

True repentance is love of good

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

Practical repentance is not fear of punishment. Practical repentance comes from love of good. Jesus knew this. His first message to the people was, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17) To repent means to change one's mind.

Jesus is giving us a reason to change our mind from doing what we want to do to doing what God wants us to do. The reason is not fear of punishment, fear of getting caught, fear of eternal damnation. Jesus did not threaten followers into obedience. The reason for obedience to God's laws is that the kingdom of heaven is here.

The kingdom of heaven is the ultimate of all good. God governs and there is no poverty, no sorrow or pain or disappointment. The kingdom of heaven is a continuous adventure of discovering wonderful treasures of Truth. It's not boring, waiting for something to happen. It's the ultimate exploit, where infinite good is available to be discovered and experienced. The fun of gaining good, the satisfaction of success, the happiness of health and harmony, all this is found in the kingdom of heaven.

This is the reason to change one's mind. All of the good of God is at hand. Let's not waste one more second ignoring it.

Are you tempted to try and forget your problems, dull emotional pain, or look for a good time by drinking alcohol or using drugs? What would make you change your mind and turn to God for answers instead of substances? Freedom from depression, confidence that something good can happen, happiness are found in God. The good you are looking for is pouring out to you from this spiritual source. God, divine Love, is talking to you 24 hours a day. His good is like a heavenly Niagara Falls pouring out so infinitely that we watch in awe.

But we don't see Niagara Falls by traveling to Virginia. You may read about it and see pictures of it, but that's like reading the Bible and going to church. But nothing substitutes being there, feeling the force of its rush,

hearing the thunder of the water, tasting the spray, being enveloped by the experience. If every drop of water represents a blessing, a good thought or deed, even the Cumberland River begins to represent the incredible goodness of God waiting for you.

Fortunately, we don't have to physically go somewhere to find the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is within you. (Luke 17:21) But it does take changing one's mind, like changing a television channel from worldly, selfish thinking to humble listening for divine Love. It's not difficult. But it may be unfamiliar. If we've spent a lifetime watching a worldly channel, it may seem strange to change channels. That's what the children of Israel thought when Moses was leading them out of Egypt. They had literally been slaves for hundreds of years in Egypt. Their life was miserable. The Pharaoh could and did order male babies to be killed. They worked long hours in terrible conditions. The power of God freed them from Pharaoh. But in their journey to the Promised Land, they kept wanting to turn around and go back! Whenever life became difficult, instead of trusting the infinite good of God, they wanted to scurry back to slavery and bondage. Why? Because it was familiar.

Moses helped them overcome their fear by showing them the goodness of God. Water came out of a rock. Manna appeared on the ground every morning. Quails appeared each evening for dinner. When the children of Israel completely repented, changed their minds, and decided there was no way they were going back to slavery, God led them into the Promised Land and nothing was an obstacle to them. The waters of the river Jordan parted. The walls of Jericho fell down flat. Instead of being discouraged by difficulties, they entered the kingdom of heaven, the consciousness of God's power with them, and they triumphed.

True repentance comes from loving God. When we are willing to turn off the old channel and turn on God's channel, we are opening the door to unlimited goodness. Jesus did not lie. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The blessings of God are pouring out just waiting for you to change your mind. It's time to leave human will in Egypt and follow God's will.

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