

Repent!

Services: Sunday, 1/21 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 1/22 at 7 PM

Church Year: Third Sunday after the Epiphany – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We know that certain things are necessary for our bodies – like *air to breathe* and *water to drink!* And since Jesus said, “...unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3 NAS), He wants us to know that *repentance is necessary for our souls!*

So what is repentance? It has two parts: *contrition and faith*; in other words, *sorrow for sins and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of those sins*. The Augsburg Confession says that: “...true repentance is nothing else than to have contrition and sorrow, or terror about sin, and yet at the same time to believe in the gospel and absolution that sin is forgiven and grace is obtained through Christ. [←That is repentance; the AC then goes on to state these results→] Such faith, in turn, comforts the heart and puts it at peace. Then improvement should also follow, and a person should refrain from sins.”¹

We now return to a portion of each of today's assigned Scripture readings as we focus on *God's call to repent!*

1. **Jonah:**
 - a. Chapters 1 and 2: You know the true story of Jonah: God commanded him to go to Nineveh, but, instead, he

¹ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (p. 44). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

sailed away in the opposite direction, so *God used the great fish incident to get him going in the right direction!*

- b. **Nineveh**: At the time of Jonah: ♣ Assyria was the most powerful nation in the world and its people were ruthless; ♣ Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria and had over 120,000 residents. Jonah didn't want the people to repent; instead, *he wanted the LORD to destroy them!* But Jonah finally went as God's prophet and *said what God wanted him to say!*
- c. **Chapter 3**: ⁴ **Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"** ⁵ **And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.** // Jonah told the people that God would overthrow them, *thus conquer them in forty days!* Even though rejection was expected, *God worked repentance within them!* Therefore, the people actually ♣ believed God's threat, ♣ were sorry for their sins, and ♣ looked to God for mercy! They also *showed their repentance* in three ways: ✓ By fasting, ✓ by wearing sackcloth, and ✓ by turning from their evil ways!
2. **Psalm 62**: Like the people of Nineveh, *we have all done wrong AND cannot fix it*; therefore, God is working by *His Spirit* through *His Word* to ♣ show us our wrongs, ♣ make us sorry, and ♣ give us faith to trust in Jesus! David, in *Psalm 62*, wrote of his trust in God to save him from his sins with these words: ¹ **For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.** Since we are helpless to

remove our sins, *let us always look to and trust in the Triune God and His powerful work to save us!* Then, being saved, *let us show forth fruits of repentance!*

3. **1 Corinthians 7**: The Spirit moved Paul to write these words, so that we would make a **sharp distinction** between *a drop and a bucket* – between *this short life and the fast-approaching eternity*: ²⁹ **This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time** [*thus, the time that is left*] **has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,** ³⁰ **and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods,** ³¹ **and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. // How does that passage issue a call to repent?** Paul was basically saying that ♦marriage, ♦mourning, ♦rejoicing, ♦buying, and ♦dealing are things for *this life here on earth*, yet this life on earth *“is passing away.”* In other words, the return of Jesus is drawing ever-closer, *so it is very important for everyone to repent!* Even now *the Holy Spirit is working through the Word* to ♦expose wrongdoing, ♦cause sorrow, and ♦give faith in Jesus! In today’s world, where many are turning a deaf ear to God’s Word, let us *gladly hear* and – by God’s grace – let us *eternally benefit!*
4. **Mark 1**: ¹⁴ **Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,** ¹⁵ **and saying, “The time ~~is~~ [has been] fulfilled, and the kingdom of God**

~~is at hand~~ [has come near]; repent and believe in [connection with] **the gospel.**”

- a. Jesus’ timeline according to Mark: ✦ John prepared the way for Jesus, ✦ Jesus’ ministry began when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, ✦ Jesus successfully resisted Satan’s temptations, ✦ John was arrested, and ✦ Jesus began – in Galilee – to call people to repent and believe.
- b. The kingdom of God has come near: “...it is so close to the hearers of Jesus that they may enter it at this very moment” (Lenski, 64). How? Through God’s work of ✦ making sorry and ✦ giving faith in Jesus!
- c. Repent and believe: I stated earlier that repentance has two parts: *contrition and faith*. But sometimes, *depending on the context*, “repent” means only *contrition*, thus *sorrow*. That is the case in **Mark 1:15**. The Holy Spirit wants to work *repentance* and *faith* in everyone in connection with the gospel – the good news of ✦ *who Jesus is* and ✦ *what Jesus has done!* From the person living **the best** to the person who is **most vile** – *and we are included between those two*, all such people need Jesus and His work, *which is fully sufficient to remove every sin!*

Conclusion: Let us pray: Dear Holy Spirit, *open us to Your work through the Word*; then, ✓ make us sorry, ✓ give us faith, and ✓ cause us to gladly rejoice in Jesus; then, *move us to show forth Your work of repentance in our lives in many and various ways!*

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