

## The Experience of Every Christian Life - Part 1

### Knowing Genuine Repentance

Luke 13:1-5

Well, let me ask you, have you ever wanted to go sky diving? I'm not talking about, you know, the tandem style strapped to the trainer kind of sky diving. I'm talking about the kind in the movies, where it's just you solo jumping out of a plane, none of this auto activation deployment device that automatically... I'm just talking about you and an old fashioned parachute pack and a rip cord, just free falling at 120 miles per hour. Wow, that would be exciting. Now if you ever get a chance to do that, you just free falling solo there with a backpack and rip cord, I've got a little advice for you, a little advice for life. Are you ready? Pull the rip cord before you hit the ground. (1:18)

Oh, that's stupid. No, no, you might, you might just get into the joy of free fall, maybe the view you're enjoying, you're thinking of how great it is. I don't know just... I mean I just want to remind you when you're free falling, pull the rip cord. In my mind the sooner the better, the sooner the better, and at least before you hit the, you know the 2000 foot elevation. That would be best, that's what the experts say, and you'll be alright probably at 1500 feet but I mean if you're under 1000, if you're like crossing the 500 foot level you're chances of survival are going down quickly. But I'd still pull the rip cord anyway, just pull it, even if you're at 200 feet you'd probably die but pull the rip cord if you have a chance to do that, it might help. (2:06)

Oh Pastor Mike that's so stupid. What kind of advice is that? Our genius pastor, of course we know you have to pull the rip cord, duh! Well it is good advice though, wouldn't you agree? I mean that is good advice whether you think you need to be told that, it is essential, it is life and death stuff. We know in Luke chapter 13 Jesus gave some life and death advice. He gave us wisdom for life and here's the thing it is just as fundamentally simple and indispensable as the advice I just gave you if you're sky diving. That's how vital and crucial this is. Take a look at it with me, Luke chapter 13. (2:49)

When you look at this the interesting contrast to what I've just said is, it isn't intuitive, it is not self evident, people do not recognize this as the, "duh", kind of advice that I just gave you. And yet it is worded just as indispensably as what I've just said that you better pull the rip cord if you're sky diving and free falling, pull it before you hit the ground. Take a look at verse 3, just jump into the middle of it. He says, "No, I tell you; unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Is there anything more indispensable and crucial than the way he's worded that? Repent or you're all going to die. Jesus who's not given to exaggeration or unnecessary repetition says in verse 5, it looks like a typo but it's not, it's the same thing. "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." That is fundamental as you'd better deploy your parachute before you hit the ground or you will die, I mean that is the paradigm here. It's that simple, it's that urgent, it's that important. Every single person in the room needs to look at this and say, "That's what it is. Repent or you're all going to die." (4:04)

But it's not the kind of information you could give to your neighbor this afternoon when he says, "What were you doing this morning?" "I went to church." "What did you learn?" "The words of Christ" "What did he say?" "Oh, by the way it's the kind of advice that relates to you neighbor, that you had better repent or you're going to perish." They're not going to go, "Duh, of course I know that." They're going to say, "Yeah, I've heard that but I don't agree with that. I don't really think that's true. I don't think that applies to me." Now why is it that this it's not as intuitive of a simple statement of pull the rip cord or you're going to die? The context tells us. Let's read it. (4:41)

Here's what's going on, it may be subtle at first but we'll get it. We'll understand this, we'll try to untangle this but here's how it starts, with the new, a news flash. There were some present at that very time – Jesus is there teaching in Judea – and they told him about the Galileans. A little geography here real quick, we're studying through Luke and we saw his ministry go from Galilee to Judah down south, in the Judean area around Jerusalem. His northern ministry transitioned to the southern ministry. And in the north it's called Galilee and back of the maps there in your Bible, you see that idea of ministry in the north around the Sea of Galilee, you've got the Jordan River the Dead Sea. And down by the Dead Sea not too far from it, you have this mountainous region and you've got Jerusalem the capital and that's the south. And in between, Sunday School Grads, you have a place called Samaria, and the

Samaritans live there and the Jews hate the Samaritans, but even in the south they were kind of the Go-People, they were the In-People. And up North in Galilee, well, those were the people that had the accents and they “can any good thing come out of Nazareth”, that was all up north. Here he’s preaching in the south and he’s got the Judean kind of the true bred kind of focused ethnocentric kind of Jews and they’re there in the south saying, “Hey, did you hear about those northerners?” Well, what was the news? Well their blood it says, who’s blood, Pilate, remember Pilate arm of Rome there, he’s governing, had mingled with their sacrifices. Now what’s the deal? Well every now and then you had on the calendar of the Jews a pilgrimage feast where you had to come from where ever you lived to Jerusalem to bring your sacrifices. You remember that story there that was told in Luke about Jesus lingering at the temple and Mom lost track of him as they went back? We said it was about like to walk from the south to the north was like us traveling by car from LA to Chicago. I mean this was a big pilgrimage for them but they had to go there with their sacrifices because it was one of the pilgrimage feasts of Israel in the Old Testament. And so as a dutiful Jew living in the north you made your way through Samaria down to south and you brought your sacrifices. Well here is some southern Jews saying, hey some of the northern Jews who we really think are kind of backwards anyway. They come down here and obviously something was wrong in their life because they got on the wrong side of Pilate. And Pilate, when they came to sacrifice their animals, ended up sacrificing them and they got their blood mingled with their sacrifices. I mean probably figurative speech, maybe some of it was actually true, maybe they just sacrificed but the point was that he killed them. (7:00)

