**Session 9: Repentance: How to Deal with Sin**

**Key verses**

Acts 2:38-39; Luke 15:7-10; Ezekiel 18:30-32

**Memory Verse**

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Introduction**

Following on from our discussion about sin last week, in this session we will explore how to deal with sin.

We will look at:

* What true repentance means
* True vs false repentance
* The Place of Forgiveness
* The link between repentance and the ‘Big Story’ of the bible

1. **What is Repentance?**

Repentance is the first step in the journey to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. At the heart of repentance is change. The Greek word translated ‘repentance’ is ‘metanoia’ and this means ‘to have another mind’ or ‘to change course’ after further understanding (Mathew 4:17; Mark 1:15). In Hebrew, one of the words translated ‘repentance’ is ‘shub’ which means to ‘turn back’. It is simply making a U turn (1 Kings 8:47; Ezekiel 14:6). True repentance is therefore more than just ‘feeling sorry for what we have done’ or ‘regretting what we have done’. It involves a complete U turn in two areas: our thoughts and our actions. We need to change our thinking and understand the awful consequences of sin and its abhorrence to a holy God. Repentance also involves a u turn in our action from disobedience to submission to God.

In the outworking of repentance, three important elements are involved:

* Cognitive element - it involves an understanding and recognition of our sin and its awfulness in the sight of God (Isaiah 6:5; 1 Timothy 1:15-17).
* Emotional element - it involves a deep sense of offence and regret. We would feel the weight of the wrong actions. (2 Cor 7:9-10; Isaiah 6:5; Psalm 51:9).
* Volitional element - it involves the will; it is voluntary and requires an ‘about turn’ (Rom 10:9-10).

The combination of these elements captures true repentance. Someone once said ‘*Repentance is not when you cry. It is when you change.”*

1. **What does True Repentance look like?**

We will contrast the story of two people in the bible (Saul & David), to draw some lessons about the distinction between true repentance and ‘false’ repentance.

1 Samuel 13:1-15; 1 Samuel 15:1-35; 2 Samuel 12:1-25

1. **What is the relationship between repentance and forgiveness?**

Forgiveness has been described as the ‘spiritual twin’ of repentance (Gordon & Fardouly 1988). After we recognise our sin and its awfulness in the presence of a holy God, thankfully, He does not leave us in our sin. If we confess our sin the bible says that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9-10). God demonstrates His love to us and the finished work of Jesus on the Cross buys us our pardon. We can therefore stand before God blameless because of Christ. God also wipes away the memory of our sin, so we do not need to keep recounting them as we are forgiven (Isaiah 43:25). Praise God for His wonderful gift of salvation that comes when we are forgiven.

**Table Discussion**

Read Luke 15:11-32 then discuss the questions below:

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Revisit our discussion on true repentance and discuss which elements (if any) you find from the actions of the lost son in this story.
2. Why did the father in this story not prevent the son from leaving or go after the son after he left the father’s house?
   1. How can we relate the father’s action/inaction to the need for repentance?
   2. What can we learn about God from the father’s response to his son when he returned?
3. How does unrepentance affect our relationship with God and with people?
4. What happens if a Christian sins after being forgiven?

**Some Final Thoughts**

* Sin, the Fall, Repentance, and the Big Story of Scripture

John 1:12; Romans 6:23

* How do you know you are forgiven?

Romans 10:9-10; 2 Cor 5:17