

EFCDP SERMON NOTES • March 16, 2025

Series: *Revival* # 3

“The Power of Real Repentance” • Matthew 3:1-12

The Big Idea: *Real repentance is the key to having everything you ever really wanted.*

1. Real repentance is the first step to revival because we must admit we can't save ourselves. Vv. 1-6

2. Real repentance prepares us to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Vv. 7-10

3. Real repentance is the only way to have eternal life. Vv. 11-12

Digging Deeper

A guide for personal and small group study for the week of March 16, 2025.



→ Was any part of the message unclear? Which aspect of the message do you think will be the most challenging to apply to your own life?

→ Do you agree with the “big idea” of this passage? Why or why not?

1. When you have guests visit your home, what preparations do you consider to be the most important?

→ If you do not often entertain guests in your home, why not?

2. In what way(s) do you think John the Baptist was preparing Israel for the coming of Jesus, the Messiah?

→ How might Isaiah 40:1-5 relate to this idea?

3. What do you think John the Baptist meant when he said, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand?”

4. What do these passages teach about the kingdom?

- Luke 1:32-33
- 2 Samuel 7:13-17
- Luke 17:20-21
- Revelation 20:1-6
- Isaiah 11:6-10

→ Is there a sense in which the kingdom of heaven could be right now, yet also in the future? If so, how?

5. Why is it spiritually significant that Jews were coming to be baptized by John the Baptist?

6. Read the following passages about water baptism, noting how they differ from the baptism of John the Baptist:

- Acts 18:25; 19:1-7

- Romans 6:1-10
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13
- Galatians 3:23-29

7. What did John the Baptist mean when he challenged the Pharisees and Sadducees to “bear fruit in keeping with repentance?”

→ What do these passages teach about bearing the fruit of genuine repentance?

- Acts 26:19-23
- Galatians 5:16-26
- 2 Corinthians 7:8-12 (see also 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, which is likely connected)

8. Read Matthew 25:31-46. How might this relate to Matthew 3:7-12? How might this relate to the idea of false and true repentance?

9. Read Matthew 7:13-23. What does this passage teach about the vital importance of true repentance?

10. Scan Matthew 23:1-36. What do we learn about what true and false repentance looks like? What are the consequences of false repentance?

11. Using 1 Corinthians 12:13, how could you respond to someone who says Christians do not receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at conversion, but only later?

12. Read the following, noting Paul’s ideas about heaven:

- 2 Corinthians 12:1-4
- Philippians 1:21-26

→ How do you think Paul’s vision of heaven may have impacted his perspective on life as expressed in Philippians 1?

13. Do you know some people who seem to never apologize for anything? If so, why do you think that is the case?

14. Have you known someone who said they repented of some wrongdoing, yet not afterward, they repeated the behavior? If so, what do you conclude about their alleged “repentance?”

15. What are some things for which you have recently apologized? Was that difficult to do? Why or why not?

16. Read James 4:1-10. What principles of true repentance does James teach in this passage?

17. Remember a time when you sincerely repented of some wrongdoing. What motivated you to do this? How did you feel about your wrongdoing afterward? What changes did you make in your lifestyle as a result of your repentance?

18. What do the following passages teach about hell?

- Matthew 25:46
- Mark 9:42-50
- Luke 16:19-31
- 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10
- Revelation 20:7-15

→ How could you use these passages to refute a heretic who says punishment in hell is not real or is only temporary?

19. Has the Holy Spirit been convicting you of changes you need to consider making in your life, to be truly repentant? How can your group pray for you as you strive toward greater Christlikeness?

Application Ideas:

1. When was the last time you asked the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of your life you have not yet fully surrendered to His control? Develop a habit of doing this at least once a week. Write them down when they come to mind, then share your list with a trusted Christian friend, asking them to pray for you about those areas.

2. Real repentance involves more than mental regret over your sin—it results in real lifestyle changes. Add some observable changes to your list of control issues, and share your plans with your friend.

3. Memorize Galatians 5:22-24, and meditate on this passage often so that it becomes an established part of your mental/spiritual focus.

4. Read the booklet, “Your Reactions Are Showing.”

<https://www.scribd.com/document/18039227/Your-Reactions-Are-Showing>

5. Read the booklet, “My Heart, Christ’s Home.”

<https://adamlickey.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/my-heart-christs-home.pdf>