Now why are you bringing that news? Jesus is always good at responding to give us a diagnosis of what’s driving the question and so look at his response. Verse 2, he answered them, “Do you think that these Northerners, these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?” So we know here’s a little diagnostic they’re thinking, “Hmm, did you hear about those Galileans, they got executed by Pilate.” Unspoken assumption, man somethings gone wrong. Now this sounds like Job’s friends. You’re suffering; you claim a relationship with God there must be a problem in your life. Jesus says now, the pull the rip cord line, “Hey, no, I tell you, it’s not that they were necessarily worse sinners – there’s a good word to underline in verse 2- no, I tell you unless all of you repent you will all likewise perish.” So yeah, those Galileans, they got killed but you know what? You shouldn’t look at their sin and think that you don’t deserve punishment and need what they, you assume need, and that is to repent of their sins and get on the right side of God. So, you shouldn’t think that way. (8:18)

And speaking of news, he says, let’s talk about some Southerners. You can see the subtle dig in verse 4. “How about those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell” Jesus says. Oh, I know you’re talking about the Northerners, let’s talk about the Tower of Siloam there near downtown Jerusalem, wasn’t built to you know California building specs, it fell down and it killed eighteen people. Do you think that they were worse – now here’s a parallel word to the word sinners in verse 2 he calls them offenders - do you think they were worse offenders then all the others who lived in Jerusalem? So we have some Jerusalem livers, not just Southerners, but they live right in the heart of God’s godly city and they died. Oh do you think that maybe they died like you think the Northerners died because God has some problem with their lives and they’re worse sinners than the others, God picked them out to judge them? (9:03)

Well we’ll consider that in a minute but he says look at me, here’s the universal principal. It doesn’t matter who you are, doesn’t matter how fast you’re free falling, doesn’t matter if you weigh 1000 pounds or 100 pounds you better pull the rip cord before you hit the ground. Unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Now why was this hard? Let’s subtly try to understand what’s going on here. It’s hard for them to see their need for repentance which Jesus has been hammering at in this book. Because they were busy saying, “look at those guys, must have been something really bad that made God mad, that made God execute some kind of judgment on them and kill them and snuff their lives out here on the earth.” And Jesus said, “Well, let’s stop comparing their sins with your sins, let’s just think of your life and let’s think about your need for repentance. In other words, let’s put it this way, number 1, if you’re taking notes and I wish that you would here this morning. Jot this one down. You need to find no comfort in comparing sins. (10:03)

### 1. Find No Comfort In Comparing Sins

That’s what Jesus is trying to say. Stop in your sin comparisons because those lateral comparisons as I like to say, when you think about your life compared to another sinners life you think, well God must be really mad at them but you know what? I’m not getting judged the way they’re judged and that must mean that my sins aren’t all that offensive to God and so you know what? I feel okay with God because God’s really mad at them but he’s really not that mad at me. And so they need to repent and maybe I don’t need it as much as they need it.” See here’s the two



words I kind of pointed out in verse 2 and verse 4, sinners and offenders. Do you think they're worse? Well, they might be but here's the point. All of us need to repent because if you don't pull the rip cord you're going to die. And pulling the rip cord here is the idea of repentance and you better repent because that's the solution that solves the sin problem no matter what it is. So stop with the lateral comparison. (10:58)

You heard preachers after a lot of the national tragedies that we've had particularly after Hurricane Katrina. Remember that back in the day? And you have pastors standing up and saying, "Well, you saw where that hit, down there in New Orleans. You see what they're doing at Mari Gas. Now that place is a pit." And they started, some of these preachers talking about all the demographics and statistics of all the evil and the vices and the drugs and partying and everything. Look at this judgment on New Orleans. Or even some people that came out and it was less frequent but remember 9/11 when the towers fell down, speaking of falling towers, and say, "You know what? God's anger, it was God's anger on America or more specifically on the city of New York." And maybe some thought it, I didn't hear many say it, but you know, in Paris they had the bombings and the shooting at those cafes and what a godless nation this has become there in France in the city of Paris and the Parisians and wow, you know, look at the band that was playing in that theater where, I mean this was the most rank and vile and just ugh. God must have been mad at them. (11:58)

You've got the Brussels bombing, I don't know what you're thinking about that, maybe who knows but people make the connection. Look at this; nothing happens without God's oversight so I'm thinking you know God must be mad over there at those guys. And you know what? Sometimes that makes us think, ensconced here in comfortable Orange County, where towers haven't fallen, bombs haven't gone off and people aren't getting shot at the Corner Bakery, well I guess God's not mad at us. You know those Parisians need to repent, those people in Manhattan need to repent, those people in New Orleans need to repent. It's easy to think that way. But the reality is when you start comparing sins with the other people it seems to intoxicate us into a false sense of security with God as though we don't need repentance (12:45)

