

Luke

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As the Lord may help me, I will speak from the Gospel according to Luke, the 24th chapter, the 47th verse.

. . . The Gospel according to Luke, chapter 24, verse 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

. . .

. substance of that sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost. A sermon that was remarkable not for any sort of oratory, but very remarkable for its simplicity, its directness, its fearlessness and its effect for three thousand souls fell under the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God as Peter wielded it that wonderful day.

[1 : 5 7] But before I come to that and to the substance of this word, the context calls for notice and consideration. It commences at verse 44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the sounds concerning me.

The apostles have not understood at all clearly the meaning of those words which Jesus Christ had spoken unto them in these matters during his public ministry.

Neither did they understand them even at the time when he was speaking to them now. Their minds could not get clear of the hope that after all the Lord might be about to establish the national kingdom of the Jews.

for in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles which is a continuation of the last chapter in the Gospel by Luke we find that they said to Jesus Christ Lord wilt thou at this time again restore the kingdom to Israel?

They could not get that out of their minds that the kingdom was to be restored in a national sense to Israel and the Lord did not contradict that because he knew that it would be so in time that he said it is not for you to know the times and the seasons which God hath put in his own power.

[3 : 56] But we read then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scripture the Lord Jesus Christ we notice was exceedingly careful to show that all things that had happened to him were according to the scriptures a fulfillment of the scriptures and if they had understood the scriptures they would have understood what had confused them so very much with regard to his sufferings and death but he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures how did he do it we don't know it may have been that he gave them more clear and explicit instruction which was a means of enlightening their understanding or it may have been and probably was that he exercised such a spiritual and gracious influence on their minds as to clear their understanding of those things that have made them so made their understanding so cloudy how we need the law to open our understandings if we are to rightly understand the scriptures it is the absolutely essential thing we should always speak first that the law would open our understandings before we attempt to understand the scriptures endless confusion has arisen from want of appreciating this and because people think they can understand the scriptures like they can understand any other writing but that cannot be the scriptures are essentially spiritual and their teaching is of such a nature that the natural mind in its natural condition is not capable of spiritually understanding the scriptures understanding the scriptures is not just a matter of understanding the terminology of the scriptures it's a matter of understanding the truth itself that the scriptures teach but there is so much in the minds of men prejudice pride of intellect and often aversion to the sacred and holy nature of the truth that the scriptures teach that they just cannot understand the scriptures but if the

Lord is pleased to open the understanding as he opened the understandings of the disciples all these conditions in the mind begin to give way and break down before the entrance of the word which giveth light and as the entrance of the word giveth light so spiritual things are seen in a right and a spiritual light and their nature certainty holiness richness and blessedness begins to be understood and begins to be appreciated this it was that the Selmist in the 119th Selm felt so much to me and prayed so earnestly for Lord open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law the eyes of the soul is the understanding faculty of the mind if that's blinded by preconceptions biases prejudices and the like it's like the eye being darkened it cannot perceive it is the work of the Holy

Spirit to clear the understanding of the mind of these blinding conditions and to impart to it a new perception a spiritual discernment and then the scriptures are understood what the Lord Jesus Christ did for the disciples at the time we are reading the Holy Spirit does to this very day it is the work of the Holy Spirit to open the understanding of the mind to render it spiritually capable of understanding the nature of holy and heavenly things it's the only way brethren young people and old that the scriptures can be understood it is by having our understandings enlightened by the Holy Spirit it is absolutely essential to understand the scriptures aright that first our understandings should be opened then opened he their understandings that they might understand the scriptures and then he set before them again those scriptures pertaining to his own sufferings and death and resurrection from the dead the third day and said unto them thus it is written and thus it behoved

Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day I should refer to the gap probably again and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem but they were not immediately to go forth into their ministry and preach these things they were not at that time sufficiently empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach effectively although the Lord by opening their understanding had given them discernment in the scriptures and in that sense a spiritual ability to preach the word but they needed more than a spiritual ability they needed a spiritual power and the spiritual power could only come from the Holy Spirit himself so they were bidden to tarry in the city of

Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high and how remarkably they were endued with power from on high when like the sound of a rushing mighty wind and accompanied by the appearance of those cloven tongues of fire the Holy Spirit came with power upon the apostles and under that power the apostles Peter preached exactly what my text says repentance and remission of sins in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and he began at Jerusalem now my friends in these words we have in a very simple and plain way the word of the

[11 : 58] Lord with regards to these matters it is to be preached here we have the sum and substance of the fundamental principles of the gospel and of salvation and not so simple but that they need to be continually expounded even repentance and remission of sins this is that which is to be preached in the name of the Lord Jesus the preaching of it began at Jerusalem and then it gradually spread as the apostles were directed of the Holy Spirit in their missionary journeys and it has continued to spread and it will do until before the end of the world this gospel shall be preached unto all nations now the Lord helped me this morning to preach exactly this repentance and remission of sin it is to be preached it is one of the most vital and essential things to be preached and

