

## **Ezekiel 3:16-21—Part 2—The Watchman’s Message: Repentance**

### **Memory Verse**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

### **Revision: The gospel basics**

Last week we learned the gospel basics from various scriptures:

- **God’s heart for mankind is love and compassion:** God desires all people to be in relationship with Him because of His great love for us.
- **God created everyone to be in relationship with Him:** this is our purpose in life—our ultimate source of satisfaction, joy, peace, love, and contentment.
- **Adam’s sin caused all people to be born as sinners:** all people are born with a corrupted nature (in the nature of the fallen or sinful Adam), called the human or sinful nature.
- **God is holy so He can’t look upon sin:** God is perfect.
- **Sin has separated us from God:** we are born separated from God, as His enemies.
- **Humanly speaking, the situation is hopeless:** we can’t save ourselves—we *have a debt (penalty of sin) that we can’t pay.*
- **Jesus is the Lamb who took away the sins of the world:** God dealt with our sin problem by becoming sin for us—God Himself became the sacrifice or payment for all of our sins—*Jesus paid a debt that He didn’t owe.*
- **This gift of forgiveness and eternal life is received by both repentance and belief:** repentance being a change of heart towards God that results in us turning from sin and turning to God, **and** belief being our trust in the fact the Jesus’ blood, His giving of His human life as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, was the full payment of all the sins of all mankind.

This week we will take a closer look at repentance from sin and what this “change of heart toward God” is—what does it mean and what does it look like to have a repentant heart. As a reminder we are covering Ezekiel Chapters 3:16-21 and 33:1-9 in parallel as they are very similar.

### **Ezekiel 3:16-21 NKJV**

Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>17</sup> “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; ***therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:*** <sup>18</sup> **When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity [sin]; but his blood I will require at your hand.** <sup>19</sup> Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, **he shall die in his iniquity;** but you have delivered your soul.

<sup>20</sup> “Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and **commits iniquity**, and I lay a stumbling block before him, **he shall die;** because you did not give him warning, **he shall die in his sin,** and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>21</sup> **Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live** because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.”

## God sets the example, warning people of their sin

Last week we learned that God was the first “sin” watchman, when He was faithful to warn Adam of the consequences of sin (rebellion against God). After that God has been faithful to send prophets and priests to warn people of the deadly consequences of sin ever since. Remember, sin kills—if people don’t repent of their sins, then they will die in their sins. It’s that simple.

### **Jesus spoke often about sin and Hell**

When Jesus was on the earth, He consistently warned people about sin and the consequences of it—Hell. The gospel message is like a rose—it’s beautiful, but it has thorns. The fact that God loves us and has demonstrated such great love towards us is truly beautiful, but the humility required to first recognise and admit our sinfulness is painful. This is why the world will persecute true believers who are faithful to preach the whole gospel.

John 7:7 NKJV

The world cannot hate you [Jesus’ unbelieving brothers], but it hates Me [Jesus] because I testify of it that its works are evil.

### **The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin**

Part of the Holy Spirit’s role in the church age is to convict the world of sin.

John 16:8-9a NKJV

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> of sin, because they do not believe in Me;...

So we see the pattern throughout the Bible, God, because He loves us, goes to great lengths to warn us of sin and its consequences. God also sent many prophets (including Ezekiel) to warn people of sin and its consequences in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, God has provided pastors and teachers to warn the people.

## **The importance of Repentance—without genuine repentance no one can be saved**

Luke 13:1-5 NKJV

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, **“Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? <sup>3</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**

The first incident Jesus referred to is an incident where Pilate (a bloodthirsty and cruel Roman governor) murdered some Jews and added some of their blood to their temple sacrifices. The second incident Jesus referred to about the collapsing tower would also have been a well known event to those listening. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make here referring to these two incidents?

Firstly, notice that Jesus says of both groups of people who were suddenly killed, that they were not killed because they were worse people than anyone else. David Guzik's comments bring out the directness and brutal honesty of Jesus' teaching on repentance from sin:

*We normally think of some people as good and some people as bad and find it easy to believe that God should allow good things to happen to good people and bad things to bad people. Jesus corrected this thinking.*

*But Jesus' point was not that the Galileans in question were innocent; His point was that they were simply not more guilty [**worse sinners**] than the others. All were and are guilty.*

***Unless you repent you will all likewise perish:*** *In analysing the issue, Jesus turned His focus from the question "why did this happen?" and turned it to the question, "what does this mean to me?"*