Now jot this down it might be worth turning too in a couple chapters I hope we're going to get to this before Christ comes back, in Luke chapter 18 he tells a story about comparing our resumes with other people and comparing our sins and he says that's a problem. I want to point out a couple things in this quick parable that he tells beginning in verse 9. First of all the most important thing about this parable is how he sets it up. Luke tells us that Jesus tells this parable for this reason; it's the parable of the Tax Collector who goes up to the temple mount to pray along with the Pharisee. And he says I'm telling this parable, or at least Luke said he's telling this parable to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt. Why? Because they didn't think they were righteous. Those were unrighteous people. So you have the Tax Collector who everyone saw in that nation as a sell out, so there's a national kind of offense that they would collect taxes for Rome among their brother Jews and now they're not only doing that but with that little badge from Rome on their robe, they're out there extorting, they're out there collecting more than they deserve, they're cheating people out of their money and so they were pretty much a bad lot. I mean this is like gang members or like organized crime and everyone looked at them and said, "What losers." (14:00)

Well then you got a Pharisee, and the Pharisee if you jump down in this passage, you see him really admitting in verse 11 we can only assume that it's true that he's not an extortioner. Look in the middle of the verse. He's not unjust, he tries to deal with people justly. He's not sleeping with his neighbor's wife; he's faithful to his wife. And now he's comparing himself to the Tax Collector. He says, "Guess what they were known for? " Being extortioners, unjust, adulterers, sometimes even writing off debts by sexual favors. This is who the Tax Collectors were. And then he says positively in verse 12, I fast twice a week. How many times do you fast by the way in your devotion for God? I mean these are legitimate things on your resume. I give a tithe of all that I get, man I get something in the mail from my Mom at Christmas and I say I owe God part of this and give a tenth or a tithe of all I get. Those are righteous things to do. So in a sense this may be one of the most important statements in the whole sermon. In a sense it's important for us to recognize in the difference between relative righteousness and absolute righteousness. That's important for us to catch because I want to tell you to be an extortioner is worse in God's mind than not being an extortioner and being a just person. It is better that you don't sleep with your neighbor's wife and stay faithful then if you cheat and violate your marriage vows. I say one is better than the other and the Bible says one is better than the other. (15:27)

So we do affirm relative righteousness and it may be that the Galileans in that particular lot or that sample maybe



they were worse sinners because in the Bible the concept of worse sinners there is a reality there it's called relative righteousness. And maybe there were some that offended God more than others because the question was asked; do you think they were worse offenders? Well, the question isn't, is there reality of relative righteousness in the Christian life, no that's true there is. And you affirm that every time you see someone committing an egregious sin and you say "I'm not like that." And you're right if you're not like that, you are better or more righteous than them. But the parable was told for this reason, verse 9, people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. That must be a statement about absolute righteousness. That must be a statement about the sense, it's just comparatively righteous because I see myself as better than the Tax Collector but I must not need to repent of anything, and that's the problem. That's the key. I understand that there is something called relative righteousness that God does care about but the question is, "then do you not need to repent?" No, no, no. Why? Because if you really looked under the hood of the Pharisee you'd realize there is sin, it's just not as bad as the Tax Collector. And because of that we are now all sinners and we need to repent. (16:48)

I happen to run across a little video of a kid doing one of those Mentos Diet Coke things. Have you seen that lately? I know that was all the rage years ago, come on get with the 90s Pastor Mike. But it was just interesting to watch this and I thought that's interesting and I noticed as I looked at a few other people doing this little experiment that you could put 3 Mentos in that 2 liter of Diet Coke and ruin the whole thing or you could put 10 Mentos in there and ruin the whole thing. Now I'm assuming if you want to keep your Diet Coke from getting messed up it would certainly be better to only drop 2 Mentos verses 10 Mentos but here's the thing it doesn't matter, all of it is going to mess up your Diet Coke. If you go out here in the parking lot and you find out that your windshield has gotten broken because of h who knows what this morning while you were here in church and you say I need to call one of those things I see in the commercials all the time, that come out and fix your windshield in the parking lot, that would be cool. So I need a new windshield, Why? Because my windsheid is broken. It wouldn't matter if a golf ball hit it and it was a little broken piece of your windshield, it's broken, you'd need a new windshield, or if a tree branch fell and shattered every square inch of it, you still need a new windshield. And see that's the principal of the scripture. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The Bible is not arguing that some people fall way shorter than other people. The question is, "do you need a new windshield?" It doesn't matter if you're falling at 120 miles an hour toward the earth or whether you're traveling at 200 miles an hour in a dive straight down toward the earth, both of those people need to pull the rip cord. Do you see what I'm saying? You must repent or you will all perish. (18:28)