I just pause for a moment to offer a remark upon the expression that repentance and remission of sins should be preached what is preaching and in what way is repentance and remission of sins to be preached now preaching implies these things as I understand it first it means to expound I mean it means to proclaim to set forth the very expression preaching means heralding the idea is of a herald proclaiming in another's name what lies upon him to publish to preach is to proclaim to set forth to publish how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace that publish glad tidings to the people

I don't regard preaching as being in the nature of submitting things to people or offering things to them but proclaiming with an authority that is of the Lord those things that he will have to be spoken and to preach means to expound to open up to explain things to bring out their true nature and their meaning and their import not merely to state things but to make them clear as to their nature preaching is proclaiming and expounding and there's another feature I think that characterises preaching and that is to enforce in a right way what is spoken upon the hearts and consciences of men

I know that it rests entirely with the Holy Spirit to make the word effectual but what I mean is this preaching isn't just to say well that's the scripture and that's what it means now take it or leave it that's not preaching that's not the way to speak to souls souls that are bound for eternity and an eternity of heaven or hell the apostles did not proclaim in that detached way they spoke with an energy an ardency of spirit their desire was to be the means of saving souls to preach is to proclaim to expound and to endeavour to enforce or to bring to bear the truth of the word upon the hearts and consciences of those who hear it we can do no more can we we can do no more we cannot with any power of our own make the word to enter into the heart if people will harden their hearts and close their ears against the solemn things we preach and expound and endeavour with all the faithfulness and affection that we have to impress upon their minds if still they turn away their ears from the truth their blood is upon their own head isn't it is upon their own head so then as I understand my text is repentance and remission of sins to be preached and I would desire to preach it now the Lord grant that the very same things that Jesus himself laid upon the apostles to preach the same things that they did preach under the power of the Holy

Spirit to the conversion of thousands and have been preached by the Lord's servants in the same spirit of faithfulness and affection the Lord grants they may be preached again today and first there is repentance and that will probably be as much as I should be able this morning to set before repentance is to be preached my friends all down the ages the word of God to men has been that they should repent and turn to him ever since man by sin turned away from God God has sent his word to men to call them to repentance repentance in in in in diverse ways God has spoken but always to the same point and the same purpose to call men to repentance and notwithstanding that there have been so few who have responded to that call so many who have disregarded it till

[19 : 09] God calls men to repentance by his word whatever may be and we know there is a secret purpose in the heart of God with regard to individuals yet he calls all men to repentance trace it down very briefly through the whole course of the scriptures if you go back and we need go no go back no farther to the days of Noah Noah was a preacher of righteousness and he was a preacher of righteousness in an exceedingly loose and licentious generation they were wanton they were wicked they cared for nothing but to eat and drink and to revel in the things that gratified the lusts of the flesh and of the mind that Noah was a preacher of righteousness what did he preach what could he have preached but repentance towards God and to call men to turn from their wicked and sinful ways while there was time before the flood came and took them all away and if you go on then we will say to the Proverbs and you'll hear a word like this unto you old men I call and my voice is to the sons of men

O ye simple how long will he love simplicity and scorn us delight in your scorning and fools hate knowledge turn you at my reproof behold I will put my spirit upon you and I will give my words unto you what is that but the word of God calling men to repentance and if you pass on to Isaiah's beautiful word let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him unto our God for he will abundantly pardon what is that but the word of God calling men to repentance and if you pass on to Hosea's tender exceptionally tender prophecy you'll find a word like this

O Israel return unto the Lord thy God for thou art fallen by thine iniquity take with you words and turn unto the Lord and say unto him take away all iniquity and pardon us freely what is that but the word of God calling men to repentance but during all that period of time for the most part God sent his word to the nation of the Jews and the Gentile nations were for the most part left to their ignorance and their idolatry but with the coming of the gospel that was not to be so any longer repentance and remission of sins was to be preached now among all nations no nation accepted for God would command all men everywhere to repent all men everywhere because he hath appointed a day wherein he would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained whereof he hath given unto all men assurance in that he hath raised him from the dead what then is it to preach repentance well to begin with to preach repentance means to preach the necessity of repentance for it is absolutely essential

I know that with regard to repentance in the experience and exercise of it it has gone much more deeply with some than with others I know that some have been brought to repentance very early in life and when it has been so so very much the better for them I know that some have been brought to repentance very late in life it has been with a calling of men to repentance effectively like it was in the parable of the labourers some are called in the early hour of the morning some in the late hour of the afternoon some at the eleventh hour of life day they are called effectively to repentance but whether in early or later life whether in deeper or lesser degree of feeling there has never never been a soul reach heaven without first repenting never it's essential it is so essential that it would be a very solemn thing for any minister not to preach the essential nature of repenting he would mislead his hearers grossly mislead them and deceive them if he did not put it to them plainly and clearly that except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish all without exception repentance is essential and that which is essential if we are wise enough to salvation that which is essential should be the very thing chiefly to engage their hearts and minds brethren are you sure there has been repentance in your life can you trace anything of this operation of grace has this essential change been wrought in you whereby you have been brought to turn unto the Lord because no matter how many ministers might encourage you to believe all is well all is not well you know all is not well that which is essential should most deeply engage the concern of our minds the thief on the cross an expanding example of course repentance at the last hour or two of life but it was real repentance and that appears not only from the plain statement of the scripture for there's a thus that's the

