

# How Repentance Is Given

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*C.H. Spurgeon's sermon emphasizes that true repentance is a gift from Christ, made possible through His exaltation and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:10, Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 11:28, Luke 24:47, John 16:8, Acts 5:31, Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Hebrews 4:16, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Grace Of God", "Repentance"

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## Description

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes that Jesus Christ, exalted at the right hand of God, is the source of repentance and forgiveness for sinners. He explains that true repentance is a gift from God, made possible through Christ's sacrifice and the work of the Holy Spirit, rather than a product of human effort. Spurgeon encourages believers to seek repentance not through self-striving but by looking to Jesus and His grace, which can soften even the hardest of hearts. He reassures that no one is beyond the reach of Christ's mercy, as He is exalted to grant repentance even to those who have sinned greatly. Ultimately, Spurgeon calls for a reliance on Christ for all spiritual needs, affirming that He is the source of life and transformation.

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## Transcript

TO RETURN to the grand text: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Our Lord Jesus Christ has gone up that grace may come down. His glory is employed to give greater currency to His grace. The Lord has not taken a step upward except with the design of bearing believing sinners upward with Him. He is exalted to give repentance; and this we shall see if we remember a few great truths.

The work which our Lord Jesus has done has made repentance possible, available, and acceptable. The law makes no mention of repentance, but says plainly, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." If the Lord Jesus had not died and risen again and gone unto the Father, what would your repenting or mine be worth? We might feel remorse with its horrors, but never repentance with its hopes. Repentance, as a natural feeling, is a common duty deserving no great praise: indeed, it is so generally mingled with a selfish fear of punishment, that the kindest estimate makes but little of it. Had not Jesus interposed and wrought out a wealth of merit, our tears of repentance would have been so much water spilled upon the ground. Jesus is exalted on high, that through the virtue of His intercession repentance may have a place before God. In this respect He gives us repentance, because He puts repentance into a position of

acceptance, which otherwise it could never have occupied.

When Jesus was exalted on high, the Spirit of God was poured out to work in us all needful graces. The Holy Ghost creates repentance in us by supernaturally renewing our nature, and taking away the heart of stone out of our flesh. Oh, sit not down straining those eyes of yours to fetch out impossible tears! Repentance comes not from unwilling nature, but from free and sovereign grace. Get not to your chamber to smite your breast in order to fetch from a heart of stone feelings which are not there. But go to Calvary and see how Jesus died. Look upward to the hills whence comes your help. The Holy Ghost has come on purpose that He may overshadow men's spirits and breed repentance within them, even as once He brooded over chaos and brought forth order. Breathe your prayer to Him, "Blessed Spirit, dwell with me. Make me tender and lowly of heart, that I may hate sin and unfeignedly repent of it." He will hear your cry and answer you.

Remember, too, that when our Lord Jesus was exalted, He not only gave us repentance by sending forth the Holy Spirit, but by consecrating all the works of nature and of providence to the great ends of our salvation, so that any one of them may call us to repentance, whether it crow like Peter's cock, or shake the prison like the jailer's earthquake. From the right hand of God our Lord Jesus rules all things here below, and makes them work together for the salvation of His redeemed. He uses both bitters and sweets, trials and joys, that He may produce in sinners a better mind toward their God. Be thankful for the providence which has made you poor, or sick, or sad; for by all this Jesus works the life of your spirit and turns you to Himself. The Lord's mercy often rides to the door of our hearts on the black horse of affliction. Jesus uses the whole range of our experience to wean us from earth and woo us to Heaven. Christ is exalted to the throne of Heaven and earth in order that, by all the processes of His providence, He may subdue hard hearts unto the gracious softening of repentance.

Besides, He is at work at this hour by all His whispers in the conscience, by His inspired Book, by those of us who speak out of that Book, and by praying friends and earnest hearts. He can send a word to you which shall strike your rocky heart as with the rod of Moses, and cause streams of repentance to flow forth. He can bring to your mind some heart-breaking text out of Holy Scripture which shall conquer you right speedily. He can mysteriously soften you, and cause a holy frame of mind to steal over you when you least look for it. Be sure of this, that He who is gone into His glory, raised into all the splendor and majesty of God, has abundant ways of working repentance in those to whom He grants forgiveness. He is even now waiting to give repentance to you. Ask Him for it at once.

Observe with much comfort that the Lord Jesus Christ gives this repentance to the most unlikely people in the world. He is exalted to give repentance to Israel. To Israel! In the days when the apostles thus spoke, Israel was the nation which had most grossly sinned against light and love, by daring to say, "His blood be on us and on our children." Yet Jesus is exalted to give them repentance! What a marvel of grace! If you have been brought up in the brightest of Christian light, and yet have rejected it, there is still hope. If you have sinned against conscience, and against the Holy Spirit, and against the love of Jesus, there is yet space for repentance. Though you may be as hard as unbelieving Israel of old, softening may yet come to you, since Jesus is exalted, and clothed with boundless power. For those who went the furthest in iniquity, and sinned with special aggravation, the Lord Jesus is exalted to give to them repentance and forgiveness of sins. Happy am I to have so full a gospel to proclaim! Happy are you to be allowed to read it!

The hearts of the children of Israel had grown hard as an adamant stone. Luther used to think it impossible to convert a Jew. We are far from agreeing with him, and yet we must admit that the seed of

Israel have been exceedingly obstinate in their rejection of the Saviour during these many centuries. Truly did the Lord say, "Israel would none of me." "He came to his own and his own received him not." Yet on behalf of Israel our Lord Jesus is exalted for the giving of repentance and remission. Probably my reader is a Gentile; but yet he may have a very stubborn heart, which has stood out against the Lord Jesus for many years; and yet in him our Lord can work repentance. It may be that you will yet feel compelled to write as William Hone did when he yielded to divine love. He was the author of those most entertaining volumes called the "Everyday Book," but he was once a stout-hearted infidel. When subdued by sovereign grace, he wrote:

The proudest heart that ever beat

Hath been subdued in me;

The wildest will that ever rose

To scorn Thy cause and aid Thy foes

Is quell'd my Lord, by Thee.

Thy will, and not my will be done,

My heart be ever Thine;

Confessing Thee the mighty Word,

My Saviour Christ, my God, my Lord,

Thy cross shall be my sign.

The Lord can give repentance to the most unlikely, turning lions into lambs, and ravens into doves. Let us look to Him that this great change may be wrought in us. Assuredly the contemplation of the death of Christ is one of the surest and speediest methods of gaining repentance. Do not sit down and try to pump up repentance from the dry well of corrupt nature. It is contrary to the laws of mind to suppose that you can force your soul into that gracious state. Take your heart in prayer to Him who understands it, and say, "Lord, cleanse it. Lord, renew it. Lord, work repentance in it." The more you try to produce penitent emotions in yourself, the more you will be disappointed; but if you believingly think of Jesus dying for you, repentance will burst forth. Meditate on the Lord's shedding His heart's blood out of love to you. Set before your mind's eye the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion; and, as you do this, He who was the bearer of all this grief will look at you, and with that look He will do for you what He did for Peter, so that you also will go out and weep bitterly. He who died for you can, by His gracious Spirit, make you die to sin; and He who has gone into glory on your behalf can draw your soul after Him, away from evil, and toward holiness.

I shall be content if I leave this one thought with you; look not beneath the ice to find fire, neither hope in your own natural heart to find repentance. Look to the Living One for life. Look to Jesus for all you need between Hell Gate and Heaven Gate. Never seek elsewhere for any part of that which Jesus loves to bestow; but remember,

Christ is all.

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