

Preach Repentance and Remission of Sins

With the sacred events of Good Friday and Easter soon to be relived in our hearts again, let us give careful thought to God's perfect plan for the salvation of our undying souls. So perfectly has He prepared His plan that man can neither add to nor take away from it, but in humble obedience to His will, receive it with joy, believe it, and present it to all of mankind. Let us therefore carefully consider the solemn responsibility all true believers have to preach and teach these eternal truths.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47

John the Baptist, whom God had chosen to be the forerunner of Christ, preached repentance unto the people of his day. Faithful to the Lord, he fulfilled his calling; preaching; *"...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* Matt. 3:2 His message was to prepare the hearts of men for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to establish His spiritual kingdom on earth. Yet he sought no glory or honor for himself, but simply acknowledged: *"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; Make straight the way of the Lord."* John 1:23 Again John testified that he came only to baptize with water unto repentance but he pointed to Christ and proclaimed, *"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."* John 1:29

We find that Jesus, on the other hand, testified of John saying, *"Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* Luke 7:28 What Jesus is saying is that John's work and his message was to awaken the hearts of men that they might recognize their sin, and in true contrition repent and thus be spiritually prepared in heart for the receiving of Christ as their Savior. We are to remember that Christ had not yet, at the time of John's preaching, established His kingdom on Earth. His suffering, death, and resurrection had not yet taken place. Therefore, John could only preach (persuade) men unto repentance. God was well pleased with the faithful obedience of His servant and Jesus also called John the Baptist great.

John said *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire..."* Matt. 3:11 Jesus, after his resurrection from the dead, appeared unto his disciples behind the locked doors and said to them, *"Peace be unto you: as my Father hath*

sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." John 20:21-23 Thus, Jesus conferred upon his disciples the authority to proclaim forgiveness of sins unto repentant, penitent sinners in His name as we read also in Luke 24:47, *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem."*

Let us now, dear Christian friend, further consider this question of greatness of which Jesus speaks in the light of God's Word. First, we see how great a calling we have received, tasting of the goodness of God's grace when He, through His children, preached unto our penitent hearts the forgiveness of all our sins in the name and blood of His dear Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He also instilled a living and abiding faith into our hearts to believe this wonderful gospel message of reconciliation. In addition to this amazing work of atonement, He gifted us with His Holy Spirit so that we would never have to walk alone in this sin-darkened world. Now, our pilgrimage would be sanctified and our footsteps guided by His unerring hand of love. Consider further dear friend, how now having received these blessings from heaven, the charge Christ has set before us is to, *"preach repentance and the remission of sins in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* Luke 24:47 The beggar of grace, the least in the kingdom of God, who believes in the merits of Christ alone, now becomes the greatest, for he is not only a hearer of God's Word, but a doer also. He who was a beggar, God has made to be his ambassador, bearing not only the message of repentance but also the gospel of grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Both keys have been given him to employ by the power of God; the key for binding and the key for loosing. Through the preaching of God's Word, the unrepentant sinner remains bound in his sin, but the repentant, penitent sinner, who believes, is set free.

Let us take notice from that which we have learned, we are to begin our preaching and teaching at Jerusalem, or we may say, our own homes, in our Christian gatherings, and then as God leads, to all nations. If we ignore the Lord's instruction or venture out on our own without His leading, our efforts will prove to be fruitless. We must remember it is the Lord's work. As we go forth prayerfully to do His work we will find it is not always easy. Satan will always resist the preaching of the gospel and we must recognize that not all men will tolerate or receive such preaching. But let us not weary or become discouraged. The Apostle Paul experienced these things and much more. He writes to young Timothy, *"Preach the word; be*

instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Tim. 4:2-4. In the preceding chapter, Paul also warns of the perilous days to come. We can believe those days are here and now in which men will have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Paul warns, *“From such turn away.”* 2 Tim. 3:1-5

Today, it appears that these prophecies, exhortations, and warnings are so timely. The urging of men unto repentance is so often omitted or so craftily veiled in flowery words of a social gospel that it passes unnoticed by the hearer. In this preaching, the heart of man is never pricked nor does he ever become awakened or convicted of his sin, but continues to be lulled into a false assurance and mindless apathy. Who will have to answer on judgement day?

While it is true that those who preach repentance are often viewed as being legalistic or judgmental, this is not our word; it is the command of our Lord. However, the message of repentance must also be clearly tempered with love and grace so the hearer may behold in it God’s grace, mercy, and forgiveness offered freely to the penitent soul.

Pray earnestly, dear friend, that God would grant each of us strength to be the voices crying in the wilderness of this sin-darkened world. Pray for those who God has called and who have dedicated their lives to serve Him in truth at home and abroad. Perhaps some poor soul will come to the marvelous light of His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is all the work of God from beginning to end and this is why we celebrate Good Friday and Easter. To God be the glory, great things he hath done.

May you have a most blessed Easter,

Ken Storm - Pastor

April 5	Charles Korhonen	Online Only
April 10	Ken Storm	7pm Online Only
April 12	Ken Storm	Online Only
April 19	Ken Storm	Online Only
April 26	Chad Kuivanen	Online Only

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

P.O. Box 531

Houghton, MI 49931

Contact Information: Ken Storm, Pastor (906)482-3234 Church (906)334-2766

Location: 17602 N. Lake Ave. Tapiola, MI

Website: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org>

Contact Information: Ken Storm, Pastor (906)482-3234 Church (906)334-2766

Location: 17602 N. Lake Ave. Tapiola, MI

Website: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org>