



WCF 15.3 (TPH p928)

III. Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof,(e) which is the act of God’s free grace in Christ;(f) yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.(g)

(e) Ezek. 36:31, 32; Ezek. 16:61, 62, 63.

(f) Hosea 14:2, 4; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7.

(g) Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30, 31.

Luke 13:1 **There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**

⁶ He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ ⁸ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’ ”

- All of humanity split into two groups: those who repent and those who perish.
- God surrounds us and bombards us with reminders of the necessity of repentance.
- We are God’s “trees” in God’s “ground,” so we owe Him to live for Him in the manner that He says.
- God gives especially those in His church abundant helps unto repentance.
- Without life and fruit-bearing granted unto our souls, church members will not repent; many don’t; many perish.

Acts 17:22 **Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:**

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ ²⁹ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. ³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

- We are God’s creatures and God’s “offspring,” so we owe Him to live for Him in the manner that He says.
- The purpose of the time and place appointed for you is that you would seek the Lord.
- God punishes nations for idolatry now in a way from which He had previously refrained.
- These punishments on nations come in order, in part, to warn every individual in the world that they will stand before Jesus at His judgment.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Well, if we could open in prayer we'll get started.

Our gracious God how we praise you for the love and which you have determined to glorify yourself by redeeming sinners in your son. We ask that you would grant to us. Now the help of the spirit of your son and you send and to believe his hearts that we might cry, Abba, father, the same spirit to leads us.

So that rather than living according to the flesh and dying, we may by your spirit, put to death, the deeds of the body, of the deeds of the flesh and live. So we pray that just as you have granted to us and grant to us to look to Christ for all of our right standing before you that by your spirit.

You would make us also look to Christ to make us to walk rightly before you. That we would be those who already have? No condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus. And that this would show in our lives by our walking, according to your commandments, as the law has become to us.

Something that is handled by the spirit of life. As he acts upon our hearts, as it produces like likeness to Christ in our lives, grant it we pray in Jesus name, amen.

So we've spent several weeks talking about how repentance is not to be rested in as something that makes up for your sin or gets your forgiveness, your determination to do better your desire to do better. You're actually doing better in walking before the Lord is not at all. What makes up for your sinning?

Not at all, not the least bit, what gets your forgiveness? And instead, one of the great foundations of the gospel so much, so that you can call it the gospel rightly, is that our being atoned for and are being pardoned are being forgiven is an act of God's free grace and Christ.

Now it was important to spend time going back over that which really, we study in the nature of saving faith. And we study, we think about justification how we're made right with God, but it's important to go back over it. Anyway, because it is also important to stress that repentance turning from sin hating sin, turning to God, loving God, knowing that, that he is worthy and altogether, lovely or love, worthy and living for him is with full resolve and desire to obey and to serve him.

And then follow through in obedience and service repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation. It is not at all meritorious. It doesn't earn any of our salvation, but it is absolutely necessary to salvation. There is no salvation without it. So if something is, is that necessary? Why is it that in every age of the church?

There are those who resist, preaching against sin, preaching holiness of life? The goodness of God's law, the necessity of obeying him a couple of reasons. Because in every age of the church, the devil is attacking the church and every age of the church, the world is offended and infuriated by anything that is in league, with Christ or anyone who says I belong to Christ, in Christ belongs to me and I will live for him.

They know that that ought to be true of them and just like you children have experienced. I'm sure when you were not doing very well and another one of the children was doing well and maybe they didn't even point it out, but you were irritated or hostile or bitter in your heart because of your sin understandable does not mean excusable.

I understand what it is. That's why I can't. Excuse it, it's called sin, but you get mad at the that child who is honoring, mom and dad and obeying and serving because it burns your conscience, doesn't it? And so the world has always attacked but also our own flesh are remaining.

Sinfulness does not like to hear about repentance and then there are well, meaning reasons as well, there are those who are worried that if we say you must repent or you will perish, that people will automatically therefore, trust in their repentance. And so we never say, you must repent and we talk as little about putting this into death as possible and we talk as little about holiness as possible, we meaning those who are doing the wrong thing, and we are not trying to talk about this things, as little as possible.

There are people who in well, who says, I should have said that and because they are concerned that people will trust in their repenting. They don't talk about repenting one of the big problems with that is. We're about to see in Luke 13. Is that was not Jesus's strategy.

Jesus was quite okay with and does say, unless you repent you will all likewise perish have so you know, we mustn't. Make up rules for how to guard against errors in Christian thinking or Christian living that the Holy Spirit doesn't follow that. The Lord Jesus doesn't follow that the apostles writing scripture.

Don't follow. So, you know, what? Our confession is doing in this paragraph by giving those cautions. First, you must not trust in your repentance at all. You must embrace that your being

atoned for and forgiven is an act that God alone has done. And as he's, he does it only by his free grace repenting can't at all earn anything from him.

