



The Joy of Salvation - Part 4 Grateful for the Gift of Repentance Pastor Mike Fabarez

Luke 15:14-19

Well I'm not much into conspiracy theories, I don't know about you. I don't think Elvis is alive or the moon is a hologram. Have you heard those? Or that Delaware doesn't exist, but there are some things I've got to believe are truly conspiratorial. When God grants a message that are the words of life as the Bible says and that message is the difference between your sins, the violations of your life being removed from your account and being appended to Christ and having that settle that issue before your Creator so you can be acceptable to God. I've got to believe in the conspiracy that there's nothing the enemies of God would rather do then to excises the elements out of that message that would render it inoperative. I think that has to be something that we take very seriously as Christians. (01:49)

I grew up in a church that rarely if ever mentioned the word repentance. There was little to no discussion as to what that word meant. I've met literally thousands of people and through our radio broadcast hundreds of thousands of people that listen to teaching from this church on the concept of repentance and they write us and they tell us, they talk to me, I've never heard that before. I've got to say that's a conspiracy because the Bible is filled with this message. I mean from Luke 24 the message of the gospel is going to be given and entrusted to us that we would then take it to the world, this message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Acts chapter 3 the preaching of Peter saying listen Jesus came and fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies – I'm paraphrasing now – so that you therefore – I'm quoting literally – would repent. That your sins might be blotted out. (03:03)

I grew up in a church, didn't you, many of you where the word was faith, trust in Christ. And I'm all about that, absolutely. And faith is essential like the motor in a car and you can't go anywhere without, you've got to have that, but I think just like the enemy of God to say well, we'll give you the engine but we're not going to give you the transmissions. Right? You're not going to get anywhere with that. (03:35)

Who are all those people who say to God on that day, Lord, Lord did we not and list all their church activities and he says depart from me I never knew you. If they're not people that had part of this message but not all of it and again I'm not conspiratorial but there are some things that are undeniable. How can the church in the 21st century in the western world talk so much about getting right with God and never mention the concept of repentance? We've already covered it in Luke, unless you repent you will likewise perish and as if we didn't get it two verses later Jesus says it again. Unless you repent you will likewise perish. How important is the doctrine of repentance? I hate to be so heavy right out of the gate on this sermon but we've got to see how critical this is. And if you're like me, growing up in a place where there's lots of talk of God and memorize a lot of verses and heard a lot of sermons and never had anyone explain to me what repentance meant. I've got to think that's a tragedy. (04:38)

Now you've been around Compass Bible Church very long you're going to say, "You talk about this incessantly." But if you're new, you're listening for the first time, what is this? Some new-fangled doctrine? Some would say well it must be synonymous with faith if it's part of the gospel. It is not synonymous with faith. Well I've heard it means the changing of your mind, metanoia, that's the Greek word my scholarly pastor told me. Meta after, noia from noos in Greek, mind, to think after. It means to think differently, that's all that it means. If we're going to play those word games just take that logic to your English dictionary when you come across words like hamlet or passage or awful. Passage does not mean pass plus age does it? Hamlet is not having to do with a slice of pig meat and letting something happen. Awful is not something that's awe and it's full of awe. This is absurd. You have to define biblical words in biblical context and there's all kinds of references to the concept of repentance, especially if you want to be a Greek scholar in combination with the Greek word epistrepheo, epistrepheo and metanoia are in the Old Testament. Shub and azub I mean these words are constantly thrown together to give us this sense of what repentance means and it's just not taught in our churches these days. That's a conspiracy of gargantuan proportions because the effects of that are eternal and it's filling the ranks of people that'll hear depart from me I never knew you into outer darkness where there's weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and they'll say but we know the Bible, but you don't know the Bible if you don't understand repentance. (06:35)



How did someone get saved 2000 years ago? How did someone get saved 4000 years ago? They repented of their sins and they trusted in God's saving grace. It's never changed, never changed. The focus of our faith has certainly been clarified. We've gone from a general trust in the mercy and grace of God to the fact that he's sent his son the ultimate provision of grace and we trust specifically in him. But in terms of the response to the gospel? It's always been repent. Repent, Isaiah 55, repent and turn from your sins. Let the wicked man turn from his evil, let him turn from his wicked thoughts and God will abundantly pardon. I mean you've heard these sermons from me I trust if you've been around. But this is what it is all about. And if we come to church in the 21st century and we don't clearly understand repentance, we are a heap of trouble. And then once you understand it, when it happens, you're going to celebrate. I mean that's what our passage is about in Luke 15. Celebrate, celebrate, rejoice, there is joy in heaven. Here is the most important person in all the universe, the God of the universe, who knows all things, he's the wisest person and he says, it can arguably make the case that in Luke 15 there are hardly few things we can see in scripture that are valued more or celebrated more than repentance. When the sinner repents there's rejoicing in heaven. (08:04)

