22] Lord thy God and shalt be obedient unto his voice it has a negative and a positive side you turn from one thing you turn from sin and you turn to something else something different something which is the very contradiction of what you previously followed you turn from sin to holiness you turn from unrighteousness to righteousness you turn from disobedience from the way

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of disobedience to the way of obedience to the commands of God if you turn unto me and keep my commandments and do them if the wicked turn not he will wet his sword he has bent his bow and made it ready turn Jeremiah says as he went up to his own back slidden generation with the gospel of

God's grace turn oh back sliding children saith the Lord for I am married unto you and I will take you one of a city and two of a family and I will bring you to Zion and the same idea is prominent in the New Testament language used especially in one of the two most commonly used words the idea of a true change which involves a return to God in a sinner being possessed of another mind another kind of mind than the mind he possessed previously in his sinnership in his state of rebellion against God a change in his will and in his purpose as well as in his opinion regarding sin now theologians and this might be helpful to us to get a clearer understanding of what is meant by repentance theologians see in genuine evangelical repentance three elements that bear upon the what you might say the very constitution of man's spiritual nature first of all they see in repentance what they call an intellectual element well anytime you hear in order to try and simplify these theological and psychological terms anytime you hear reference made to man's intellect it might help anyone to understand that there is there a reference to man's ability to understand or to and even to reason what is meant then by an intellectual element in man's repentance well there is meant that there is in man's mind new light on sin he he has made a discovery as to the nature of sin he has been given light surely on the heinousness of sin that he never had before now every one of us ought to question ourselves as we go on trying to follow through these lines of thought we should be questioning ourselves how we have
I had light upon sin as to its nature a light that has increased since it first shone in my mind and whose increase I can discern in this way that sin has become more and more heinous in my estimation it has become exceeding sinful I have begun to discover in myself light upon what God sees in sin I have begun to follow
God's thinking as that is expressed in scripture so that I have begun to realize that sin is far far removed from the vague concept that I once had of sin which did not lie very heavily upon my spirit at all it was as vague and light and eerie that it really had no influence upon my life at all has sin become something great in my estimation great in its guilt great in its filth great in its power great in the evil effects that it has had on mankind and damnable and hell deserving as it is in sight of
God have I begun to get light on the law of God have I begun to see better the nature of the law of God as a reflection of God's holiness have I begun to learn something of the spirituality of God's commandments of their holiness of how just they are and how good rather than to regard them as an imposition laid upon is created by God as a tyrant who sets such bounds before their lives that they are not free to live as they would wish to live as my darkness regarding the spirituality holiness the justness and the goodness of
[22:02] God's law been dissipated so that I now see that my view was wrong that my understanding was totally the reverse of truth regarding the law against which we have sinned have I liked upon my own accountability to God have I begun to live in the light of that truth that God my creator is my lawgiver and my judge and that I must render an account to him and receive from him according as I do in the body whether my deeds were good or bad well there is an intellectual element in genuine repentance there is light in the understanding of those who have the grace of repentance and then there is an emotional element we all know how there can be glimmerings and very bright glimmerings of light in one's understanding with very little effect upon a passion's feelings and sometimes with unsound unhealthy and wholesome effects upon one's feelings there can come a change in one's view of sin for example which leads only to fear and dread of punishment you remember the effect upon

Judas of light entering his understanding regarding the heinousness of what he had done I have sinned he said in that I have betrayed innocent blood but Judas went and hanged himself because his light led him not to penitence but he has godly sorrow in his soul over his sin and and thirdly there is what we call a volitional element and reformed theologians are wont to constantly lay a great deal of emphasis upon the will of man that is what you have to do with when you are talking about something being voluntary or involuntary you are dealing you are fixing your thoughts upon man's will and you remember that the bible speaks of penitence as something that has a radical effect in the soul of man something that affects the whole personality of man well the profundity the radicalness of the effect of penitence in the soul of man is reflected especially in a man's change of