Read the headlines to kind of think what they must be dealing with. This is headlines, right? Galileans died, Tower of Siloam fell. I open my news screen yesterday and said, "Well, what are the news stories today?" Here was the first headline I saw. Eight Ohio family members executed some of them while sleeping. You heard the story of this in Ohio? And you know what I thought? Egregious, terrible, horrible and if I wanted to look in the mirror I'm thinking man I'm glad I never killed my family, and that's true, I haven't, haven't done it. Ambushed at Arizona Wal-Mart leaves two officers shot. Whoo, terrible, awful. Now I've been to Wal-Mart and gotten frustrated at Wal-Mart, never shot anybody. I never even hit anybody at Wal-Mart. Thought about it, never done it. Now is it better that I haven't killed my family, is it better that I haven't shot police officers at Wal-Mart? That's a good thing. Three Orange County jail escapees plead not guilty. That one struck me. What's the argument there? I thought it was okay to climb out the window of this jail and take a van and drive up to another state. I'm not guilty. Not only have I not been to jail, well I have to preach, not as an inmate. But I've never escaped and claimed it wasn't a problem and I wasn't guilty. I can keep reading through all of this to myself, I'm not that. Here's what I want to tell you because some people have over simplified the scripture and they think I want to see all sin the same. God doesn't see all sin the same. When the guy comes out to replace your windshield in the parking lot he doesn't see smashed windshields as all the same. But he does recognize every windshield is broken and needs to be fixed. People in free fall they don't all fall the same way or even the same speed, depending on how they're flying out of the airplane but they all need to pull the rip cord. (20:45)

Now I want you to make sure that you are always appalled by egregious sin. So in one sense if there is something that is sinful and perhaps they had reasons to believe that Galileans were sinful and that those people on whom the tower fell were bad Jerusalemites well then okay for us to be appalled by that. As a matter of fact, there's a benefit to that, according to Romans 2, it reminds me that my sin detector is working and that's good. My sin detector works. When I'm appalled at people's behavior – I mean one of the headlines was, Man exposes himself near a Mission Viejo school. Did you read that in our local paper? That should appall you. That's egregious and you think that's bad. Now those kinds of realities they should make us feel like ugh, awful, but we need to realize this. When



you see that problem in someone else, like a stethoscope, our sin detector and we put it on that article and we put it on that article, and we put it on that person and we even get personal about people that did things to us at Wal-Mart or people who did things to us at the office or what someone said at the gym or whatever it might be. We see that with our sin detector and we think, that's bad, that's bad, that's bad, that's bad. In Romans 2 says, "Well, your sin detector works the problem with people, when all you do is set the moral stethoscope on everyone else's chest you never seem to take that and put it on your own. (22:08)

And that is a problem and the Bible says you will be condemned because it's proven that your sin detector works but you never take the effort to put it on yourself and see it. And even if you did you might say, "Well they're worse than I am." No I understand that. I trust you haven't been out exposing yourself at playgrounds in Orange County. But you do understand that whether it's killing someone in Wal-Mart or escaping from jail there are things within the category of all those sins that we are guilty of. There's a distinction in degree but not a distinction in kind. That's what Jesus spent time in the Sermon on the Mount to point out. He said it isn't just about Murder. Murder is nothing more than the unrestrained hostility in someone's heart to injure someone. Now here's the thing, you think because I haven't murdered someone I don't need to repent, to put it in terms of our passage. But when you harbor hostility in your heart toward people, I bet you have done the same kind of thing but not to the same degree. Oh sure, you haven't been out there exposing yourself at some playground. Fantastic but I'll bet there's sinful things going on in your mind in terms of the category of being sexually illicit and unbiblical in your sex life in terms of your thinking and even that the Bible says within degree there is a distinction but in kind there is no distinction (23:31)

Does that mean that your lustful thought is as bad as being some kind of exhibitionist? No, I'm not saying that. One is worse than the other; there is a legitimate distinction between degrees of sin. There is a relative sense of righteousness, I understand that but the question is, "do you need to repent?" Do you need to pull the rip cord? Do you need to have the windshield replaced? The answer is of course yes. Why, because I am a sinner, or to use the word in verse number 4, I am an offender. You do you offend? I'm not talking about you offending your own sense of morality, I'm talking about you looking at God and saying "I'm offending God", because for God any Mentos in the Diet Coke is a problem. (24:08)

I know the news we get, the people dumping pocket loads of them in it, but you dropped a few in there this week, didn't you? You broke a few of the rules in terms of God's morality, in terms of sexuality, in terms of honesty, in terms of not doing or paying what you should, I mean that's what all those prisoners are doing, they're suppose to pay for their crimes in those jail, they said, "No, I'm out of here." I'll bet you cut a few corners in that regard as well. That you said I should do it but I'm not going to do it. So find no comfort in comparing sins, not that there aren't legitimate distinctions between the degrees of sin, but because the real question is do you need to repent? And Jesus' answering the question, No, you all need to repent. (24:48)