The whole point of this third parable that we've reached in Luke 15 is the older brother doesn't see it. He doesn't understand it and he doesn't rejoice when people do it and I've already given you the forecast what we're going to find out it's because he's never done it. The older brother is as guilty as the younger brother in the story of the "prodigal son" because he missed repentance. How horrible for us to read a story about a wayward younger brother who runs to the Vegas of the ancient world, spends his money on prostitutes and gambling or whatever else and ends up in a pig pen and repents and us be the older brother thinking yeah, I guess he needs to, but I don't. That's what this parable is about the prodigal son and yet all we've heard so far in verse 7 and verse 10 in Luke 15 is the word repent. God is rejoicing, heaven is rejoicing there's rejoicing before the angels of God when a sinner repents. All we've got so far is a word, metanoia. We've got this word. Now we need to know what it looks like. (09:08)

We're taking four weeks to look at the third parable in Luke 15, the parable of the "prodigal son" who wastes his father's inheritance and we looked at the concept of sin last time as to how this is a saving from a state of sin into a state of acceptance and grace. And we looked at how tragic it is that we would be sinful people. Sinning and we didn't even look at the consequences eternally just the concept of sin and we said that we need to understand what we're saved from. Now we reach six verses this morning I'd like to cover where we look at what repentance looks like. What is repentance? What does it look like? We know it's something that God values, it's something that God celebrates and if you're wise you would celebrate and value the things that God values and celebrates but we've got to understand what it is. And once you understand it, you ought to be grateful for it. (09:57)

You've noticed our worksheet there? It's printed and it's downloadable and hopefully you have a copy of it in front of you. Be grateful for, be grateful for, be grateful for. We're going look at these aspects of repentance this morning and I hope if it's happened in your life you'll be grateful for these. Grateful, profoundly grateful. And if it hasn't happened, then you're going to have to restructure the wording of these points because it's going to have to be something that you have to recognize that your desperate need for. We need to repent of our sins. Let's read these six verses. Just to review you can glance at verses 11 through 13, what we covered last time, that there's a man who has two sons. The younger son says to the father, give me the share of the property that's coming to me. It's supposed to come when he dies but apparently to insult his father he says I want my inheritance now as though you were dead. And the father and we noted this last time amazingly divides the property and gives it to them. Not many days later the younger son gathered all that he had, verse 13, he took a journey to a far country and there he squandered his property in prodigal living or in reckless living as it's translated here in the ESV. (11:08)

Today verses 14 through 19. We've heard about repentance, we've heard it's important. We hear that it makes angels and God celebrate. What's it look like? Verse 14, and when he, the younger son, had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country and he began to be in need. So, he went and he hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. You understand Kosher Jews and pigs don't go together, you know that, remember that. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate and no one gave him anything. And when he came to himself, he said how many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread but I perish here with hunger. I'll arise and I'll go to my father, I will say to him, "Father I've sinned against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." Verse 20 if you've got the text open you can see that he's going to arise and go to his father. But before he gets up and heads to his dad, we're going to look at what goes on here, in his life, in his mind. And we're going to start with the circumstances in verse 14. (12:32)

The first component of repentance that we should celebrate comes from just recognizing that there were in your life if you have a testimony and you are a genuine Christian and you can say I can remember when I initially repented of my sins and my sinful state before God. You remember a set of circumstances that lead to that. So, there were some circumstances for him. It says here in verse 14 and when he had spent everything so he's run out of money. That's not a terribly bad thing for a young healthy young man in a vibrant economy. You just go out and get a job. Problem was the circumstances that he was in, his economy was hammered because there was a severe famine that arose in that country and because he couldn't get a job and he ran out of money he began to be in need. He starts to see his need and feel his need because of the circumstances of him running out of money and at the same time there's a famine in the land. And those two things the confluence of those two things rose in his heart a sense, palpable sense of his need that something is wrong and it needs to change. Circumstances. Now that's the circumstances described in this passage. I want you to think of the circumstances in your life, if you're a Christian. You're a Christian, you can think of your initial repentance that was according to Acts chapter 3, it was the thing that was the trigger, it was the pivotal experience that you had to have your sins blotted out. You didn't earn it, it's not a work, it's something that God grants you and does but it began with a set of circumstances. What were the circumstances that led to your repentance? Once you identify that in your mind, write this down, number one we need to be grateful for that. Be grateful for the circumstances that led to your repentance. (14:14)

