

Journeying to the Cross: Jesus and Repentance

Luke 13:1-9 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 14 March 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Do you have a story about a relationship that made a complete turnaround (for the better)? What created or prompted the change?

Worship: [Acts 2:36-39](#) (Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation to you?)

Sermon Summary for [Luke 13:1-9](#) (Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.)

Jesus forged the path of repentance, giving us a way back to God. But what is repentance? It is a change of heart and mind that leads to deep, lasting life change. Our hearts turn back toward God. New decisions and choices are made; new actions are taken; new prayers are offered. We stop thinking that rebellion against our Father (or more subtly, avoiding Him) is a better path for our lives than worshipping God and obeying His commands. Therefore, to repent is to start desiring God more, to look to Him for our hope. This leads to new joys in God as we put off our patterns of rebellion, ignorance or lethargy... walking the way of the cross together with Jesus.

Where does repentance take us? Away from death, toward God. Repentance is life-giving because it is granted from God. It's also a grace just as much as faith is. The turnaround of repentance is therefore turning back to God – into His loving embrace. Our hearts begin to treasure and value God more than anything else. We come to see that God is greater in every way – greater in joy, in pleasure, in hope, in substance, in fullness, in lasting-value. And so, we need to hear Christ's call to repent (v3). It halts our pattern of relying on our own wisdom – the same human wisdom that says our Father doesn't want us back when we are far from Him. As Proverbs warns us: "*There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death*" ([14:12](#)). Christ refutes this lie, proclaiming the truth: that our God is willing to forgive more deeply and more often than we could possibly fathom. Godly sorrow leads to repentance because it knows that God is there to embrace us, to love us, to forgive us, to welcome us, to give us more of Himself with arms of grace open wide.

When should we repent? All the time! Repentance should always be the first order of the day. We need to take to heart Christ's statement that without repentance as a way of life, we are going to perish. It's why repentance is the subject of Martin Luther's first thesis (of ninety-five) – where he says that the life of every believer should be filled with repentance. This is especially true for us as Christians when we start comparing ourselves to others, feeling good about our righteousness when compared to theirs. In our pride, we think we deserve a good life – that we've done something to put God in our debt. These feelings run counter to the truth of our utter dependence on Jesus for His mercy. Because the best we have will always be tainted by sin and brokenness.

What does repentance produce in us? // Jesus tells us that we will bear much fruit: Fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of new life, the fruit of becoming more and more Christlike, the fruit of touching other people's lives in God's name and seeing change in their lives as God works through us. Because repentance turns the center of our being back toward God, creating more and more of the life God intends for us. All of this occurs when we are willing to open up our lives to our loving Father and repent.

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

What is repentance?

- How would you define or describe “repentance” to someone who had never heard the word?
- If repentance is “a change of heart and mind that leads to new decisions and choices”, how do we know when our repentance is genuine? (See [Luke 5:32](#))
- How are faith and repentance like the “socks” of the Christian life? Which do you think comes first – faith or repentance, or is it both at the same time? How are both acts of God’s grace?

Where does repentance take us?

- Jesus says if we don’t repent we will perish. What does Jesus offer to those who repent? (See [Prov. 14:12](#); [John 10:10](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#)) What is the difference between godly grief and worldly grief? ([2 Cor. 7:10](#))
- If repentance is a “turnaround”, what are we turning away from, and what are we turning toward?
 - Share stories of times when you have experienced this “turnaround.”

When should we repent?

- Is repentance a one time deal? Can it (or should it) be put off? Why or why not?
- Why does repentance often seem unpleasant? What are the whispers of the enemy at those times?

What does repentance produce in us?

- Discuss what the fruit of repentance looks like. (See [Acts 26:20](#); [2 Cor. 5:17](#); [Gal. 5:22-23](#))
- What kinds of new fruits of repentance do you long to see growing in you?
- How does it comfort/encourage you to know that God in His kindness leads you to repentance? ([Rom. 2:4](#))

Prayer

Make a commitment to spend a little more time in prayers of repentance this week in your group, privately or both. For the weekly Prayer Guide to use personally, with your group, or family click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Generous Hospitality

We are turning our attention to Generous Hospitality, which includes being generous with our presence/ attention, caring for others by listening to them, being generous with our story, being vulnerable, and being hospitable with our time, home and workplace. Though this means we have the opportunity to show hospitality to just about anyone, it boils down to living out Christ’s commandment to love our God and to love our neighbor [Mark 12:30-31](#).

Over these next few months, we’re challenging ourselves and all CGs to a common goal: making a concerted effort to know and care for those living closest to us. Our literal neighbors. To truly live out “the greatest commandment.”

As a resource, we are recommending *The Art of Neighboring* ([site](#) | [book](#)). It challenges us to get to know the eight households closest to our own. This alone would make a huge difference in our neighborhoods and is a wonderful way to practice generous hospitality. And this challenge is only a starting point; we hope that as we embrace it, we are motivated to find creative, purposeful ways to know and care for those God calls us to love. Let’s all begin by asking: *Which of my immediate neighbors should I introduce myself to today? How can I offer friendship to them?*

Some suggestions:

- Make a list of the 8 households that are closest to your own. As a first step, commit to learning their names.
- Add Neighboring videos (CG leader has videos) and discussion to your regular sermon discussion..
- Step away from sermon discussions to read and discuss the book and work together to put it into action.
- A good time to start would be after the Generous Hospitality Seminar on March 27th. Register [HERE](#)