*It means that we all may die at any time, so repentance must be a top priority. Those who died in both of these instances did not think they would die soon, but they did, and we can suppose that most of them were not ready.*

***Unless you repent.... unless you repent:*** *By noting the ancient Greek grammar, we see that Jesus here mentioned two kinds of repentance, and both are essential. Luke 13:5 (**unless you repent**) described a once and for all repentance [initial repentance]. The verb tense in Luke 13:3 (**unless you repent**) described a continuing repentance [following salvation].*

## **True repentance will result in godly fruit being produced in our lives**

Jesus continued His teaching on repentance by saying that genuine repentance will result in fruit, that is, a changed life. People around us should be able to see that we are different, that we are changing to become more like Christ.

Luke 13:6-9 NKJV (the continuation of the above passage on repentance)

<sup>6</sup> He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I **have come seeking fruit on this fig tree** and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup> But he answered and said to him, '**Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilise it.** <sup>9</sup> And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

"The fruit of our life shows what kind of person we really are. An apple tree will bring forth apples, not watermelons. If Jesus Christ has truly touched our life, it will show in the fruit we bear—even if it takes a while for the fruit to come forth" (David Guzik)

This parable illustrates repentance or the lack of. There are three main points Jesus makes:

1. Genuine repentance produces fruit (e.g. fruit of the Spirit, righteous living etc)
2. Although God is very patient (he waited three years), there will come a day of reckoning, when those who do not produce fruit (have not repented) will perish (be judged and sentenced to Hell for eternity—also see John 15:6).
3. God, the good and compassionate Gardener, does everything He can to get the tree (the person) to produce fruit (also see John 15:1-5).

"There is a time for felling fruitless trees, and there is an appointed season for hewing down and casting into the fire the useless [unrepentant or unfruitful] sinner." (Spurgeon)

## Characteristics of a repentant heart

We will now look at exactly what causes the change in my heart when I repent, turning from sin to God. How and why does our attitude or heart change toward God?

### **New attitude—from pride to humility (poor in spirit or spiritual poverty)**

The key here is that we must recognise our spiritual poverty. You might ask, “What do you mean by saying that I am spiritually poor?” It’s helpful to first look at what it isn’t; most people fall into the self-proclaimed good person category as described in:

Proverbs 20:6 NKJV

Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?

The *Living Waters, Way of the Master* evangelism course copies Jesus’ example of evangelism when Jesus talks to the rich young ruler (Matthew 19, Mark 10 and Luke 18). The *Living Waters*’ gospel presentation opens with the question, “Would you consider yourself to be a good person?” Of course, what do you think the answer almost always is when a person is asked that question? “Well of course I’m a good person!” Try it yourself. Ask someone on the street if they are a good person.

The rich young ruler is a stereotype of the prideful unsaved person who is full of themselves when it comes to their own estimation of their moral goodness. Let’s have a look and see how quickly Jesus lovingly destroys this young man’s concept of his own moral goodness by shining the light of God’s moral law (the ten commandments) into the young man’s heart, exposing the inky blackness of sin that he was previously blind to. Remember that the Ten Commandments are a summary description of God’s goodness, perfection, and purity, described in Romans 3:23 as *the glory of God* (“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23 NKJV)

Jesus was definitely not helping the young man’s self-esteem, but He was being honest with him. What is more important? Flattering someone by going along with the lie that they are a morally good person, thereby building up their esteem of their own sinful self (their self-esteem), or shining God’s moral law into their hearts and showing them the truth—their moral depravity. This moral flattery, this assumption that man is basically good at heart (they are born good but are corrupted by their environment), is one of the core beliefs of atheism and therefore psychology. Psychology is the enemy of the gospel—it teaches the opposite to what the Bible says about our sinful human nature—our school system and the world are basically inoculating people against the gospel. Let’s have a look and see if Jesus flattered the man or told him the truth.