Number 2 in this repeated phrase in verses 3 and 5 he uses this phrase at the end. If you don't repent you will all likewise perish, verse 3. He says, "No, I'm telling you, you will all likewise perish" verse 5. Now here's a problem, a difficulty. If you happen to see sin in someone's life, maybe it's more personal like you're one of Job's friends and you can, I know they were kind of stretching to find sin in Job's life but let's say you see someone incur some kind of consequence in this life for their sin and you say clearly God must be mad at that person. And you see that, and then you hear the words of Christ echoed from this sermon this morning saying, "No, unless you repent you'll likewise perish." Let's say it is someone who is actually killed doing some thing sinful. I just had a story last week talking to somebody about someone killed because they were doing something sinful. And I sat there with this Christian and said, "Wow, look at that." Here was the statement I made, "That guy really paid for his transgression that day." And, it's true. When you see that, I want you to realize that what Jesus' talking about here is not an earthly consequence. (25:59)

Now think about this, this is a shift and Jesus does this sometimes, he has a story given to him that people were killed by Pilot, that a tower fell and physically killed people and then he uses the word perish but he doesn't mean biological death or this life's consequences, neither did he in the first verse that you ever learned. What was the first verse you ever learned as a kid? What was it? John 3:16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have ever lasting life. Now here's the thing, what you know and what I know is this. That every Christian that has ever responded to the love of Christ put their trust in Christ guess what they did? They have, they've perished, or they're still alive and maybe we won't perish because Christ will return but if Christ doesn't return in the next 100 years, we're all going to perish. (26:49)

So what's the deal? Well in this passage I've got to know this. He says, "Unless you repent you will likewise perish." Is he guaranteeing them that they will not physically die if they repent? No, of course not. Matter of fact we can look at Katrina and say yeah, I mean there was a lot of licentiousness in that part but there were Christians there, there were churches that were flooded there were people that were Christians that were displaced by it, there were Christians in the Twin Towers on 9/11 that were killed. There were people we can only assume in Paris sitting by a café who were shot and killed and they loved Christ, I mean there had to be some. So clearly this is not a promise of not dying or suffering life's consequences but really what was their question? Their question wasn't, hey look people died, it was in the death that they died at Pilot's hands or at the collapse of that tower in Siloam there, at Siloam, was that God's anger toward them? And that's where the connection and the nexus is. Well, yeah, that's the concern, am I going to incur God's just anger? We call it the wrath of God and that's what he's trying to say. Listen if you don't repent you will incur the wrath of God. When the Bible says he loved the world so much and gave his Son so that we wouldn't perish, he's not talking about physical death he's talking about something the Bible calls the second death. Remember that phrase from the Bible? If you go to your home fellowship group this week and you look at the last couple of questions there on our worksheet you'll see references to that, that were talking about the Lake of Fire. Or to put it in the words of Christ, from Luke chapter 12 he's said, "Friend's don't fear the ones that can kill the body and after that there's nothing else they can do." Verse 5, but I'll tell you whom to fear, fear him that after he's killed the body has the authority to cast people into hell. That's called the second death. The Bible says it is appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment. So now I know the real issue isn't if I physically die because I'm going to physically die unless Christ comes back soon. So when I die that's really not the issue and I can die in a car crash, I can die with the roof collapsing in an earthquake, I can die in a fiery freeway crash, I don't know, I can die in a lot of ways. But really the question isn't, "Is he going to perish in some bad tragedy?" The question is when he dies and stands before God is there going to be the tragedy of hearing depart from me I never knew you, into the lake of fire that is prepared for the devil. Am I going to incur the wrath of my own sin that God pours out on? Or am I going to hear enter into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world, you are forgiven. That's the real concern. And what hinges on the reality of A verses B is repentance. Unless you repent you will likewise perish. (29:33)

By the way, back to this and this is woven through out this, and I should mention it that you do have natural disasters or sometimes you wonder is there a response of God in this and when you heard me say there were preachers that stood up in the wake of the Katrina Hurricane and said, "God must be judging the place." And then most pastors said, "Oh, that's ridiculous." As a matter of fact those that came out and said that a lot of them recanted and said, "No, no, no, I didn't mean that because everyone said you're crazy." All I want to ask you, thinking Biblically now; does God ever bring judgment on a city because of its sin? Of course he does, Lamentations chapter 3 very clear, or a very famous city that got destroyed because of its sin, Sodom and its neighboring town of Gomorrah. Let me read you a passage from 2 Peter chapter 2, 2 Peter 2 verse 6. Here's why, listen carefully now, it talks about the turning of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, and in so doing God condemned them to extinction, - here's the key phrase – making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. Now again we have a shift from a natural disaster and I mean that in terms of temporal life consequences to a threat of God's judgment after death. Let's fill in the point, now I haven't given you point 2 now have I? Here it is you need to look past life's consequences. (31:01)

## 2. See Past This Life's Consequences

When things happen in life, and if you can draw a distinction which I'm saying should be very careful in doing. I didn't stand up and say, "Katrina is judgment on New Orleans." I didn't say that and I'm not suggesting you become some kind of diagnostic wizard that can figure out the connection between these things but I am saying it is been known by the divine commentary of scripture that some times that happens but when it happens according to this passage it is an example of the real threat which is not physical death, it's not dying in a tower in New York city in Manhattan, it's about facing the judgment of God, those are examples. (31:34)

