

DAVID WILKERSON DEVOTIONS

PREACHING REPENTANCE

What was the first message Jesus delivered after He emerged from the temptation in the wilderness? Scripture says, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

Jesus called people to repent before He even called them to believe. Mark writes, “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15). Christ preached, “Repent first—and believe.”

Elsewhere Jesus says of His mission, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:13). And He told the Galileans, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

Jesus’ gospel was all about repentance!

John the Baptist also preached repentance, to prepare Israel for the coming of Christ. John’s message to the Jews was simple and straightforward: “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2).

People came from everywhere to hear John preach. And he told them in no uncertain terms: “The Messiah is soon to appear in your midst, so you’d better get ready to meet Him! You may feel excited that He’s coming, but I’m telling you, your hearts are not prepared because you’re still holding on to your sins.

“Outside you appear clean and holy. But inside, you’re full of dead men’s bones! You’re a generation of vipers, snakes, with absolutely no fear of God [see Matthew 3:7-12]. Yet you have no concept that you’re even sinners. I warn you—you must deal with your sin before you can believe on the Savior and follow Him. So, repent, turn from your sin and live in a way that reflects genuine change!”