

## **BUILDING FOR ETERNITY**

### **1. Repentance: A Part of our Life**



#### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a children's song that goes like this, 'The wise man built his house upon a rock ... the foolish man built his house upon the sand...' This comes from a story Jesus told. He is wanting to teach us an important truth.

In his story there are two kinds of builders. The first builds his house on the sand, where it is easy and quick to lay the foundations. This house will collapse when the floods come. The second man builds his house on rock. It is hard and costly work, and takes time to lay the foundations but when a storm comes the building stands.

The two builders are two types of people. The first is like the person who hears the words of Jesus but doesn't obey them, while the second is like a person who hears and obeys.

When we choose to follow Jesus it is important how the foundation is built in our lives, as we are not only building for this life, but for eternity. When a foundation is laid, great steel pillars are driven into the ground. The truths that Jesus taught are like these pillars. It is not enough to know these truths in our minds only. We need to put them into practise daily, so when storms come into our lives we will stand strong.

In this series we will look at some of these truths: Repentance, Faith, Baptism, Prayer, and more. Even if you have been a Christian for some time, it is good to check whether the foundations in your life are laid well.

#### **REPENTANCE**

The first foundation pillar that must be laid is repentance. We are told this in Hebrews 6:1. This was the first message that Jesus preached and also the first command that he gave. When Peter was preaching to the crowds who gathered after a lame man was healed, he declared, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Acts 3:19. The way we enter the Kingdom of heaven is through repentance.

*(Below are some questions you could discuss in the group. If your group is too large, then divide into several groups and appoint leaders. Allow 10-15 minutes to go through the questions, then meet together again and share your answers, before completing the study.)*

- a.) What do you think it means to repent? Can you think of any examples from the Bible where someone repented?
- b.) What are the things in people's lives that often prevent them from repenting?
- c.) What affect does it have in our Christian life when we keep hold of wrong attitudes or thoughts and say and do things that are wrong?
- d.) What difference does it make when we learn to repent of anything we have done wrong?

#### **1. What is the meaning of repentance?**

Not only was repentance the first message Jesus preached, it was also the theme of John the Baptist's preaching in Matthew 3. Let's look at what John taught.

- a. Repent Matthew 3:2

The word repent means to change one's mind, or to choose, to decide to turn away from sin and turn to God.

b. Confess Matthew 3:6

This is another word that is closely linked to repentance. It means to admit we are wrong and be truly sorry.

E.g. An example of repentance and confession is the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24.

- He repented v18 - 'I will set out'. He made a decision.
- He confessed v21 - 'Father I have sinned.' He confessed.

c. Prove Matthew 3:8

We need to produce fruit that will prove we have repented.

If we do not show by our attitudes, actions and words that we have repented, then it is not real repentance. We may need to say sorry to someone or pay back what we have taken, like Zacchaeus paid back those he had cheated.

When we asked Jesus into our lives we confessed our sin and received his forgiveness. This foundation has been laid and we do not need to go back again and again, asking for him to forgive our past sin. However this truth is still important in our lives.

**Why is repentance important in our daily lives?**

When we first came to Christ the Holy Spirit was working in our hearts, softening them so we would be open to the gospel. It was easy for us to confess our sin. However we need to continue to have soft hearts if we are going to grow in our walk with God. We do this by confessing and repenting of our sin whenever it creeps back into our lives. Things like pride or not wanting to admit we are wrong hinder us, as well as blaming others instead of facing up to our own wrong doing.

If we allow little things to start coming into our lives we won't feel so close to the Lord and may find it difficult to pray or read our Bibles. We may feel guilty and not want to have fellowship with other believers. What a difference it makes when we keep our hearts right with God! Read 1 John 1:6-9.

**Conclusion**

Our life is like a garden. God wants healthy, beautiful fruit growing there. When we first repent and turn to Christ the garden is cleared, but little things can creep back in. Just like weeds, we need to get rid of these things, by repenting. However long we have been a Christian we need to watch our garden carefully.

Repentance is the way we enter the Kingdom of God, and it is a truth we need to continue to obey. As we do our life is being built on a rock – it is being built for eternity.