Matthew 19:16-22 NKJV (*The story of the rich young ruler*)

Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

[*Meaning, “how good do I need to be to be good enough to be accepted by God?”—this is the thinking of a works based false gospel.* ]

<sup>17</sup> So [Jesus] said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

[*Jesus corrects the man’s understanding of good—if only God is good, then man isn’t—hint, hint!* ]

But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

<sup>18</sup> He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ <sup>19</sup> ‘Honour your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ ”

*[Jesus uses the moral law or 10 commandments as the measure of absolute moral goodness or perfection]*

<sup>20</sup> The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

*[Here we see just how blind the rich young ruler was to the reality of his sinful heart—he claimed to be morally perfect—to be perfect like God—to be as righteous as God]*

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

*[Here Jesus applies the first and second commandments to the young man—have no other gods or idols—Exodus 20:3-4]*

<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

*[What Jesus just revealed to the young man is that he was an idolator. Jesus asked him to give up his possessions (another way of asking him to repent of his sin of idolatry)—so he could be saved—but he couldn’t. Why? His money was more important than God and therefore more important than eternal life with God.]*

Again, here we see the familiar message—repent or perish. Remember how Jesus said, “if you keep your life you will lose it, but if you lose your life you will find it.”

Matthew 16:24-26 NKJV

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever desires to save his life [enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin in this world] will lose it [suffer for eternity in the Lake of Fire], but whoever loses his life [gives up the temporary pleasures of sin] for My sake will find it [inherit eternal life]. <sup>26</sup> **For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

Again, repentance is presented as a matter of eternal life and death. Notice the very important question; “**what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**”—for the rich young ruler it was his money. For other people it will be different things: family, career, romantic relationships, lust, sex, fame, power, or pleasure (self-indulgence). Notice that Jesus burst the young man’s self-esteem bubble and bruised his ego, but, in doing so, the hard ground of his heart was ploughed or softened so he would be more receptive to hear, receive, and understand the word of God in the future (see Matthew 13:1-33—the parable of the soils). We don’t know if he eventually chose to repent and receive eternal life, but at least now he had a chance to honestly evaluate his life, his heart, and spend time considering what was more important—forsake eternal life with God to enjoy this temporary life (money), or forsake this temporary life so he could enjoy eternal life with God.

You may ask, “how can people be so blind to their sinfulness?” The Bible gives the answer in:

Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV

“The heart is deceitful above all things,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?  
<sup>10</sup> I, the Lord, search the heart,  
I test the mind,  
Even to give every man according to his ways,  
According to the fruit of his doings.

Unfortunately, the Bible says that this blindness of our sinful nature, this spiritual pride, would not just be in the world, but also in the church. In fact, the bible says that this spiritual blindness would be the chief characteristic of the last days church, the church of Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14-19 NKJV

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,  
‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: <sup>15</sup> “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> ***Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked***—<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. <sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Why do you think there is so much sin in the church presently? People are living together without being married, there are homosexual leaders and marriage, transgender leaders, female pastors, drunkenness, adultery, divorce, lying, other sexual sins like pornography and lust, gossip, and greed (materialism). Have you noticed that the modern gospel doesn’t emphasise the sinfulness of man, the holiness of God, or repentance (turn from sin and turn to God). How many churches would be like Jesus and be honest with the enthusiastic yet unrepentant young man, teaching that if you are not willing to repent (turn from sin and turn to God) then you can’t be saved?

Today, we have a watered down gospel, commonly called the prosperity gospel, which minimises sin, and instead of the main message being, “you must be saved from sin”, the focus is now on what material benefits a person can receive in this life (health, wealth, happiness etc), to attract them to the church. People are encouraged to pray the sinners prayer, but not to repent. Do you think that many of these so-called believers are actually saved? Do you think that as a result of this watered down gospel that many churches may be filled with false converts—people who have made a profession of faith but have never repented? We’ll come back to this next week.

Here is the truth concerning the moral condition of mankind. This describes the sinful human nature of all people. Yes, Christians have a new nature, but they also still have the old—thus *the battle between the Spirit and the flesh*, the old man vs the new man. Romans 7 does a great job of describing this battle between our old sinful human nature and our spirit or new nature with its new desires to please God.

Romans 7:18-20 NLT paraphrase

And I know that **nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature**. I want to do what is right, but I can't.<sup>19</sup> I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.<sup>20</sup> But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; **it is sin living in me that does it**.

Summary: “nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful [human] nature.” So just how bad is my corrupted, fallen, sinful human nature?

Romans 3:9-20 NLT paraphrase

Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that **all people**, whether Jews or Gentiles [non-Jews], **are under the power of sin**.<sup>10</sup> As the Scriptures say,

“No one is righteous—  
not even one.

<sup>11</sup> No one is truly wise;  
no one is seeking God.

<sup>12</sup> All have turned away;  
all have become useless.

No one does good,  
not a single one.”

<sup>13</sup> “Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave.  
Their tongues are filled with lies.”

“Snake venom drips from their lips.”

<sup>14</sup> “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

<sup>15</sup> “They rush to commit murder.