Another situation in Acts chapter 5 two people, Ananias and Sapphira, what did they die for, Sunday School Graduates? Lying. Well, I'm glad you never lied because God would kill you, right? It's not a trick question. Oh it kind of is I guess huh, because I have lied, hmm. Why did God kill Ananias and Sapphira? I don't think it's too hard to assemble in our minds as we read through Acts chapter 5. He did it just like he did with Nadab and Abihu, not because they were the most egregious sinners of the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, God destroyed Sodom not

because it was the most egregious sinful city and I prove that by reading in Luke chapter 10 when he says, “You know on the day of judgment it will be more bearable for the city of Sodom than it will be for cities like Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, why? He said, “Because if I had done in Sodom and Gomorrah what I did in Chorazin and Bethsaida, they would have repented.” Therefore the real concern isn’t does your city get blown up and everybody die, the question is once you die and face the judgment are you going to blow up in the thing called the second death, because that one has eternal ramifications. And he says, “it’ll be better, it’ll be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for cities that seem to just you know continue on and do well. I guess Chorazin didn’t, but some of others did. And I’m saying, what’s the difference? The difference is that you can lie and not be killed by the Spirit of God and it is for the reason that someone like Nadab and Abihu or Ananias and Sapphira died, it is an example so that you will take sin seriously. And you know what sin needs? Repentance. And it’s suppose to bring that godly fear upon you, which we can’t even get out of the narrative with the first guy dying in Acts 5:5 when Ananias fell down and breathed his last it says great fear came upon all those who heard it. (33:41)

Now if you’re in the average 21<sup>st</sup> evangelical church and I asked you the question is that a good thing or a bad thing, you’d probably get it wrong but I would hope a lot of Compass people would get this question right. Ananias dies, breaths his last and fear came upon all those who heard it, was that a good thing or a bad thing that fear came upon all those who heard it. And I hope you would say, “It’s a good thing, man.” And I can prove that to you because four chapters later it says, Acts chapter 9 verse 31, throughout all the church in Judea and Galilee and Samaria they had peace and they were being built up, why? Because they were walking in the fear for the Lord and in the comfort of the Spirit it multiplied. God saw the healthy church, a church that had a fear. A fear of what? A fear of two words that we have in verse 2 and verse 4 of our passage of being sinners and being offenders and not responding with contrition and repentance. Sin needs repentance, not just to start the Christian life but to continue the Christian life. As Martin Luther put on the first of his “Ninety-five Theses” on the door of the Wittenberg Castle. He said we need to live a life of repentance and we’ve lost that. Repentance is the way of life for the Christian which means when we see sin in our lives we’ve got to recognize that is something that stirs God’s offence and we need to repent. And the real thing is you need to see past life’s consequences and when there happens to be a connection in this life between sin and judgment that actually is God’s and that’s hard to tell and diagnose sometimes but if you see it in the Bible in Sodom and Gomorrah or Ananias and Sapphira or Nadab and Abihu it’s supposed to be an example of the real issue of standing before a Holy God one day without repentance in our heart. See past this life’s consequences. (35:24)

I hope you look up all those verses that I put for you in the back of the worksheet this week. In Revelation to think through the second death, that’s the real issue. Perish in this passage you should put a little superscript 2 next to it. This is not perish in a physical sense, Christ’s concern is just like John 3:16 an eternal sense with eternal ramifications incurring the wrath of God. (35:47)

Lastly we need to spend the last few minutes of our time together I guess then what it means to pull the rip cord. No I tell you, unless you pull the rip cord, you’re going to die. Unless you repent, that word is so important in the Bible and so forgotten and neglected in the 21<sup>st</sup> century evangelical church it is time for churches like ours to revive that word. To understand that word and to know exactly what Jesus meant when he said, “You’ve got to repent.” You’ve got to repent. You start the Christian life with repentance and it’s the continual activity of the Christian life. You’ve got to repent. Now in the back of the worksheet every week I always give you ancillary sermons that are related in some way to the topic and I’m telling you if you’re new to the church you’ve got to spend time listening to sermons and reading passages that define what repentance is. And I wish I had an hour to do it and I don’t so all I can tell you is to listen, you need to at least research the conclusions that I’m going to give you now. Number 3 on your outline, here’s what repentance is. Let’s put it this way, number 3, you need to sincerely turn – there’s the verb I’m going to use, the synonym – from sin to God. (36:55)

### 3. Sincerely Turn From Sin To God

That is what the Bible teaches repentance is, to turn from sin to God. And unless you turn from sin to God you will perish with a superscript 2 next to it, it’s the second death and that’s the big problem. Sincerely turn from sin to God. (37:12)

