

Repentance – A Fresh Beginning

The Rev'd. Dr. John Roddam | www.pleromainternational.ca

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The Fall in our culture is THE start-up time – a New Year. Is there anything in your life where you would want a re-do? a new beginning? At the end of Luke's Gospel, Jesus said, "*repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in My name to all nations...*" Luke 24:47. This points to a fresh start!



The word 'repentance' means a change of conviction. It is deeper than a change of mind. This points to a change of beliefs... a turning to Jesus where one follows Him as Lord. For many this involves a 180-degree turnaround.

Most of us follow our own conscience and dictates. The idea of turning our will, desires, future, and self over to another is a capitulation few are willing to engage. But that is what it means for a person to follow Jesus as Lord.

This flows out of a loving relationship, where we surrender to the persistent, loving advances of our God. Jesus' Name means "saviour." He is on a rescue mission to save and redeem us.

One of the first people I met when we moved to the West Coast in 1994 was Father Ron Barnes, a staunch Anglo-Catholic. As I got to know him, I found he was an advocate for personal renewal. He believed this began with a prayer inviting Jesus into one's life. This is the prayer –

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, I know that You came into the world to die on the cross and save me from my sins. I want my life to change. I want to commit my heart and soul and mind to you. I invite you into my life right now. I want you to be my personal Saviour, the Lord of my life. Come, Lord Jesus into my heart. Clean the garbage out of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Wash me clean and turn my life around so I can live for you. AMEN.

Fr. Barnes had that prayer on the back of his business card and he had led over 5 dozen people already that year to personal faith in Christ. His ministry was mostly to mainline denominational folk. For some reason Anglicans have stopped leading people to personal faith in Jesus and think it is foreign to our tradition. Fr. Barnes simply pointed out the fact that the prayer was written by a Roman Catholic Priest. Perhaps that was what Pope John Paul II was pointing to when he said, "We have sacramentalized our people, we have not evangelized them!"

So... what about You, my dear reader? Do you need a fresh beginning? You might consider Jesus. There are many benefits in following Him... knowing love, joy, peace at a level you never thought possible. PLUS, you receive the forgiveness of sin, the promise of everlasting life and an abiding love relationship with the Risen Jesus Christ. Wow!! Pray that prayer and start anew today!