Lord for what I'm saying this morning there's a thus that's the Lord for it but you can perceive that repentance is essential when you consider what is the state of every man every person in his fallen condition isn't it apparent that he is away from God that he is no love to God or Godliness that he is no desire to serve God and enjoy him isn't it apparent that his mind is in tardy's text on his own ways and to gratify his own desires ever sinful and gross they may be or if not sinful and gross still there is own desire he takes not God into his account now if such and one and that is the case with all forever to be reconciled to God and at peace with him and forever to enjoy him isn't it as clear as day that there must be a great change in the spirit of their minds with regard to God and godliness and what is that change for the God of the spirit of their hearts and minds but repentance brethren to preach repentance is to preach the necessity of it

[28 : 12] I wonder if this is preached I wonder how much in this district today repentance is being preached and congregations are being faithfully and clearly and solemnly warned that except they repent there is nothing before them but to perish and that there is no substitute for repentance no substitute whatever there are works and meat for repentance but not a substitute for repentance there are the effects of repentance but they must come from repentance and again if repentance is to be preached in the Lord's name then the nature of it must be preached now to what purpose is it to say in a loose way you must repent and leave it at that why to preach repentance is to show what it is to repent well what is it to repent the word is a term of course as is fairly well known by those who take pains to understand the meaning of scriptural terms is a change in the mind but then it must be understood that it is a change in the mind of a very special nature and character it isn't just that the mind is changed in its outlook but it's changed in its character it isn't that the mind turns to God but it turns to God in a gracious and in a special way in a humbled penitent contrite way that's repentance it is a change in the mind and in the spirit and a certain man said to his son son go walk today in my vineyard and he said

I will not see I will not but afterwards he repented and went see there's a change in his mind his rebellious spirit was broken and softened down that is often how repentance shows itself in the mind and in and in the spirit for the most part I believe not necessarily in every case but for the most part there's a period in life when there's a strong disposition to break away from the ways of God and his truth and his worship and everything pertaining to godliness there's a tendency to break away from it I know there was with me a very strong tendency and I know that if it hadn't been counteracted by the grace of God

I should have broken away from it go work today in my vineyard and he said I will not I will not but afterwards there came a change to him the word repentance also means an afterthought he thought well this isn't this isn't a right attitude for me to take to my father to be rebellious like this to hurt his feelings and break his heart and reject his word he's my father what a wretched thing it is for me as his son to say to him I will not and his spirit began to change towards his father he relented he felt differently about it and it wasn't only that he went but he repented and went he went back penitently he was sorry he'd ever acted and spoken like that and showed such a spirit to his father now often repentance works in the heart like that the first disposition is to throw off restraint to meet the word and way of God with an I will not but afterwards where repentance is granted and effectually there's a relenting a change in the mind towards God and godliness and a turning of the heart

God wore for repentance in the nature of it is not only a change in the heart and spirit towards God but it's a change in the nature and character of the spirit itself creating me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me a right spirit is a penitent spirit it becomes those who have sinned against God in many ways and who have indulged so much in themselves that is grieving in his sight and have broken his word and his law it becomes them if they repent to repent with sorrow of heart and the same holy spirit that works the repentance imparts the sorrow to the repenting heart so that's the repentance that I preach and I believe the law will have to be preached a repentance that is of a spiritual and a gracious and a heart affecting and a life affecting character repentance and remission of sin

I've only just time for one more observation to preach repentance is not only to preach his absolute necessity and its gracious character but to preach the blessedness of repentance the blessing of it perhaps someone might say I've never thought of repentance as a sense of blessedness I thought of forgiveness as being a blessing and pardon and the like but I never thought of repentance in a sense of the blessedness of it well then perhaps you will this morning for believe me there's a real blessing in repenting you can put the one against the other there's a curse in sinning isn't there and there's a blessing in repenting and whatever such may say about these things or don't understand them have never experienced them and are prejudiced against them and they know nothing about master whatever whatever they may say those who know what repentance is from the experience of it will agree with me it's a blessing it's a blessing it's certainly a repentance that never repented on and where does the blessing come from it comes from Jesus

[36 : 22] Christ he is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins unto his people it comes down from heaven whatever comes down from heaven brethren whatever comes from Jesus Christ is a blessing nothing ever came from Jesus Christ to you but it was a blessing and nothing ever came from Jesus Christ to me but it was a blessing everything that comes from Jesus Christ is a blessing and therefore if he is exalted to give repentance and if repentance comes from him it's a blessing well now I must break off this morning and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem Amen

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