Now even though I try to use that word in the vernacular for repentance, it still has its problems. It has its problems, because turn is an analogy. Think this through, turn is an analogy. It’s really not about physically changing the

direction of my body. Turning doesn't do anything, but there's something about turning that is I guess easy for us to understand than just this word repentance that has so much baggage in terms of people throwing it around that we don't even know what it means anymore, which by the way, before I even illustrate that let me tell you it does not mean what a lot of people in Christianity say that it means. They take the word and they go to Greek and that's very impressive people start quoting Greek and so they take this word and they say, metanoeo, metanoeo that's the Greek word. Meta preposition after noeo from noose to think, the mind. It just means to have a different thought, to think after, to think differently after something. And they say it's a synonym for faith, because faith is just kind of changing my opinion of Christ and so that's all repentance is, is changing my opinion of Christ. It's changing my mind. (38:16)

Well that's as absurd as thinking that the word hamlet is nothing more than the combination of the word ham and let, and just as long as you know those components you've got it. Or awful, as long as you know what the word awe and you know what the word full means, put those together that's what the word means. It's ridiculous. You have to look at the usage of the word and understand what it means and what it means is always an orientation of my life. Which I understand is an illustrative word, orientation, a turning, from sin and what offends God, and what God calls sin, to God. That turning is what we're talking about, and it's metaphorical, it's an analogy. (38:51)

I was traveling last week, I had a lot of meetings and preaching in a couple situations and whenever I can, which is not very often, I love my wife to be with me and she couldn't be there for the whole thing, but there was a chance where I had a down day and in a day where I was preaching and so she flew out to join me. And she came out there back east to join me and we went to this place that we were told about, went with some friends and we all got some dessert after dinner and because the line was so long and it took so long, the owner gave us an extra piece of chocolate cake, she didn't ask us she just gave it to us. And she packed it in a little one of those clam shell clear plastic containers and then my wife brought it back to our little hotel room and stuck it in the mini-fridge. And then she got on a plane and left me there with it. I don't know why. I've been trying to eat a little better as some of you have noticed, so I went down to the store before she got there and I bought myself a big bag of carrots. Rabbit food. Bottles of water, that's what I had in my mini-fridge, bottles of water and carrots. She comes to visit me and leaves me with a thick juicy scrumptious looking piece of chocolate cake, in a clear container, and put it on the top shelf of that mini-fridge. Now my tummy started grumbling in the afternoon and I was hungry, I went into that mini-fridge, popped that thing open, reaching for rabbit food and there it was. I haven't had chocolate cake since October, I haven't had Cheez-Its since October. I know. And I had to turn from it. (40:42)

Now here's the thing, if I'm going to reach my carrots, I'm going to be facing the chocolate cake. It was, I must admit temptation, and turning doesn't mean I reach in for my carrots, like this, although that wouldn't have been a bad idea. I faced it, I saw it, I reached past it and I ate my carrots. I pulled my carrots out. Now this is an illustration by the way, it's not sin for you to eat chocolate cake. Eat your chocolate cake. Post it on FaceBook and tag me on it, it's fine. I will vicariously enjoy chocolate cake as you eat it. But I'm not eating it right now, and so I got to turn from it. What does that really mean? It means that in my mind I say, "No." I substitute this desire for this that I don't desire as much in my flesh but I'm going to want to do something I've decided and resolved to do in place of what I crave doing and so I'm saying, "No" to that. If you really want to make it as basic as possible this repentance is a volitional thing where I'm saying, "Umm, No." Instead I do this. There's the picture, I can't even say that without turning my body because that's the idea of metanoeo. It is that resolve to turn from sin to God and what God would have for us, not what we would in our flesh want. That has to happen or you will suffer the consequences of your sin. And it isn't about you dying in a tragic fiery crash, it is ultimately about you dying and standing before God at the judgment. You have to turn from sin to God. Now the good thing is when you do that and sincerely turn to him, he gives you resources, he strengthens you. He gives you something that's more than strength he gives you his own Spirit, the Spirit of God. Now if you think well then sin is done, no that's the problem, as John said in 1 John, if you claim as a Christian to be without sin, you're deceiving yourself, you're lying the truth is not in you, so you're going to stumble. But the question is, if you do take a bite of that chocolate cake, what is your response to that? Well, I hope it's a lot different than when you weren't a Christian then again chocolate cake is just an analogy, you can eat your chocolate cake in peace and be righteous. But what is it? It's a kind of pain and a violation of the resolve to follow Christ that you've made. It's a kind of conviction from the Spirit that makes you say, "No more, not again." Now I know you're asking why didn't you just throw the stupid chocolate cake in the trash. I don't know why. But it makes for a better analogy doesn't it, because here's the thing. I don't care how many times you throw the chocolate cake away, in our world; it's going to be on the top shelf. Right there, things that are going to tempt you to say things you shouldn't, think things you shouldn't, do things you shouldn't and there's the temptation. And





when you do happen to take a bite or linger too long staring at that chocolate cake, it is time for you to repent again and again and again. (43:43)

And if you think what a terrible thing the Christian life, no, the Bible promises progression in our sanctification. And you think, well great when I'm seventy years old as a Christian, I'll repent a lot less and then when I was forty years old as a Christian. No, that's not how it works; it's just a different set of things you're repenting of. I mean God continues to work on the layers of our Christian life, peeling them back, and you repent and I hope that 5 years from now you're not struggling with the same exact sins you're struggling with now. And so there's progression but there's a lot of repentance. (44:13)