1. Be Grateful for the Circumstances that Led to Repentance

Now that's a weird thing for this man who's going to look back on this famine and say I'm so grateful for the famine of 31 AD, let's just put it that way. So grateful for that. Now this is just a story. But you could put a date I'm supposing next to the circumstances that lead to your repentance. And for many people like this man it was a series of bad and painful events, am I right? Some of you can nod at me because you know the circumstances that led to your repentance much like this young man's circumstances were painful. Maybe you were like Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament before he repented. I'm not trying to establish that he's some kind of converted New Testament style Christian but certainly he repented before God and humbly recognized who he was in light of God and all of that was preceded by what? He went nuts for a while. He was out in the grass, he had a very serious medical problem that has a fancy name even today in medical journals of people going around acting like they're animals. And this is what he did and it was painful and terrible. And that was the circumstances of his medical problem that led him to have that moment where he came to his senses and recognized who God was and bowed down before him. What were the circumstances that surrounded your repentance? What were the circumstances that came together and led to your circumstances? Maybe it was a crisis of some kind. Paul had the same kind of medical problem, not the same kind but the same category. He had scales on his eyes because he got knocked off the horse this bright light, he was blinded temporarily and through that going to this house as a humble blind person now, he gets the gospel shared to him and he becomes a Christian. God had to knock you off your horse proverbially speaking, right? And at some point, for many of you, you have a painful series of circumstances that led you to feel your need for God and the gospel. You should thank God for that. (16:18)

You should be very grateful for those circumstances because as we said early in this series that is God orchestrating your repentance. Maybe it wasn't a crisis, maybe it was as Romans chapter 2 says, verse number 4, maybe it was a series of kindnesses if I can make a word up here. Kindness. The kindness of God leads some people to repentance. Now for a lot of thick headed people like you and me that may not be the case in your story but I'm thinking a guy like Timothy for instance. The side-kick of the Apostle Paul he gets a least a kind of a Norman Rockwell painted picture as Paul talks about Lois and Eunice and this faith that was passed down. You got to kind of picture this church kid if you will, who grows up, comes to faith in Christ and it's almost, you know, it's just so warm and nice and watercolor and Paul's was so different than that. Maybe it was a series of kindnesses where you said God is so good, how could I not see my need and my sin and serve him for the rest of my life. Or maybe it was like the Ethiopian Eunuch, remember that story in Acts? Maybe it was just for you, just to keep this thing going here. The crisis? No. Maybe it was kindness? No. How about this? Maybe it was just a series of conversions with the right people. God, as I like to say, orchestrated a series of divine appointments and you got placed in a situation where the right kinds of people with the right kinds of message were just there. Maybe you wandered into a particular kind of church, or you've got this particular job and there was this Christian there that was vocal about his faith. Or you had a neighbor move in next to you and all of a sudden now you're in conversation it's so dramatic there in Acts chapter 8 where Philip shows up while this Ethiopian eunuch is just thumbing through Isaiah 53 and doesn't get it and asks this bystander what is this all about? After Philip says, "What are you reading?" I mean here's God orchestrating all

of that. (18:21)

Now in our Old Testament Daily Bible reading, hopefully you're keeping up with this, we're in the very fascinating book of Ezekiel right now and then we're going to read the book of Daniel. And then we're going to read a little book 14 chapters called Hosea. I'd like you to locate that right now and look at a passage with me. Hosea, I want you to turn to Hosea chapter 2. Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi, Matthew. So, go to Matthew, turn back 12 books, there it is. Hosea. If you don't know anything about Hosea it's one of the weirdest books in the Bible because God tells a prophet, now we're reading that in our Daily Bible Reading God is telling Ezekiel to do a lot of crazy things. This morning if you read it, if not you'll get a chance to read it tonight, kind of strange stuff he's telling him to do but nothing as strange as what he told Hosea to do. He said, go marry a prostitute. I'm going to want verification for that kind of message, right? What? Go marry a prostitute, an unfaithful woman. And so, he does, couldn't find a better prostitute than Gomer of all names. But he marries a prostitute named Gomer. Gomer as you might expect, very unfaithful to her husband. So, you've got the prophet here with an unfaithful wife all the while trying to illustrate to Israel look at your preacher and his marriage. This is me and you guys, that's how God is trying to communicate to Israel. Look at the preacher and his marriage, that's you guys the unfaithful whore, to use the word that we're about to read. And here I am God. And what does a reasonable man do with a woman who is a whore? He divorces her, that's what I would expect. But God doesn't and that's the whole point of this book. (20:22)

