

## The nature of the God that we repent to

**Matthew 4 : 17, Luke 24 : 44-47, Acts 2 : 38 – 39**

- Repentance is necessary to enter the Kingdom of God.
- It is a key, non-negotiable part of our salvation and acceptance into God's family
- We need to repent once at the point of our salvation when we declare that Jesus is Lord of our lives, and we need to continue to repent throughout our lives because we continue to sin
- The Hebrew word for repentance means to turn and return (to turn away from our sinful ways and return to God)

Some reasons why we struggle to repent :

- We don't realise our need to repent
- We do recognise our need to repent, but we don't feel remorse / Godly sorrow
- We have the wrong view of the God that we turn back to – we think he will treat us as we would treat us, or that he would treat us as we treat others who have made mistakes

**But luckily God is nothing like us in that respect !**

**Exodus 34 : 4 – 6**

- These are some of the most important words in the Bible about God !
- God here is speaking about himself – abounding in love and faithfulness

**1 Corinthians 13 : 4 – 8**

- God is all of these qualities - not only that, God abounds in these qualities - he exceedingly possesses these qualities
- God is exceedingly loving, exceedingly patient, exceedingly kind, exceedingly does not keep a record of wrongs and is exceedingly protective and trusting, exceedingly never fails us

**God is over-the-top in His love for us !**

God is compassionate and merciful. When we sin, He does not respond in anger and annoyance. We tend to respond like that to each other, but God is different. He has a ridiculous over-the-top amount of love for us. And this is the God we come back to when we repent.

This is the God that we serve. How does He respond when we repent ?

**Luke 15 : 1 -10**

- Central theme : something that was lost is found and returned to the person or place where it belongs
- Is a cause for celebration - not just a personal celebration but a party is thrown
- Lesson for us : God celebrates / God parties when we repent

### **Luke 15 : 11 – 24**

- The son effectively treats his father as though he were already dead - extremely hurtful for the father
- But the father awaited his return, never gave up on him
- Publicly embraced his son, kissed him and gave him a robe, ring and sandals - all symbolic of an honourable restoration to his family.
- He then threw a big party

This is how our compassionate and gracious God, abounding in love and faithfulness, responds when we repent – He restores us into a relationship with Him, with over-the-top joy and celebration.

### **Ephesians 3 : 14 – 19**

- Paul prayed that the church would know the fullness of God's love, but then quickly added that this extent of love is too great to understand fully
- With the limitations of our worldly bodies and minds, we are simply not able to fully grasp / understand the love of God

This is the God that we serve. Even though we cannot fully grasp it, He abounds in love and faithfulness. Because of that he joyously restores us and celebrates when we turn back to Him. Fortunately He is not like us – He does not treat us as we would treat ourselves or each other.

#### Challenge for the week

1. Think of something that you need to repent of – an area of your life where you have not been walking with God / where you have not been in the light
2. Then imagine leaving that sin behind and returning to God - imagine God's joy and celebration when you do this
3. Then repent / turn back to God knowing with certainty that He abounds in love and faithfulness and will joyfully accept and forgive you
4. Finally, encourage a brother or sister to do the same this week - if there is something you see in a brother or sister's life, speak to them this week, remind them of this lesson and help them to view God in the way that I have described today, and help them to repent