<sup>16</sup> Destruction and misery always follow them.

<sup>17</sup> They don't know where to find peace.”

<sup>18</sup> “They have no fear of God at all.”

<sup>19</sup> **Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God.** <sup>20</sup> **For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.**

Romans is the clearest and most detailed presentation of the Gospel in all the Bible. Why is it so good? Because it goes to great lengths to explicitly show us why we need a Saviour—we need to be saved from the penalty, power, and presence of sin:

- The **penalty of sin** (Justification—just-if-I'd never sinned—happens the moment a person is born again): Jesus paid our sin debt when He died on the cross in our place (Romans 4:22-25, 5:9, 1 John 2:2).
- The **power of sin** (Sanctification—changing the believer into Christ's image—an ongoing process): Jesus victory over satan means that sin no longer has any power over us—we can have victory over sin (See Romans 6:1-23, 8:2, 13).
- The **presence of sin** (Glorification—receiving our resurrection body—a future event, at the rapture): one day we will be free from this body which is home to our sinful nature. This is why physical death is so glorious for the believer— we will be free from the presence of sin—we literally will never ever want to sin again (see Romans 8:18-25). The battle against sin will finally be over.

Notice what the purpose of the law is—“**to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God.**”<sup>20</sup> **...The law simply shows us how sinful we are.**” This is why when we are sharing the gospel we must use the (moral) law, the 10 commandments to show people how holy God is, and therefore in contrast, how sinful man is—only then will people see their need for a Saviour to save them from their sin.

So let’s explain the idea of spiritual poverty or moral bankruptcy. Spiritual poverty is a term used to describe just how completely corrupted my sinful nature is that I inherited from Adam (**And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature**—Romans 7:18-20), and my moral depravity (**all people.... are under the power of sin... No one is righteous— not even one**—Romans 3:9-20). Jesus teaches in the beatitudes that only the poor in spirit will inherit the kingdom of heaven (be saved). Did you realise that the beatitudes are actually a description of how a person is saved and then what happens as they are transformed in to the image of Christ? Let’s have a look at this beautiful and profound process of salvation.

Matthew 5:3-4 NKJV

- 3 “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*[Once I recognise and accept that I am a wretched sinner, morally bankrupt, guilty of countless crimes against God’s holy moral law, and therefore fully deserving of spending eternity suffering in the Lake of Fire (Hell), then I become **poor in spirit**. It is only in this state of utter hopelessness and despair that I will be willing to repent of my sins and then be able to genuinely cry out to God “please save me from my sins.” The result is “For theirs is the kingdom of heaven”, I am now saved. Jesus when He convicted the rich young ruler of his sin was trying to bring him to this place of being **poor in spirit**, of being humble before God.]*

- 4 Blessed are those who **mourn**,  
For they shall be comforted.

*[What happens when I begin to see just how morally poor, sinful, and depraved I am? I begin to **mourn** over my sin—my sin makes me sad—I grieve over the terrible state of my hard and sinful heart. What happens? I shall be comforted. Did you realise that the dark valley of repentance leads to the mountain of rejoicing and joy?—the more I choose to repent, the closer I draw near to God, and the more of His peace, love, and joy I experience—it is so worth the short term pain caused by repentance.]*

(If you would like to continue to see the progression of the life of the believer, I would recommend studying David Guzik’s commentary on this passage, Matthew 5:1-12. It’s available for free on the *Blue Letter Bible* app)

With this new attitude of being **poor in spirit** comes new priorities. Why? Well, once I realise that without God I am spiritually bankrupt, that I am completely and totally morally depraved, and because of that I am headed to Hell, I will be much more willing to make the hard choice to leave the things of this world behind so I can receive eternal life with God. Being **poor in spirit** naturally leads us to and explains this second characteristic of a repentant heart—new priorities. We also understand why those who have not had the law of God shone on their hearts to convict them of their sins are not **poor in spirit**, and are therefore not likely to choose give up the old life and put Jesus first.