Look at chapter 2 drop down to verse 5. The children he says are unclean. Why? Because their mother has played the whore, verse 5. Hosea 2:5. She conceived these children out of shameful acts. Conceived them, has acted shamefully. For she said, "You know what? I don't like the pastor's salary here, I'm going to go after my loaves or my lovers rather who gave me my bread, there's the loaves, and my water and my wool and my flax and my oil and my drink. I can turn some tricks here I can make some good money, I'm going to go after my money and so I'm going to do my immoral stuff, that's what I'm going to do. I'm not going to be faithful to my prophet husband." That's what you guys were. This is the analogy. Verse 6, therefore, what am I going to do? I will go to the divorce lawyer and I'll draw up papers to ditch this woman. No. I will hedge up – this will be good to underline, bracket, star, highlight – I will hedge up her way with thorns. I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths. Where are her paths? Her paths are to go turn some more tricks. Her paths are to find some more, you know, customers. She wants to go and cheat so that she can get the income of prostitution and here is the husband I'm going to build thorns so that when she goes that way it'll be "ouch, ouch" there's the pain of the crisis. Or I'm going to build a wall, maybe it's just as I said earlier in this series the sovereignty of God moving circumstances and pinning you in so you got nowhere else to go. Verse 7, she shall pursue her lovers but not over take them. She shall seek them but she shall not find them. Why? Because there's hedges of thorns and there's walls and she can't get to them. Then she will say, "I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then, then now." There's not a scribe or a Pharisee listening to Jesus tell the story of the prodigal son that doesn't recall this passage. I just can't imagine this is the same exact concepts in the Hebrew phrases as the son wakes up and says, "it is better in my father's house then it is right now." Here is the picture of the unfaithful bride, this prostitute. And she goes, "I can't get anywhere." What we don't see in our parable is the wall of thorns, the hedges of thorns or the walls of cement where you just can't go any further. And do you know what it was in our passage? A famine, running out of money. The confluence of circumstances. (23:00)

Now I don't need to read the rest of this but the whole book is such a telling commentary on what we're studying this morning. But you should see a little of last week in verse 8. All that going out trying to turn some tricks for some more money, she didn't know that it was I who gave her the grain. I provided the wine and the oil. I lavished her the silver and gold which she used to go prostitute herself. That's the egregious nature of sin, we preached that last time we were together. But I want to focus on this particular reference now though is circumstances (23:38)

What were the thorns you ran into that made you turn to God? What were the walls that walled you in that gave you nowhere else to go? Now if you're sitting here listening to me going, well I don't know that's not me, then this message needs to be turned around, you need to pray that God would close you in. You need to pray that maybe being in a sermon this morning or listening to this message right now is part of the circumstances that God has using to bring you to repentance. If you do repent, be grateful that you ran into this sermon, be grateful you ran into these people. It was God's sovereign interactions, a sovereign crisis, a sovereign kindness, a sovereign conversation. Drop down to verse 19 before we leave Hosea 2. It does end well after all of that rebuke about how egregious it is that she went out to search for things that God was already giving her. Hosea 2:19, and I will betroth you to me forever. I



will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness and you shall know the LORD. And that's not just with her mind because they knew a lot about God, this is the most intimate use of that word in Hebrew. We're going to be together and you're going to love me and I'm going to love you. (24:58)

Wow, I don't want God to force me to love him. Well, then you'll never love him. Well, I don't want him to have to circumstantially pin me in. That's the picture in the scripture. You are like sheep that have gone astray, I am wandering after my own way. The only way for me to return as it says in Hebrews is to the shepherd of my soul is to have God work in the circumstances, at least that's one component of it, to get me to him. And when he does that we ought to be thankful for those circumstances. (25:28)

