

Repentance and Testimony

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Repentance, what is it? Well, the Bible Dictionary says the following:

The Greek word of which this is the translation denotes a change of mind, a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. Since we are born into conditions of mortality, repentance comes to mean a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin to which we are naturally inclined. Without this there can be no progress in the things of the soul's salvation, for all accountable persons are stained by sin and must be cleansed in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Repentance is not optional for salvation; it is a commandment of God (D&C 18:9–22; 20:29; 133:16). The preaching of repentance by John the Baptist formed the preparation for the ministry of our Lord. See Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:4, 15; 2:17; Luke 3:3, 8; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; Rom. 13:11–14; James 5:1–6; Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 19; see also Isa. 1:16–20; Jer. 3–5; 26; Ezek. 18:19–31; 33:7–20; Hosea 6; 12; 14; Joel 1:8; 2; Jonah 3:5–10; Zeph. 2; Zech. 1; Mal. 1–4. [Bible Dictionary: Repentance]

The part of that definition that really stuck out at me is “a change of mind.” Think

about that for a moment, when a person does wrong, or commits sin and they repent of their wrong doings, they have a change of mind. The term that is often used in the scriptures is a “mighty change of heart.” When a person sincerely repents of a sin, they end up having no desire to commit that sin ever again. They turn their lives away from that sin and they are willing to follow God with all their heart.

The scriptures are full of stories where people sin and fall away and then they repent and come back. One of my favorite stories is in the book of Enos.

1 - Behold, it came to pass that I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it—

2 - And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins.

3 - Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.

4 - And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

5 - And there came a voice unto me, saying:
Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou
shalt be blessed.

6 - And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie;
wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

7 - And I said: Lord, how is it done?

8 - And he said unto me: Because of thy
faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before
heard nor seen. And many years pass away
before he shall manifest himself in the flesh;
wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee
whole. [Enos 1:1-8]

As we can see, Enos had a great desire to be forgiven. Repentance isn't a fast process, sometimes it takes a while. Enos is a great example of one who sincerely repented. Did he just one day decide to say a simple prayer and ask to be forgiven? No, it says that he cried unto God in mighty prayer and supplication, and even when the night came he still cried unto God until he had been forgiven.

So, how does one know if they have repented? In Doctrine and Covenants 58:43, we find the following:

43 - By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.

In order to find true repentance, one must confess and forsake their sins. Once a person has found a “mighty change of heart”, they have a testimony of repentance

and how it can help us turn towards God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

A great example of this is found in Mosiah 27. This is of course the account of Alma the younger and his conversion. After he was struck down and the angel convinced him of his wrong doings, he repented and woke up. What did he do? He bore testimony of the experience that he just had.

He bore his testimony to the people. Here are a few verses from his testimony, they are found in Mosiah 27:29-31:

29 - My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more.

30 - I rejected my Redeemer, and denied that which had been spoken of by our fathers; but now that they may foresee that he will come, and that he remembereth every creature of his creating, he will make himself manifest unto all.

31 - Yea, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him. Yea, even at the last day, when all men shall stand to be judged of him, then shall they confess that he is God; then shall they confess, who live without God in the world, that the judgment of an everlasting punishment is just upon them; and they shall quake, and tremble, and shrink beneath the glance of his all-searching eye.

Then of course he, with the sons of Mosiah, went and tried the best they knew how to right the wrongs they had made against the church. They went out among the people on missions and bore their testimonies. It is so important to bear our testimony as often as possible. As we do so, the spirit has more chances to witness the truthfulness of the gospel to the people that we teach.