## **New priorities—genuine repentance means putting Jesus first**

In Luke 14:15-24 Jesus gave the parable of the great supper (in context referring to the marriage supper which happens after Jesus second coming, and which only believers are invited to). There He described salvation as an invitation that must be accepted. Jesus then goes on to explain that salvation is more than just accepting an invitation—there is a cost. As someone said, “*salvation is free, but it will cost you everything.*”

Luke 14:25-33 NKJV (*The cost of accepting Jesus’ invitation to follow Him*)

Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, **he cannot be My disciple.** <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me **cannot be My disciple.** <sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—<sup>29</sup> lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. <sup>33</sup> **So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**

Notice the main point Jesus is making here. Three times Jesus repeats, “**cannot be My disciple**”. Jesus is defining exactly what it takes to be a disciple of Jesus, that is, what it means to be saved. This is important. You’re either a follower or disciple (learner) of Jesus or you’re not. You’re either saved or your not. We’ll talk about those who profess to be Christians but don’t produce fruit next week.

Firstly, is Jesus saying that to be saved we must first hate our father, mother, etc? No! Jesus uses the word “hate” to emphasise just how much stronger our allegiance, devotion, or commitment to Jesus must be than to anyone or anything else, *including ourselves*. Simply put, all other relationships must be of a much lower priority than faithfulness and obedience to Jesus.

“It is only in a comparative sense, and not literally, that the term can possibly be used; and to make this very clear, Christ said that we are to hate our own life.” (Spurgeon)

The important principle we learn here is that ***true repentance is the decision I must make to make loving and obeying Jesus the most important part of my life, my first priority.*** It’s so easy to make other things more important, e.g. family, money, career, ministry, friends, sport, entertainment etc. Some of these things are good things, but anything more important than Jesus, anything that we are not willing to give up for Jesus, *is an idol*. Remember that the rich young ruler decided that for him money was more important than God, therefore it was an idol that he was worshipping, and therefore it was his god. He couldn’t be saved because God demands all of us, our complete allegiance, our total surrender to His will.

Jesus goes on to say, using two different examples, that before a person repents, they must first ***sit down and count or consider the cost***, the pros and cons, of both following and not following Jesus.

The war example is especially significant. The king with less troops considers that he would lose the war. Therefore, he seeks terms of peace. *The spiritual application here is that, without repentance, without forsaking all, I cannot be saved, and therefore will end up condemned forever in Hell—in other words, I lose. This is the cost of not repenting.* I therefore seek terms of peace with God while I have the chance (in this life, before I die)—I surrender and accept God’s terms of peace—“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV).

This is important. Becoming a Christian is more than just saying a prayer, of making a profession of faith. Before we pray with anyone for salvation, we must make sure that they are aware of exactly what it will cost them—their flesh life, meaning that they will have to forgo living a life that seeks to please the desires of their sinful nature. To be saved, they must **be willing to**: give up that relationship with the non-Christian boyfriend or girlfriend, separate from the person they are living with but are not married to, give up addictions to drugs, alcohol, gaming, gambling, lust etc. The changes may not happen all at once, but a genuine Christian, someone who has genuinely repented of their sins and is born again, will over time change to become more like Christ.

It’s so important to remember that repentance for salvation is only “**be willing to change**”—I come to Jesus understanding that I can’t go to heaven as I am—and so I understand that God will have to change me *once I am saved*. Again, *it’s only once I am saved* that God begins to change or transform me. *As we learned last week, I don’t have to clean my life up or try to change before I ask God to forgive me—I am simply giving God permission to change me—I have humbled myself before God, saying, “Not my will but Your will be done, I give you control of my life. Jesus, You are my Lord (Master).”*

Philippians 1:6 NKJV

Being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you** [at the moment of salvation] **will complete it until** the day of Jesus Christ [the day I die].

Philippians 2:13 NKJV

For it is God who works in you [believers] **both to will and to do** for His good pleasure.

In summary, repentance is a costly business. If I do choose to repent, then yes, I will have to humble myself and I will have to forgo worldly things that bring me short term pleasure, but the eternal benefits clearly outweigh the short term cost.

### **Summary of the characteristics of a repentant heart**

- 1. True repentance (turning from sin and turning to God) starts with becoming poor in spirit (accepting that I am morally bankrupt, that nothing good lives in my sinful human nature). It is the purpose of the 10 commandments, God’s perfect moral law, to show that every person is guilty before God.**
- 2. True repentance is choosing to make loving and obeying Jesus the most important part of my life, my first priority—not my will but God’s will be done—having an attitude of complete submission/surrender to God’s will.**
- 3. True repentance is being willing forsake the temporary pleasures of this life so I can enjoy eternal life with God—the fruit of repentance is a changed life.**
- 4. Initial repentance and belief results in salvation. Continued repentance (turning from/dealing with sin) is required to maintain my fellowship with God. My obedience/repentance/turning from sin is motivated by my love for Christ because of what He has already done for me at the cross.**