Verse 15, Luke 15. So, he went out and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country. Now picture that. He had all this money and he wasted it. He's starting to feel his need, verse 14, that's how that ended, he began to be in need and now he has to go work for someone. And this someone is pretty nefarious character because in Israel we shouldn't have, not only should we have someone eating bacon and ham, we should have nobody providing it, this is the drug pusher if you will, not that there's anything inherently wrong with bacon, I hope you had some this morning. But in the old covenant this ceremonial prohibition was something you avoided at all costs. And here was this guy, this Jewish boy, he's attaching himself, hiring himself out to work for a pig farmer. And he was sent out into the fields to feed the pigs. And as he's taking these pods, whatever that was, the pig slop and giving it to the pigs, he's scooping his hand into this slop going that's looking pretty good to me right now. He longed to be feed with the pods that the pigs ate. And no one gave him anything. (26:45)

Now I want to look at those two verses but I want you to see what they're sandwiched between. Bottom of verse 14 he began to be in need. Top of verse 17 and when he came to himself. Somewhere between feeling the need and then going "Bam, what am I doing?" And the lights coming on, are these two verses. Seeing the depravity of our condition, how terrible my sin is. There has to be this sense of awakening to the problem and in our minds, you look at him hiring himself out. He was a favored prince in a very rich man's estate and now he's a servant, serving pigs. He's enslaved to this man, he's got nowhere else to go. There's not a person in this room who's truly converted and has eternal life and has been forgiven who hasn't at some point had clarity about how bad sin is, how enslaving sin is. You don't get forgiven without recognizing something of the deplorable nature of sin. And when you do see that you should be thankful. Number 2, you should be grateful for the clarity, let's put it this way, that what you've got here and you're feeding on is pig slop and it's awful. You ought to see the rip off of sin. (28:00)

2. Be Grateful for the Clarity that Sin is a Rip-Off

And every one of us who is a real Christian you can say that, unless of course you had been fed some false gospel. Some kind of gospel that says get your ticket to the spiritual Disneyland in the sky, stick it in your back pocket, you've got your insurance. Hey, pray this prayer, walk this aisle, get dunked in this tank, you'll be okay just do what I tell you to do it's not a big deal, it won't cost you, God will make your life easier, it'll be great, just slip this little certificate in your back pocket and then when you get to the gates, you know Peter will be there, he'll give you a high five and the gates will open, it'll be awesome. And sin was not even a real discussion, it sounded like, you know, the airport seminar in a Tony Robbins thing saying just do this, sign this, your life will be better. Or like an insurance salesman that says, "Hey if there's ever a fire here, this will get you out of trouble." That's not biblical Christianity. There's not a person in the room who forgiven of their sins who has not been opened in their eyes to the deplorable state of what sin is. Sin to God is egregious, it's bad, it's sinful. We dealt with this last week, the sinfulness of sin. We said that is something you've got to see is bad and when it comes to repentance there's a clarity about that. A clarity. You don't think a Jewish boy raised in Sabbath school doesn't feel a guilty conscience when he's feeding pigs for a living? How was your conscience just before you repented? Was it like Psalm 32 where God's hand was heavy upon you, your energy was drained from you, it was like the fever heat of summer walking through, I can't take this anymore. There's a point in which you get that, the eyes are opened. (29:44)

Speaking of eyes, 2 Corinthians chapter 4 speaks of Paul's ministry as going around and having God open the eyes of people. He says, you know the gospel when we preach it, we're not losing heart, although a lot of people it's bouncing off them like bullets off of Superman. Their forehead it just doesn't penetrate, their eyes they don't see it, it's as though their eyes are veiled. If it is veiled, you know, it's veiled to those who are perishing. Satan has blinded the eyes of the unbelieving, verse 4 of 2 Corinthians 4. Keeps them from seeing the light of the gospel. Now we're



proclaiming not ourselves but Christ Jesus. Ourselves is only Jesus's servants but, verse 6, for the God who said let light shine out of darkness, who turns light bulbs on, he has shown in our hearts and he's given us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. There it is, it's a gift. Bam the eyes come open. The gospel, the peeling of these eyes open. Just like Paul prophetically and I should say poetically being physically blind having his spiritual eyes opened when his physical eyes are opened. And Jesus always comparing our depravity to blindness at some point our eyes are opened and we see it. And when we see it, 2 Corinthians chapter 7, we turn from it because it's evil, it's awful, it's gross. If you like sin, see then you haven't repented, you don't see it. 2 Corinthians 7 says you deplore it, you hate it, you despise it. Do you trip and fall into it? Sometimes, yeah you do, but you hate it. Now some people say I've got a testimony I never really hated sin, I just knew that God would forgive it. Well then you haven't had your eyes opened. One of the components of repentance is your eyes opening to it, you see the slop of sin. I put it in terms of Romans chapter 6, you realize you're a slave to sin and you see the fruit that you are getting at that time as nothing. As it says elsewhere in the scripture, as corruption, consequence, regret, guilt, emptiness, feeling the hook under the bait, you get it, you see it. He says what fruit were you getting at that time from the things which now you're ashamed of. And all of us looking back on our non-Christian lives need to see that. Be grateful for the clarity that sin is a rip-off if indeed you had that experience. (32:00)