Because if it does, it takes away from his grace and it takes away from the freeness of his grace. But then going on to say yet, is it of such necessity to all sinners? That none may expect, pardon without it. We're also following scripture here. So the first proof text, they give is just that, you know, that phrase unless you repent, you will all likewise perish and verse three in verse five of luke 13, but we're gonna read the whole passage.

There were present at that season, Luke 13 verse 1. There were present at that season. Some who told him about the Galileans whose blood pilot had mingled with their sacrifices? Okay? So there are Galileans and they've gone up to Jerusalem to offer. Sacrifices. They they know that their sinners.

They know that they're guilty, they know that they need a tournament, they know that God has provided atonement and they they go up to to offer the sacrifices and then they get killed and the implication because of what Jesus says in verse 2 and Jesus answered and said to them.

Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse? Sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things. So it what is Jesus? Suggesting that the Jews supposed what were they thinking? That Jesus asks them about that. Those Galileans deserve it. Haha, we know about them, they say that they that they believed in and God's promised forgiveness through the sacrifice that he had provided.

But then God's providence, they went up there and they didn't just slaughter bulls and lambs and goats pilot slaughtered. Then how we knew it? They they were secret sinners in the church. Jesus says, I tell you no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Okay? So, two things going on here.

One in God's providence, his people can suffer and even die. Cannot draw conclusions about the way that the about the Galileans from the way that they die. But number two about him, does Jesus say that the people asking him about? This should be concerned, is today, should they be about themselves?

And what do they need to do? They need to repent and what will happen if they don't repent, they will perish. Now he doesn't mean unless you repent, you will all likewise get slaughtered by pilot they would then have a lot of work to do. Wouldn't he What's he talking about as you talking about their bodies?

Perishing. No, because they were talking about the Galilee in soul spirting. Right. There was saying a, how we knew they died in sin. That's what they're saying thing, did you hear about those Galileans Jesus? I just bet they were terrible. Sinners is turns to them and he says, you're all terrible sinners.

It's true that the that that's a picture of what sin deserves what happened to the Galileans, but what they were going to do in Jerusalem sacrificing the animals, the sacrifice of the animal was also a picture of what's in deserves and the greatest of play ever of what Cindy deserves is, what children.

But child can tell me what is the greatest display of ever of what sin deserves Hell. Is number two, hell is going to take forever and ever? It is a perfect but necessarily everlasting picture of what sin deserves. There's another picture that is also perfect and complete and only takes three hours.

The oldest child on the room, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Okay. So, yes, you hear. Jesus talk about how and you tell yourself unless you repent, unless you repent self, you will likewise perish. You hear about someone dying in a spect in spectacular, fashion extraordinary, fashion. And Jesus says that you tell yourself unless you, repent, you'll likely spirit.

But most of all you you see Christ on the cross and you say, unless you repent, you will die without him and you can never finish doing for yourself. What Jesus said? It is finished about on the cross. You need Jesus. In order to have Jesus, you must repent.

Now Jesus alone and only what Jesus has done. Has earned for your forgiveness, your turning to him does not earn your forgiveness but you cannot have him without turning from sin. Unless you repent, you will all like less parish and then he challenges them just to show that the Lord is often giving us such displays and he says, or those 18 on whom the tower in slow and fell and killed them.

Do you think that they were worse? Sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise pair. So, Jesus is basically splitting humanity into two groups, those who perish, and those, who

Repent, like you Andrew, those who repent. Now, this group can be described in a bunch of different ways, can't it This group is the those who repent group, but it's also, those who believe in Jesus group, So that it can be, the those who have Jesus group, It's faith that joins you to Christ, and it is the those who are atoned for their sin is paid for by Jesus group.

If you have Jesus, you have his payment for your sin, and it's the those who are made righteous before God. In Jesus group. If you have Jesus, you don't just have payment for sin. You have his righteousness, counted for you. You have everything. You have his spirit given to you.

You have his adoption. He is the only begotten, but you are the adopted child. So, there's a lot of ways you can describe this group that perishing group is over here. But one of the ways that this group can be described, is the repentance unto life group. They've been given this grace that we heard about in the previous two paragraphs in Westminster confession 15 that we've been seeing open from scripture these many weeks now.

So all of humanity is split into two groups, the perishing group and the repenting group, that's something you can tell yourselves when you've got, you know, one of those sins not you know, we respond in our ongoing sinfulness and our fleshliness to sin in many different ways. Some sins are sins that are already by the spirits grace to us, horrible, and ugly to us and we hate them.

And then, there are other sins that we kind of want to treat like that. Pet that has destroyed all the furniture and ruined the garden. And and you know, you have to get rid of it. No, this, I'm not like code language telling my children that we're getting rid of the cats.

