

# Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



## The Missing Link

**KEY PASSAGE:** Luke 24:44-49 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 55:6-7 | Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17 | Luke 5:32 | John 3:16  
Acts 2:38; 16:25-34 | Romans 7:15; 8:29 | 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 | 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 | Ephesians 2:8-10 | Colossians 3:8  
2 Peter 3:9 | 1 John 1:7-9 | Revelation 2:5

### SUMMARY

**Many of us have found ourselves repeatedly confessing the same sin to God, wondering why we can't overcome it.**

At times like these, we feel trapped in Romans 7:15, "For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate." First John 1:9 assures us that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us, but merely confessing may not bring us victory. What is missing? What will help us get out of this cycle? The missing link is genuine repentance.

### SERMON POINTS

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told His apostles to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins in His name to all the nations (Luke 24:47). This was not the first time the message of repentance had been announced, nor would it be the last.

- John the Baptist began his ministry with these words: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2).
- A short time later, Jesus came on the scene repeating the same message (Matt. 4:17).
- After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, Peter boldly told the people, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts. 2:38).
- Later, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying, "You were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God" (2 Cor. 7:9).

- In Revelation 2:5, the glorified Christ admonished the church in Ephesus saying, "Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first."

#### What is repentance?

Repentance is heartfelt sorrow for sin followed by the renouncing of sin and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ. It's not merely feeling remorse or guilt but changing direction. It includes a recognition that sin is against almighty God and is utterly wrong. When we have truly repented, the result is a changed life. We forsake our former ways and thoughts and return to the Lord (Isa. 55:7).

#### Repentance is essential for believers.

Sin does not fit in our lives because God has predestined that we "become conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). Whenever we sin, the indwelling Holy Spirit convicts us so we can confess and repent. We should never ignore, tolerate, accept, or practice what we know to be sinful. It not only offends God, but also hurts us.

#### Repentance is essential for salvation.

God made the way of salvation simple, yet there is so much confusion about it. Some people say all we have to do is believe in Jesus. In their view, repentance and submitting to the lordship of Christ are not a part of salvation. Others think joining a church, being baptized, giving money, and doing good works are all that's necessary.

Salvation is by faith and not works, but we need to clarify what "believing in Jesus" means. This

expression encompasses so much more than merely believing what the Bible says about Him. Saving faith is more than mental agreement with the truth. It includes an acknowledgement that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins, as well as the recognition of our own sinfulness. We become sorrowful under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and desire a changed life. Believing in Jesus includes complete trust in Him for salvation, repentance from past sins, and surrender of our lives fully to Him.

In the New Testament, salvation and repentance are often equated. When Jesus spoke of salvation in Luke 5:32, He said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Peter also spoke of salvation when he wrote that the Lord does not wish “for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Another area of confusion is the lordship of Christ. Some people want to claim Jesus as Savior but not as Lord. They desire His forgiveness and a guarantee of heaven, but they don’t want Him telling them how to live. The problem with this approach is not only that it is extremely selfish; it’s also contrary to the very identity of the Son of God. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, and we cannot remove the fact that He is our Lord and God. Those who are truly repentant are willing to submit to Christ and let Him lead them in a new direction.

### **Repentance results in a changed life.**

After salvation, we begin a brand new life. Although we don’t understand all that’s involved at that moment, the Holy Spirit works within us to convict us of sin, draw us to repentance, and guide us on a new path of obedience. We all begin as spiritual babies, but the Lord wants us to continually grow in Him, and repentance is a large part of this process. If we stop turning away from sin, we will stop growing and stay “infants in Christ” (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

### **We are not perfect, but we are responsible for what we do.**

After our salvation, we should desire to please the Lord and do the good works He has planned for

us (Eph. 2:8-10). If we are genuinely saved, we will never be happy or satisfied living in sin because we now have a new nature through the Holy Spirit who indwells us. When He convicts us of sin, our first response should be to ask Him for forgiveness.

### **What does confession mean?**

Confession means to agree with God that what we did was wrong. But that alone will not keep us from repeating it. That’s why repentance should always be a part of confession. We are called to live a sanctified life, one that is set apart for God and His purposes. Confession and repentance are an important part of sanctification.

When we live a sanctified life, we walk in obedience to Christ. However, according to 1 John 1:7-9, we deceive ourselves if we think we’ll never sin. That’s why we are told to confess our sins to God. Christ not only forgives us but continually works to cleanse us, making our lives different. He helps us put away the sin and turn back to Him in obedience (Col. 3:8).

## **RESPONSE**

- Is there a particular sin you repeatedly confess? What is it? Why do you think you keep struggling with it? What steps can you take to truly repent and turn from it?
- Do you tend to view confession and repentance as a negative experience that makes you feel guilty or worthless or as an opportunity for cleansing and a fresh start? How could a positive perspective of this privilege encourage confession, and motivate you to live a holy life?

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