And be grateful, verse 17 that you "came" to yourself. Verse 17 but when he came to himself he said how many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread. I mean they're getting feed the good stuff I'm getting fed the bad stuff. Sin is a rip-off, sin is no good, there's corruption and guilt and shame over sin. I need to be in my father's house, yes, I'll arise and I will go to my father. Those phrases of the lights going on, saying I need God, I need to be related to God, I need my sin forgiven, I need his grace, I need to be in his family. That's something that God grants and if he's granted it to you and your testimony you should praise God for that. Number 3 be grateful for the craving that you had to turn to God. (32:47)

3. Be Grateful for the Craving to Turn to God

You craved it, you wanted it. I want God. A lot of people want God as long as he's just Tony Robbins. Do you know what I'm saying? Those are people that have not had the clarity about their sin, well that's not repentance. That's Joel Olsten theology, right? He doesn't want to talk about sin. We're talking about biblical Christianity. Second component, you've got circumstances then you have your eyes opened, you have clarity about sin. If you have that then you crave God because he's the savior, he can solve this problem. He can free you from the enslavement to sin. (33:21)

You know we don't crave to be with God. We don't crave to turn to God. Matters of fact the Bible and if you're note taking right now is the time to get your pens ready these verses are critical and you should get them all. You should get every one of these. You do not crave him in your sinful state. John chapter 3 verses 19 and 20. Jesus said it to Nicodemus. Light has come into the world but men love, what? Darkness rather than light. Why? Because their deeds are evil. Anyone who does evil deeds, they hate the light, they don't want to come into the light because if they come into the light their deeds will be exposed. They still love sin, they don't want to come into God, they don't want God. I don't want any of that because that's going to make me feel bad about the things that I like and I don't want that. I like the things that I like. Romans chapter 3 verse 10 through 12. It is written there is none righteous no not one. So, no one is righteous. That's what we're talking about, the exclusion of no one in the world. No one understands, no one seeks after God. Context no not one, we don't seek after God. We've all turned aside, together become worthless, no one does good, not even one. So, here's the problem of non-Christians who are sitting there feeding on the pig slop, none of us thinks about God, none of us wants God, none of us wants at least the holy God of the Bible, we may want the Tony Robbins god but we don't want the God God of the Bible. We don't want the holy God. So, if ever you had that craving it didn't come from you. Where did it come from? John 6:44, no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. He has to draw you. He awakens this, he cultivates this, he fans this craving into a flame to where you say, I need God, I want God, I must have God. That desire comes from him. John 10:16, I have other sheep that are not of this fold. Speaking to the Jews about the Gentiles. I must sit here and wait for them to seek me. No. I must bring them also. Very active, God seeks and saves the lost, and they will listen to my voice. Some thorn hedges, some cement walls from conviction of sin and a craving for God. (35:49)

Be grateful for the craving that you had to turn to God. Did you have that? You can't have that without the 2nd point in this message, the clarity that sin is awful. The deplorable state of your sinfulness. Have that then you crave God,

the savior the king. Verses 18b and 19, second half of verse 18, I'm going to go to my father and then I've got something that I'm going to say. What are you going to say? I'm going to say, "Father, I just want a job at your house because I'm really hungry." No. I've heard some people see this parable that way. This is just him, you know, his cravings his stomach, he's hungry. This is just pragmatism. No. Clearly this is a picture of repentance and Jesus is trying to make it clear that if you're repentant you recognize your sin and you have a concern about sin in light of God and heaven. Father I've sinned against heaven. Oh yeah, and you were the collateral damage, and before you. And I'm not longer worthy to be called your son, but if you would in your grace, and I am hungry and I do need you and I see my problem and I can't solve it, treat me as one of your hired servants. I don't need a big place, I don't need a prominent place, I just need to get out of this deplorable state of alienation from my father's house. Please take me back. That's contrition, just to round out the C's here, right? No applause for an outline that has all C's in it today. Number 4 be grateful for the contrition to plead for forgiveness. (37:27)

