

“Repent... It's not a Curse-word, it's a Lift the Curse Word!”

The Ministry of the Prophets

September 21, 2025

Joel 1:1-14

...They're "Having a Moment"! ...v.2

...It is a moment characterized by DULLNESS! ...

-- The common theme of the prophets of "Repentance" NECESSITATES a proper and healthy sense of "SELF-AWARENESS"

"There's a lot under the surface of life," and part of our spiritual formation is to try and unearth a little bit more of it each day. For the Puritans and other early modern Reformed Christians, such autobiographical excavation or self-examination was regarded as a key component of keeping the heart. "The Puritan teachers as a body," writes J. I. Packer, "constantly insisted that realistic self-knowledge is a sine qua non for living the Christian life."³ Richard Baxter wrote at length on "the mischiefs of self-ignorance and the benefits of self-acquaintance," and John Owen concluded that "for a man to gather up his experiences of God, to call them to mind, to collect them, consider, try, improve them, is an excellent thing—a duty practiced by all the saints, commended in the Old Testament and the New."⁴ Jonathan Edwards preached on "the duty of self-examination," and Campegius Vitringa spoke for the entire tradition when he declared that a Christian "will never regret this practice of self-examination."⁵ For Reformation-minded evangelicals, self-examination is a key tool in our pursuit of spiritual formation..." **Matthew Bingham**, "A Heart Aflame for God - A Reformed Approach to Spiritual Formation", p. 219

...He comments on the normative element of "Healthy Generational Exchange!" ...v. 3

...Do Something Different!! ...v. 13-14 ... These "MOMENTS" call for particular types of actions by God's People!
...Not 'business as usual' ...Not more of the same

Joel 2:12-14 [Joel's Call to Repent/Return]

REPENTANCE... is at the Heart of the Prophet's Ministry!

Amos 5:4-6 ⁴ For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live;

⁵ but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing."

⁶ Seek the LORD and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,

Jer 35:15 I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me.

Ezekiel 18:29-32 ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

³⁰ "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."

Isaiah 55:6-7 ⁶ "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;
⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

"These words of the prophet go right to the very heart of repentance, for repentance must include: seeking the Lord, calling upon Him, forsaking wicked ways, and returning again to Him." **Richard Roberts**, "Repentance", p. 45

... **"SEEK Me and live" ... "SEEK the LORD while he may be found; call upon him"**

WARNING: to the Body of Christ who is Being Discipled by Podcasts! ...God's "Endgame" is NOT that people seek "Conservative vs Liberal Values & Gov't Policies" ...It is that they SEEK HIM!!!

...This is the nerve center of "Repentance"! ...Before my eyes look or my hands reach or my feet step—my soul "SEEKS" something!!

-- "Repent" (def) ...the various Hebrew & Greek words that are translated "repent" have a "turning or redirecting (180 degree) dimension" to all of them. ...But, Biblical Repentance is always a "Turning/Returning to GOD!"

"To know God is to love, trust, and obey Him in an immediate and spontaneous way. But the very sinfulness of sin and its effect on every person necessitates a maximum word of God. ...This word "repentance" ...is a most timely and greatly needed message for God's people today. ...This word from the heart of God must once again become the first word from God to this generation. It must be clearly and persuasively taught and preached and urged among God's people, and then, to an eternally destined lost world." **Henry Blackaby** (from the Foreword to "Repentance" by Richard Roberts)

-- **Biblical Repentance is NOT merely a change of behavior ...it is an act of 'movement toward God'=> "SEEKING" ...it is Movement Toward the Address of WORSHIP!!**

...This is "the electronic impulse" at the starting point of our spiritual nerve system! ...What are you "SEEKING"? ...The reason the "Need for Repentance" exists—is because "SEEKING" exists!

Is "Repent" a Curse Word to You?

"Too much preaching and teaching today seems to avoid and even hide the truth of God as revealed here, lest I offend someone. Sadly, everyone seems to demand that the Word of God be 'user-friendly.' However, truth clearly stated from God's heart is always 'user-friendly'--as God would define it! In our day we are told rather forcefully that no one is to relate to others in a way that might offend them. Everyone, they exclaim, must be free to do what is right in their own eyes. So it is that we are approaching a dangerous spiritual anarchy that will ultimately become our spiritual demise." **Henry Blackaby** (from the Foreword to "Repentance") (written in 2002!)