My little son was a pitcher in Little League. I remember when he was very little he went from, you know, T-Ball, coach pitch to pitching and he became the pitcher of his team and he was out there and what did he repent of when he was a little tiny Little League pitcher? Well, of missing the strike zone. He's just trying to get it there. But if he continues, and he did, he became the All-Star pitcher and all that. He got better and better and the things he left the game lamenting that he did wrong were different than when he was a Little Leaguer but I guarantee you he still lamented things and repented of things that he thought, "Man, that wasn't right. If I had only done that, I shouldn't have done that." Now, let's imagine he went through college and went on to the Major Leagues, do you think that he doesn't repent as a major league pitcher, of anything? No, of course not, but I'll tell you it's a lot different then when he was a Little League pitcher, and so it will be for your Christian life. You will never leave the life of repentance as a Christian. It's just like trust, you'll be repenting of much more nuances and subtle things that you do know are sin and offend God. And thankfully God doesn't throw it all on us the first week of our Christian life. We couldn't survive but he gets us working and God gets us repentant and he gets us to see this is offensive to God, this grieves God. Turning from sin and then to God. I could talk about this for hours and I've run out of time but let me give you one passage to look up. Its Psalm 70 verses 4 and 5. It's one example of many and I looked up a lot and I thought there's so much about turning to God but I just love the nuances of this particular passage. Psalm 70 verses 4 and 5. (45:41)

May all who – here's a good word – seek you. I'm turning from sin I'm seeking God. May they rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation – you've saved me – may they say evermore, "God is great!" Why? Because they recognize this, verse 5. Because we're poor and we're needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer. I love that. To turn to God isn't just saying no to sin, it's turning to God who you recognize is your deliverer, your forgiver, your savior. I'm clinging to you now. Much more I can teach and have taught on the topic of repentance and I invite you to look it up, to read good books on repentance and to study what the Bible has to say about it, but let me just tell you, it is the key to you living the Christian life, it is the cornerstone, the foundation of you starting the Christian life. And he says if you don't repent you're going to perish. (46:34)

Repentance is something that in our day is not discussed, it's not talked about, people frankly don't even think they need it in our day, even in churches you don't hear a lot about it. Let me just say, part of it is because we don't have a high enough view of God and we have an inflated view of ourselves. It's a lot like a math study I read when they ask students do you think Jesus understands Algebra. It's an interesting survey question. Guess what Math students say, most of them? No, he doesn't understand Algebra. Then they ask them, do you think you're good at Math? These are American math students. Of course most of them said, "Yes, very good." Okay, these are American Math students, we rank 25<sup>th</sup> in the world in Math. But the interesting thing about the survey is that when they aggregate all the things and did all the statistics, they ended up realizing that Americans are ranked number one in thinking they're good at math. I thought well that's classic, I mean the idea of thinking about Christ if you believe that Christ the resurrected Christ is the logos of God, the knowledge of God, the logic of God, the revelation, no he doesn't understand Algebra, he needs your tutoring, right? Of course he does. He created the universe. You can't even, in that Math survey, even accurately assess the kinds of lateral comparisons. It's like the guys who broke out of the Orange County jail watching the news tonight about a shoplifter and getting all torque that they're so terrible and there's so much better than the shoplifter. They don't even get it. They have a high view of themselves. See the answer is a lot like Isaiah 6 when we need to have that idea of God that's elevated, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty. And guess what happened to Isaiah? I'm a man of unclean lips. He sees his sin for what it is when he sees God for who he is. And when you recognize the problem of sin in your life it'll be because your view of God is what it should be. Don't think that Jesus is looking at you, saying oh you're not as bad as everybody else; I like you, no need to repent. Unless you repent you'll likewise perish and if you think that sounds so negative, let me reread for you Psalm 70. When you seek the Lord man, the Bible says we can be glad and rejoice. Those who love your



salvation we can say "God is great!" forevermore, why? Because we can see that we're poor and needy and that's the negative part but here's the thing we look to a God who is our help, our deliverer and our redeemer. We need this message and this truth I think in our day more than ever before, let's be men and women of repentance, see the importance of it, make it a daily part of your Christian life. Let's pray (49:28)

God help us think more clearly about repentance the way we ought to, not being cavalier about our sin but recognizing what a big offense our sin is to you. And God for those that are not Christians in this room, their Christian life has to begin by recognizing that lateral comparisons will only deceive them about their need for you. So let them see clearly their problem and then for us that are Christians God we need to repent every day, recognizing like Psalm 139 says that we ought to be praying search me, try me, know my heart, see if there's any wicked or grievous way in us. So let us be much more sensitive to those things that we might be able to live that penitent life that's so important and well pleasing to you, dismiss us now God with a sense of that joy that Psalm 70 talks about, let's be the kinds of people that recognize what grace there is and help there is and deliverance there is in the great redemptive plan that you've given to us in your word. In Jesus Name, Amen. (50:22)