4. Be Grateful for the Contrition to Plead for Forgiveness

Be grateful for that contrition. That's a heart that's broken over sin and calling out just as he did, I'm not worthy, I've sinned. Inherent in that I want your forgiveness, I want you to bring me back as a hired servant, I just need this to be cancelled. Forgive me. I painted a picture here. Circumstances that lead to repentance. Seeing that as a God sovereign thing. Clarity about the rip-off of sin. And some of you say, "Well, I don't know how much I still..." Craving to turn to God. Yeah I guess I need him, I didn't want to add him, I didn't want to miss out on heaven because some friends were there my parents were going, I want to be there. Contrition yeah oh I have to say I'm sorry, I'm sorry for my sin. That just guts this of the visceral work of the Spirit that he does in your life. If you are a real Christian then you know this is a real feeling, this is a real regret, this is a real contrition that is deep and real. And you say, "Well, you know, I wasn't much of a sinner." Then you don't understand sin. Do you think that Timothy's repentance from his sin was really any different than Paul's repentance from his sin? One was killing Christians and the other one grew up in the Norman Rockwell spiritual home of Eunice and Lois. I guarantee you if he understands the problem of alienating himself from God through the sinful acts of his life, he repents with a crying out as it says in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 with a kind of zeal and indignation over the sin in his life. (39:06)

I got my wife a new car this week. We're done with the minivan stage I can gladly say. And I surprised her with it when she came home from retreat. I know that's too self-serving I shouldn't have said that, but I did put a bow on it. Man, husband of the year brother, let me tell you. Anyway, so she's got a new car out in the parking lot. No plates, new, whoo, clean, wheels are, the tires are black and shiny. Windshield clean. If you happen to for whatever strange reason break my wife's windshield this morning. I hope you'll be sorry for that. I hope you'll feel bad about that. I hope you'll regret that, I hope you'll help me pay for that. But if you look at violating my wife's new car and the feelings that go with that and you mitigate those feelings because you say, well I was juggling with hammers next to her car and I mean, I didn't mean it and I know I broke it. You know I heard a story of another guy who dropped a piano on his pastor's wife's car and shattered it and I mean there was no windshield left. I'm looking at your windshield and yeah, I broke a part of it, it's not that bad. (40:35)

If you don't feel bad because you broke my wife's windshield because you know other people have through pianos through other people's windshields I think something is wrong with you, right? I'm going to try to beg you to feel bad anyway because it's still broken. When James says, if you've broken one law, right? You're guilty of it all. It does not mean that all sins are the same, I'm with you. I'd much rather have Timothy's testimony than Paul's testimony in that he wasn't in his own heart killing sinners or Christians rather and persecuting Christians that's great, there's a difference there and sins are definitely in a hierarchy because there's different penalties for different sins so don't let anybody quote that verse in James and say all sins are the same. It's not the same but as a sinner all of your sin shatters the law of God. And when you shatter my wife's windshield I don't care if it's just a hammer that just put a shatter that's this big or whether there's nothing left and not a piece of that safety glass even hanging on the seal around the windshield because you dropped a piano through it. Either way you ought to feel really bad and apologetic and you ought to say, I am so sorry I broke your windshield. (41:56)

So, whether it was coveting and gossip, lust and these private things in the corners of your heart, but you're a good church kid I mean you weren't taking drugs, you weren't sleeping with your girlfriend, I mean you weren't gambling, you weren't you know a drunkard or anything. You broke the windshield of God's law. It was egregious to heaven. You deserve to completely pay for your sins and the whole of that windshield because you broke it. (42:23)



But if God worked in your heart something that the rest of the world does not have and that is contrition over the fact that you need his forgiveness, you ought to be thankful because I know you can always look at people that broke God's law a lot worse than you. Contrition always comes with confession and the good news is if you confessed your sins he's faithful and righteous to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Be grateful, be grateful, be grateful, be grateful, all these statements about calling you to gratitude are based on the fact that you did not do these things without God's involvement. You cannot pat yourself on the back for these things. (43:07)

