

# God Is Giving You Time to Repent

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One of the doctrines that is in great need of definition today is the doctrine of repentance. And I find that one of the great practical areas of Scripture that helps us immensely to define and study the very nature of what true repentance is are these seven letters. All five that Jesus has something against, He calls to repentance. And Thyatira, three times the word "repent" comes up.

I want you to think about this. Whatever and however you define repentance, one thing is certain from each of these letters, including Thyatira wherever Jesus has something that He disapproves of. What is it? Brethren, you know what we've got going on in the world today. We've got this idea that, well, repentance is just a change of mind. Brethren, a change of mind is always going to change the way we think. If you change the way you think, you change the way you act. How you think, what comes out of the heart, what comes out of where you think, shows what you really believe in there, by how you act, how you live. You can't say that a man suddenly had a 180 degree turn in the way he thought that doesn't result in a 180 degree turn in the way he acts. That's make-believe. That's fiction. That doesn't happen. That doesn't work.

But people say that because what they really want to do is explain how somebody could possibly repent and their life not change. I'll tell you what, it doesn't work here. Does it? In each one of these cases where Jesus finds something wrong, or He finds a fault with these churches, He calls them to repent. And brethren, what He's saying every time is "stop." You lost your first love: repent. What does that mean? It means quit it! Quit losing your first love, go back to the first works and get it back. You've allowed false doctrine, repent of it! Quit it! Stop it! You can see that repentance as defined right here is that reality that there's a 180 degree roundabout. We abandon that which displeases Christ. We embrace that which pleases Him. That's clearly what repentance is here. You can't make it to mean anything else. You try to go through these five letters where fault is found, and try to make repentance not a change of life. A change of abandoning the sin, and pursuing the righteousness. You can't do that. Jesus is clearly calling for radical measures of change in these people's lives.

Now, notice this: Notice in Revelation 2:21 Notice this very carefully, it's one of the most instructive verses in our Bibles concerning the doctrine of repentance. "I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent." Oh, if that isn't instructive! Do you feel the weight of that? I gave her time to repent, and she won't. She refuses to repent. Do you see what Jesus is saying? She has opportunity. When Jesus says, "I gave her time to repent." That means she has the opportunity to do it if she wants to! The opportunity is there. If she doesn't do it, it's because she refuses to do it. He full well gave her the time... You see, brethren, what this tells us, is if you don't repent, it's because you refuse.

Sometimes we have people that say, "I want to be saved, but God isn't saving me." As though they're blaming God. Listen, as long as you have life, what does Scripture say? God's kindness is meant to what? Lead you to repentance. You can't say, "I want to be saved and God won't save me." What God is saying to you; What Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is saying to you, is I'm giving you time to repent, I'm pouring goodness and kindness on you, and I'm giving

you opportunity. It is meant to lead you to repentance. And if you don't repent, it's not because God won't save you. It's because you refuse to repent. You've got something in your life you will not give up that He hates. That is clearly what this is teaching us.

Brethren, we cannot say, "Well, my circumstances... if God wouldn't have put me in this situation, then I wouldn't have to have this sin, and I'm going to sit here, and I'm not going to repent until He changes this situation." Brethren, situation and circumstances are never reasons to repent or not to repent. He calls you to repent. He expects you to repent. He calls these churches to repent who are in suffering. Suffering isn't the issue. Brethren, He calls us to suffer without sinning. Suffering is not an excuse. We can't look and say, "Well, I'm going to wait until God does something, I'm going to wait until God brings revival."

Can you imagine them? Sitting at Thyatira? Things have gotten pretty bad here since Jezebel's been here. Things have been pretty bad since sister so-and-so got here. You know what we need is revival. What Jesus is saying is, "What you need is to repent!" I am giving you time to repent, and if you don't I'm going to bring such tribulation on you that you are not going to like it. You see the realities of this? And brethren, in all of these, the consequences for not repenting show directly on their responsibility. "If you don't repent, I'm going to remove the candlestick." Wow, that's drastic! You're going to take the light right out. "If you don't repent, I'm going to come against you, and war against you with the sword of My mouth."

And as we looked at last week, when you go out further into Revelation, brethren, it's the wrath of God. That's what that means. And here, I will kill your children. That's bad. And if MacArthur's right, and as I've suggested is right, this is a bed of hell, and this is horrible tribulation, because it is the tribulation of the fury and wrath of God, just like it says there in Romans 2. Brethren, you go through and you look at these churches when they are told by Christ to repent. The consequences of not doing it are severe. But that is nothing more than we find, nothing less than we find, when He was here on this earth and He walked and He taught, and He said unless you repent, you will perish. It's the same thing. Perishing is having Him come against us with the sword of His mouth. Perishing is having us thrown into the bed of hell. Perishing is having us thrown into this great tribulation. Perishing is having Him kill us. It's bad. And He gives us time. And brethren, what this is telling us, is you're never in a place to point the finger at God and say, "It was Your fault." God is saying, "I give you time." In other words, you have opportunity to do it if you will do it. Brethren, whether you profess to be a Christian or not, the consequences of not repenting are really severe.