"repentance has been neglected because of a grievously distorted focus upon the positive. There is a widespread notion that Christianity must always be stated in positive terms. Some have gone as far as to say, 'If you can't say something positive, don't say anything at all.' Faith is perceived as positive whereas repentance, by such reckoning, obviously falls into the category of negative. But how would you like to take your automobile to a mechanic who always had a positive outlook and could never bring himself to find anything wrong with your vehicle?" **Richard Roberts**, "Repentance", p.17

"Given the nature of sin, God, in His justice, could simply judge His people completely and immediately. But He, in love, desires to extend His mercy, forgiveness, and restoration to all of His people in the hope that they will repent and return to Him. In fact, the first word from the heart of God, revealed from Genesis through Revelation, is His urgent and loving call: 'Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!' Repentance from the beginning of time to the present hour has been, and remains, the most positive word from the heart of God!" **Henry Blackaby** (from the Foreword to "Repentance" by Richard Roberts)

... "Repent" ...in 'heaven-tongue' means—"I've Got GOOD News"!!

- The Introduction to Jesus Ministry! ...**Matt 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

"The first word of the gospel is not 'love.' It is not even 'grace.' The first word of the gospel is 'repent.' From Matthew through Revelation, repentance is an urgent and indispensable theme that is kept at the very forefront of the gospel message." **Richard Roberts**, "Repentance", p.23

- John the Baptist is considered the "Last of the O.T. Prophets"!

Lk 1:16-17 ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

- **He is Appointed and Sent by God!**
- **He-is Ministry "Goes Before"!!** ...he creates the "environment" that is conducive for receiving the ministry of THE CHRIST (the Messiah, God's Salvation).

...His Ministry is NOT to SAVE ...it is to prepare the way of salvation! ("I am not the Christ...")
...Can we Let the Bible Have It's Proper Variety of Ministries & Effects!!

John Stott: "Biblical preaching should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable."

Not Every Aspect of the Ministry of the Word is Seeking to Accomplish the Same Exact Thing

...at some point we are to arrive at "Salvation/Disciples/Worshippers" —But, part of arriving at THAT Address, is taking the Heart-Filled-Step of REPENTANCE!

- **The Goal of His Ministry is REPENTANCE.**

"Not only is the word repent the dominant note in John's message, but he made the concept of repentance absolutely clear. Repentance makes the path straight between the Lord and the repenting person. Repentance is like clearing a highway of holiness to and from God." **Richard Roberts**, "Repentance", p. 24

Lk 3:3-6 ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

"Without repentance, no one can make their way to the Lord, for there are to many ups and downs, ins and out, and devious ways in the unrepentant heart. Apart from repentance, the Lord will not make His way to us. Making straight the way of the Lord is always a prelude to his coming. In repentance we clear our path to God; in granting us this repentance, God clears His path to us." **Richard Roberts**, "Repentance", p. 24

Our "MOMENTS" Need to Not Treat "Repentance" like it's a Curse Word!

...the people of the Prophets—were having a moment. God sends a medical regimen for healing! ...It has a few medications and procedures—but critical & primary to the ministry of the prophets is the understanding that—"There Will Be Moments that NEED Repentance"!!

...Earth is "Having a Moment", and THE 'Healing of All Healings' is showing up in THE CHRIST! ***...There is a Doctrinal Reality that is attached to the Phrase—"The Person & Work of Christ"—Salvation is the Doing and the Accomplishing of God!! It is a Covenant Between God and the Second Adam!! It is GRACE apart from Works! (Eph 2:8-9)***

***--YET!... Its Connection with Us, the Good/Healing that it brings has THIS STARTING POINT:
"Repent, for the kingdom is at hand!"***

Acts 3:18-21 ¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

...Repentance IS Preparation! ...Repentance Creates Straight Highways for the Grace of God

...Repentance ushers in "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord"

-- It is NOT a CURSE WORD! ...It's a Welcoming Word!