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will whereas his will was bent before in one direction it is now turned in another direction a direction which is the very opposite of its prior direction and you remember
I hope you learned from the shorter catechism that this grace of repentance is a saving grace because amongst other things it leads to a man not only grieving over his sin and to hatred for his sins but he turns from them that is from his sins to God with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience that is fully intending and striving for new obedience there is a new version of the shorter catechism I wish every one of you would get a copy of it and give your opinion as to how strictly correctly it be wrote the teaching of the old the original one there is a change of will a man's will is renewed when he has a penitent heart you remember the woman we read about in
Luke chapter 7 she stood behind Christ you remember when she entered the house of Simon the Pharisee and when she came in we read how her tears began to flow possibly involuntarily her tears began to flow I don't think the penitent sinners are very eager to display their feelings but sometimes they are unable to contain their feelings according to the measure in which the spirit and grace of God works this grace in them it can overwhelm people so so mightily that they are unable to withhold their floods of tears and this woman let her tears flow they bedewed his feet with her hair possibly disheveled in token of her grief she wiped his feet and finding she was not repulsed she kissed his feet over and over again and she anointed them with the ointment which she herself of course had brought her eyes which once longed after earthly joys we find shedding forth very penitential tears we see her using hair which she no doubt once had displayed for idle ornament to wipe the feet of
Christ her lips which once had vain things or how many vain utterances that flowed from these lips they are no kissing the holy feet of Christ the costly ointment with which she once perfumed her own body is no used for another purpose it is offered to God as a sacrifice I came across these words of a poem by a sonnet by Hartley Coleridge she sat and wept beside his feet the weight of sin oppressed her heart for all the blame and the poor malice of the worldly shame to her were past extinct and out of date only the sin remained the leprous state she would be melted by the heat of love by fires far fiercer than are blown to prove and purge the silver ore adulterate she sat and wept and with her untressed hair still wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch and he wiped off the soiling of despair from her sweet soul because she loved so much there's a picture of a woman in the city who was a sinner but who now has a broken and a penitent heart what is the source of this blessing this grace well first of all we must say that it is not within the power of a sinner to work himself into a state of penitence before
[31:14] God the people I say says turn not unto him that smited them neither do they seek the Lord of hosts harden not your hearts God says as in the provocation Paul speaking of hardened sinners as they are naturally declares that after their hardness and dim penitent hearts that treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God oh how cruel we are to ourselves when we are called to penitence we choose rather to treasure up wrath for ourselves against the day of wrath it doesn't come from the persuasive power of others or how often you have been told to repent to turn from sin to

God not even God's own warnings through his terrible providences can bring about penitence not even the coming of Christ amongst men of itself can bring them to penitence the light shineth in the darkness we are told by John and the darkness comprehended it not and this is the condemnation it is said elsewhere in John that light is come unto the world and men love the darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil when a sinner repents it is the effect and result only of the grace of God of the grace of God God bestows upon a sinner a covenant blessing a blessing set apart aside by
God in the counsel of redemption in the covenant of grace from everlasting he bestows upon a sinner a blessing that was bought at a great price purchased by Christ's blood he gives a blessing that Christ possesses as it were in the fullness of life in the unction without measure of the Holy Spirit that he has in his glorified state and which he ministers by means of his intercession and his office as the high priest of his people through the Holy Spirit who comes to indwell the heart of a sinner so that all glory for every moment of penitence and every tear spiritually shed by a gracious soul belongs to
God in Christ and not to any creature in heaven or on earth repentance and then there is remission remission which means deliverance from condemnation for their sins that repentance and remission be preached in his name a few thoughts regarding this precious precious blessing of God freely

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offered to sinners in the gospel just as surely as he calls them to repentance and bestows the grace of penitence upon them he freely grants them remission of sin and remission that God grants is remission a pardon a forgiveness that bears upon all of their sins now you have learned long since and heard so frequently the many aspects of our miserable state as sinners that we come into existence under the guilt of
Adam's first sin with the want of original righteousness and the corruption of our whole nature commonly called original sin and also that we have on top of all these the guilt of every sin that flows from that unholy condition in thought in word and in deed when God remits sin he gives remission that bears upon all the sinfulness of a sinner's state and you can easily see how no other kind of remission would be of much benefit to a sinner would it if some sins were forgiven and even one left unpardoned would he not have to endure
[37:15] God's wrath for that one sin of what benefit would the remission for all his other sins be you remember some of you do I'm sure the account we have in Leviticus chapter 16 of the day of atonement which God appointed in his church of old that the high priest was to make an atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel and because of their transgressions in all their sins and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness as if God were telling them that the provision made in the blood of atonement bore upon every aspect of their sinfulness and of their sins and even the pollution that attached to their holy things because of their sinfulness there was in the blood of atonement sufficient to wipe away all the stain and the guilt of all these sins and we have to remember that God remits sin willingly that he remits sin with delight we often and I am sure penitent sinners often are tempted with the thought of God as one who is reluctant to forgive their sins if he has any measure of willingness at all that there is on the part of God a greater measure of unwillingness and that pardon must be the result of constraining and pressurizing