Acts chapter 5 verse 31, God exalted Christ Jesus, sat him at the right hand as leader and savior to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. He gives forgiveness, he gives the repentance. Acts 11:18. All those standing around watching the Gentiles get saved said they glorified God saying then to the Gentiles God is granted repentance that leads to life. Epistrepho the synonym of Metanoia, Acts 3:26, God having raised up his servant sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness. Now I know we say I repented and I turned from my sin and there's absolutely nothing wrong with saying that biblically but theologically you better say God turned me from my sin. He granted me repentance. He gave repentance to me and the forgiveness of sins. Listen to this verse, 2 Timothy 2:25 and 26. Paul is telling a young pastor of Ephesus, Timothy to correct his opponents but do it with gentleness that God may perhaps grant them repentance that leads to the knowledge of the truth and that they may come to their senses, does this sound like the parable of the prodigal son? And escape the snare of the devil after having been captured by him to do his will. You want to talk about the gravity of sin? Captured by the enemy to do his will, you're eating pig slop, you're going to be condemned. But God graciously granting repentance so that you can come to the knowledge of the truth and may – here's the phrase – come to your senses. (44:54)

Non-Christians are insane for continuing in their sin but as it says throughout the scripture think of Ephesians 2, you were insane too. You followed along with the course of this world. You did the same thing working with the same spirit of disobedience that's now at work in all those non-Christians. But God granted you life, he gave you repentance. He tailored and orchestrated the circumstances to lead you to repentance, he gave you clarity in opening your eyes about how sin is, he gave you a craving to run to God and he broke your heart over your sin and gave you contrition that made you cry out for his forgiveness. (45:35)

Hey there's a lot of entitled people in our culture, have you noticed that on the news this week? They expect everything to go their way all the time and if not, well I better hope my professor gives me the day off because I can't take any tests today. I mean here's the problem with an entitled culture, they're grateful for nothing because they think they deserve everything. And if you sit as Christians and think that we're not effected by that, you've got to be careful because as Christians we can feel the same way about our salvation. Well, you know, I saw the gospel, I mean it made sense to me, I saw my sin, I said I'm sorry, I put my trust in Christ, I repented, of course I get forgiveness, thank you God, I appreciate it. There's no profound thanksgiving there. We can echo some of that sinful entitlement perspective. Let me put it this way, to the extent that you feel entitled you will have no gratitude in your life. The more entitled you feel the less gratitude you'll have. The more you see that you deserve none of this and that all of this is a gracious gift from God then you'll start to be profoundly grateful. You realize you brought, as so many theologians have said, nothing to this deal but your sin and God graciously orchestrated circumstances, gave you clarity, gave you a craving, granted you contrition, that's repentance and it's all from him. Give him glory for that. That's a Bible word. But give him all of the credit, give him all of the honor for that, give him all of the thanks for that. Give him spotlight for that. That's what it means to give him glory for that. (47:22)

Hard to preach about sin last week, repentance this week under the heading of the Joy of Salvation. But this is a quiet kind of joy, the joy that might shed a tear because you're profoundly grateful for the gift that God gave you, specifically today in granting you repentance. Be thankful for that as we pray. (47:47)

God, as I said at the outset I'm wording all of these points in a room filled with a variety of people so for many I'm sure it does not apply, they're not grateful for the circumstances that led them to repentance because they haven't. They haven't seen with any clarity the problem of sin, they haven't craved to be in your family because they know you are the savior and can solve this dreadful problem and they've never experienced the contrition over their sin that lead them to cry out in utter hopelessness in any other mechanism to solve the problem but to cry out to you for forgiveness. So, I pray for them right now, they're in our midst, they're listening to this broadcast they know where



they stand with you and they somehow want to tailor a Christianity that's not costly and I pray God that you'd give them what we, the rest of us celebrate. We're so grateful for those circumstances, we're grateful that we saw sin for what it was, we're grateful that we craved to be your children and we're grateful for that moment of contrition that we had for the very first time in our initial repentance that we need your forgiveness. Let that be the reality for more and more people that surround us, the people we work with, the people we related to, the people we live next door to. Give us more people that live this way, fill this church up God, I feel bad when we have parking spaces that aren't used and chairs that aren't filled and classrooms that are not bursting because we live in a populous place that people that need repentance. And you say the reason even back to Acts chapter 3 or 2 Peter chapter 3 the reason you're delaying the return and the times of refreshing haven't come and Christ has not been sent is because the message of repentance needs to go out. We lament the conspiracy of church being done all across the country and all around the world mostly in this country though of talk about you without any mention of repentance. Let us celebrate this great gift and let us banner that and let us be ambassadors of that message that's at the heart of the gospel. Thank you so much for this morning that those that are saved let them leave with a though it may be a sobering study a time of sense of real joy and gratitude that you've been so kind to us and we didn't deserve it. Dismiss us now with that kind of profound thanksgiving, in Jesus name. Amen. (50:36)