Repentance

Now **repentance** is that **quality** of **God given faith** that moves the will to obedience to God. Therefore **repentance** must happen **together with faith**. The two are inseparable. The Gospel calls us to **turn from sin** (repentance) unto **trust in Christ** (faith).

Acts 20:21 - 21 solemnly **testifying** to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Because it is the **character** of God given **faith**, **repentance** itself is a **divine gift** (John 15:5, Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18, 2 Tim 2:25).

Acts 11:18 - 18 And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, "Well then, **God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance** that leads to life." NASB

And since it is **part** of the character of **faith** itself, (for God given faith is of itself a **penitent faith**), it occurs in the **order of salvation simultaneously** with **faith**. Faith and repentance, if you will, are in a sense, two sides of the same coin.

Repentance is an essential part therefore of salvation. It is a **sincere sorrow** for personal **sin**, an **earnest forsaking** of **sin**, and an **ardent commitment** to **amend personal sins** and **live in obedience** to God. Notice how these qualities were all present in the repentance of the Corinthians which Paul commends in 2 Corinthians….

2 Corinthians 7:9-11 - 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made **sorrowful to the point of repentance**; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces **a repentance without regret, leading to salvation**; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold **what earnestness** this very thing, this godly sorrow, **has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!** In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. NASB

You see they were sorrowful in a "**godly**" way, and Paul says, "**sorrowful to the point of repentance.**" See that **repentance** possesses a **sincere sorrow** over **sin**. This repentance also had **"indignation"** of its wrongdoing, it zealously **hated** and **forsook** its own **sin**. Further, Paul writes, it had an **"earnestness"** with it to **"vindicate"** or amend its sinfulness and to **"avenge"** its own wrongdoing. It possessed a **zeal** and **longing** for **obedience**. See how the Corinthians **mind** and **will** was **completely reversed** and **changed** in this **repentance** from an allegiance to its own sinfulness to an **allegiance** to the **will of God**. And this is what repentance is at its heart, a **turning from sin unto God**. It will often produce a **confession** of **sins** as well.

Proverbs 28:13 - 13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But **he who confesses and forsakes them** will find compassion. NASB
Bruce Demarest states that repentance has “three essential aspects. (1) an intellectual element, (2) an emotional element, (3) a volitional element.” I concur that this boils it down to its essence. Repentance clearly is….

1) **Intellectual** – knows/understands it has sinned against God & righteousness
2) **Emotional** - feels remorse and sorrow to the point of forsaking personal sin
3) **Volitional** - commits itself to amend its wrong and walk in obedience

Now because repentance is actually part of the character of saving faith it is also seen in the Scripture as an essential element in salvation.

Acts 11:18 - 18 And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.” 

2 Corinthians 7:10 - 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. NASB

Repentance says Paul, “leads to salvation.” It is a necessary and essential part of salvation, for what would the human response to God’s grace be if it were not a heartfelt and sincere turning from sin unto God. And knowing that regeneration is the very saving act of God whereby He grants saving faith, and that faith is of its essence repentant, we see that whenever true salvation has taken place, it always accompanies a sincere repentance. Moreover, this sincere repentance, being part of the character of saving faith, will continue throughout life as our abiding attitude toward sin. It is a hearty state of living in that sorrow for and forsaking of personal sin, being also committed unto obedience to God.

1 John 1:6-10 - 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NASB

See here that for the true believer the ongoing acknowledgement of sin, even to the point of confession, and the practice of obedience “walking in the light,” is that abiding state of right-standing with God that we live in, and the “blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” The repentant believer is therefore not only trusting in the righteousness of Christ for His salvation, but lives in a heartfelt commitment to obedience to God. We see this clearly in the Thessalonians repentance. They not only “turned to God from their idols,” but that repentance produces a life of service to God.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God NASB

This when Paul would preach the Gospel, He would call people not just to repentance and faith, but also to a life of obedience.

Acts 26:20 - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. NASB