God as it were against his will as if God were someone like us changeable or moody who is more inclined to wreak vengeance upon his creatures for their sins who is a God the prophet Micah asks on behalf of the church of Christ who is a God likened to thee what is so distinguishing about him a God likened to thee who pardones iniquity who passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of thine heritage who doth not retain anger forever because he delights in mercy he delights in mercy judgment is his strange word he says to Moses
Paul reminds the Romans I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion these words are not intended to convey the idea of unwillingness or reluctance on the side of God on the contrary what they emphasize is the fact that remission of sin stems directly and freely and sovereignly from the will of God and not from the will of any man righteous or unrighteous and I came across this in the writing of Professor Shedd an American theologian of last century who obviously was very highly educated and cultured and knowledgeable in the classics he says go into the ancient pagan world examine the theology of the
Greek and Roman mind and you will discover that the fears of the justice of God far outnumbered the hopes of the mercy that Plato and Plutarch and Cicero Tacitus were far more certain that God would punish sin than that he would pardon it this is the reason there is no light or joy in any pagan religion the unnaided human mind is certain that God is just but is not certain that he is merciful great uncertainty overhangs the doctrine of divine mercy from the position of natural religion only within the province of revealed religion is the uncertainty removed in other words it is because God was pleased to manifest his own glory as a savior of his people that there comes to light the fact of divine willingness to remit the sins of all who come in penitence into God's presence confessing their sins to him and
God's remission of sins we learn from his own word is a remission that is in a sense repeated continuous you remember that one asked Christ how often would he forgive the sin of a brother who sinned against him until seven times oh no Christ said I say not unto thee until seven times but until seventy times seven and those who have penitent hearts truly penitent hearts whatever other experience they have they all have this as a daily experience yea and early experience that they must turn to God for forgiveness but in some measure they discover that
[43:54] God still remains the same God who forgave them at the start that there is no God likened to him who still pardons iniquity who still passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage who does not retain anger forever because he delights in mercy and it is our mission that is to the glory of God it is to the glory of God no penitent sinner would desire God's forgiveness in any

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manner that stained the glory and majesty of God as a God of holiness and justice but if you are a penitent sinner looking tonight to God for mercy you believe

God's own word that God is glorified that his holiness and justice are glorified in the remission of your sin in a more glorious manner than God would be glorified in your everlasting destruction and is there a penitent sinner here tonight who wishes to know with all their heart the answer to the problem how can that be how can God be just and justify the ungodly you remember the words of Christ to the disciples just before he ascended to heaven out of their sight ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory why must
Christ suffer these things in order that God be glorified when he freely pardons all the sins of all his people to time's end God is glorified when he pardons sin and then what God I conclude with this thought what God hath joined together let no man put asunder and first of all you are to understand and I am to understand that I have no true warrant for entertaining the confidence that my sins are forgiven or remitted if I still have an impenitent heart for the simple reason that
God himself as it were joins together repentance and remission and I have no warrant to separate the two I have every authority to announce that every penitent sinner in the world tonight has free forgiveness from God I have every warrant to declare that every impenitent sinner in the world tonight is still chargeable with guilt before God what God has joined together let no man put asunder and for the penitent there is lasting comfort surely in that same fact if you have repented if you are confessing your sins before
God rest assured that God willingly yea with delight freely forgives all of your sins come let us reason together saith the Lord though your sins were as scarlet they shall be white as snow he said to Isaiah the prophet personally by the angel lo this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquities taken away and thy sin is purged and the prophet answers back at another pardon of his prophecy thou hast he declares with confidence thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back transgressed i will praise thee oh lord for though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away and thou comforted me i even i am he that blotteth thou thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins and i'm going to close with this one thought to let thee folly of hardness and impenitence of heart come home to you you remember the foolish virgins virgins their lamps were lit and there seemed assays and comfort as the wise who were with them until the discovery well you remember how the parable of the lord in the parable tells us that they began to seek oil for their lamps when the midnight cry had been made the bride groom cometh he had suddenly appeared he was coming they were too late the door was shut repentance is something urgent repentance is something not for tomorrow not to speak of next year or when you are old repentance is for now for now is the accepted time now is the day of salvation may god bless these thoughts to us let us pray to
[52:27] thou lord pour thy spirit into our hearts to thou give us a vision of the mercy thou hast shown in the sending of thy son and in the death of thy son in this world that we might be drawn to him and see in his death in his crucifixion the effect of sinning against thee that none less than thy glorious and only begotten son could rescue us as sinners from the terrible condemnation that rests upon us by nature O Lord do thou give us penitent hearts enable us to come with faith to seek thy forgiveness and to believe with thy people that thou dost cast the sins of thine own from them as far as is distant from the west and the glory shall be thine forever

Amen Amen

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