

Purpose

- To continue to learn what is necessary for church membership.
- To learn to hear and believe

Materials

- Bible
- Handouts

Background Material**REPENTANCE**

What does it mean to hear? It isn't just a physical process of receiving a message through your auditory system. To hear is to receive a message of faith, a story, and a gospel that someone else shares with us, not matter what the communication process.

Have you ever done something really wrong, and felt bad about it? How did you deal with your own feelings about what happened? That is what this lesson is all about. When we do something wrong it can be classed as sin. To get rid of the results of sin requires repentance. Repentance means recognizing you have done something wrong, asking for forgiveness and promising not to do it again. The concepts of sin and repentance are basic elements in being a Christian.

The meaning of sin according to the Bible is to "miss the mark of perfection." It is like putting up a target with a bull's eye. If we are normal, we will miss the bull's-eye many times more than we will hit it. To miss the bull's-eye is to be imperfect. God is aware when we miss the mark. We might be able to get by with some things in our own eyes and in the eyes of others, but not God's. We might compare this with our being home alone, playing with the dog or cat, when we crash into a piece of furniture. The furniture is broken. No one is there to see what happened, so we try to repair the damage. If we can get it done, maybe no one will know anything ever happened. But we will know. If our conscience is working at all, we will not feel right about what happened, and we will have to tell our parents or someone what happened and take our lumps. This is what sin and repentance is all about.

How do we get things straightened out with our parents or whoever owns the furniture in the situation we used? We can always hope the owner of the furniture we broke doesn't hold a grudge against us. We can ask forgiveness and hope it is granted. If we are forgiven, we then have the job of gaining the trust of the owner of the furniture again. Usually this will take quite a while. We have to earn their trust again. God is not like this. When we ask God's forgiveness, God will give it to us if we are sorry about what happened and make every effort possible to straighten up. This being "sorry" about

what happened and our attempt to get things right again is what we mean by “repentance.”

We also have the problem of forgiving ourselves for not being perfect. God will rather easily forgive us if we are repentant. If our conscience is working right, we still have to deal with ourselves and the mistake we made. It is not easy to forgive ourselves or accept that God has forgiven us. This is where we need a strong sense that we are people of value, of worth. This will help us seek and accept God’s forgiveness, and forgive ourselves.

How is it that God can forgive us? From the time sin entered the world, God has been working to come up with a way to provide forgiveness. To complete this work, God sent Jesus to this earth as the Savior; Jesus came to this earth and was crucified to make forgiveness of sins possible. There are different theories about how this worked-the fancy word is “atonement”-bringing God and us “at one.” Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, we discover that God’s love has the power to bring us together with God, no matter how separated or sinful we might be. Therefore, we know that God wants to forgive our sins, and all we have to do is ask. If we are sorry for our sins and do our best to make the necessary changes in our attitudes and actions, in other words, if we are repentant, we will be a part of God’s people!

Repentance involves telling God how we feel about our relationship with God, and how we want it to be strong and full. God accepts us; but we have to accept ourselves as people of value who can be forgiven by God, and accept others as being worthy of God’s love. Christ calls us to love God, and to love others as ourselves. To repent involves seeking God’s forgiveness, but also the forgiveness of others we have sinned against. Repentance leads us to rebuild trust and relationship with God, self and others. Sometimes this can take considerable time and a lot of work, but with the help of God it can be done.

We are to publicly confess that we have sinned and want God to come into our lives and be our Savior. After that is done we are baptized so that the Holy Spirit will enter us.

ZACCHAEUS

The story of Zacchaeus shows the freedom and good news that repentance can bring. Zacchaeus, a very short man, was a tax collector in Jericho, and he had cheated many people out of their money. In Jesus’ time tax collectors were hated. Jesus came to Jericho and was hidden by a crowd of people, so Zacchaeus climbed up a tree to see him. When Jesus asked Zacchaeus to come down, Zacchaeus obeyed. Then he gave half of all he owned to the poor and paid back all those he had cheated. Zacchaeus was sorry for his sin, and Jesus forgave him. Jesus forgave Zacchaeus and was saved. Zacchaeus went out and worked for the Lord. This story is in Luke 19”1-10.

DAVID

Read in Psalm 51:1-13 about David. David asks for forgiveness after committing a terrible act. Read this and talk about how David felt? What words tell us about God’s reaction?

Procedure

Read over background information of repentance.

- Do handout 68-1. We will look at this in class. They can finish later or take it home.
- Handout 68-2 can be done for fun.
- Go over background information on Zacchaeus and David.
- Do handouts 68-3 and 68-4. Let them read Luke and go over the sheets.
- Handout 68-5 is just interesting reading.