But there are, there are some sins that although, although they are destroying us in our remaining fleshliness, we have difficulty hating them. Remember repentance is a grace from Christ to grace from God and it's something that you grow in and you're hatred for sin is something that you need to grow in and particular sins.

You need more help with that. Well one of the things to help you with that is to say Jesus says all of humanity is split into two groups, the parishing group and the repenting group and I will not even for the pets in risk. Being in the parishing group, I will cling to Jesus and his righteousness and I will ask him for grace to help me.

Hate all of my sin, including the ones that thus far, I'm let I am less inclined or feel less inclined to hate now. God, surrounds us and bombards us with reminders of the necessity of repentance Jesus is. Yeah, and show my age. Some of you are old like I am.

And Jesus is teaching you how to read the newspaper. Okay. Don't don't read it like a pre-trib free mail, ultra dispute. Yeah, you got your haggly book right next to you and you're like into the world end of the world and to the world and to the world. Okay?

Don't do that. We'll hear more about that in the in the sermon you should read the newspaper or your news feed or whatever. However, it is that you get news or, you know, the bottom of the whole in which you have put your head for peace. You should you should respond to the events of the day.

By saying, I need to repent. I need to repent. I need to repent sin, is wicked, sin is offensive to God and God hates it, and he punishes it and he had keeps making displays of his hatred against it and the necessity of repentance, okay? So when we read about what's going on on the world, there's many other things to do.

Yes, it is. It is important to think rightly about those things, but one important thing about every you know what, we would call a catastrophe or something like that, is to remember the necessity of my continuing to hate my sin, my growing, and hating my sin, my continuing to apprehend to see, and I hold of cling to the love of God in Jesus Christ, and to purpose and resolve to obey him.

Moving on, then he moved to a parable to teach this similar thing, he also spoke this parable a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Okay. In the parable, who's vineyard? Is it a certain? A certain man?

Okay, so the vineyard belongs to the man. And what did he have in his vineyard? A fig tree who's victory? Is it? It's his fig tree and to whom does the hypothetical fruit. And sadly for the tree thus far, it is only hypothetical, but to whom does the fruit belong.

It belongs to him, then he said to the keeper of his vineyard. Look for these three years. I've come seeking fruit on this tree and find none. So, how much fruit is he found so far? Not. Okay, this isn't and, you know, it's you can take things to far and stretching things and in the parable.

But in the parable, this is not a tree that has produced some inadequate. Fruit average. Genuine believer will think that about his fruit thus far. He ought to be grateful for whatever he has because apart from grace, we're all none, fruit trees, aren't we? Okay. But this one has none.

So he says, continuing verse 7, cut it down. Why does it use up the ground? But he answered and said to him, sir, let the, let it align this year. Also, until I dig around it and fertilize it and if it bears fruit well, but if not after that, you can cut it down.

Now, scripture interprets scripture, and like I said, it's yeah, parables are not allegories. You should not try to read into every detail of the parable, the analogy. For instance, you'd make a great mistake. If you thought that the man and the keeper, the man, who ends of vineyard and, and the keeper of the vineyard are different persons of the trinity.

And, you know, the father really wants to smash people and the son or the spirit of saying, no, no, let me work on them longer. You would just be committing a traitor in heresy, they're not multiple wills and desires and God and even worse. You would be sitting again to the marvelous love of the Lord for his own church, who in the parable of the wheat and the tears.

Right says, don't pull up the terrors. Why? Because there's wheat. That is who's fruit is so poor that it actually looks like tears and it's the Lord's love for the weakest. Poorest fruit producing. Wheat in his church. It's the Lord's love for them that motivates and that parable not pulling up the tears.

Okay, so in the whole world of Christ's church, there are these super weak believers so that if you're in a church in Vanuatu or if you're in a church in Murray County, Tennessee and you are producing the poorest looking fruit. At least it feels that way to you, you can say from that, parable, the Lord, Jesus loves me so much that he, who, against whom that tears in his church are infinitely more offensive than they are against us.

He is putting up with them for the sake, of weak believers. Like I am how much more worthy is he of bearing better fruit and you look to him, you know, I say, oh, well the Lord, Jesus loves that. I'm weak. It doesn't love that you, we that you're weak, but he is.

He is patient to produce better fruit in you, and that's what you get in this parable, right? So you take the teaching of the one, take the teaching of the other and you see the patients but you see what the patients is for. It's for our repentance, right? But he answered and he said to him sir, let it alone this year.

Also, until I dig around it and fertilize it and if it bears fruit well, but if not after that, you can cut it down. Okay, so he's saying there are in the church. Those who bear? No fruit. There are people who know the truth about justification by grace alone, through faith alone, but are not trusting in Jesus.

There are people who know the truth that repentance is necessary, but they don't hate their sin and they don't love righteousness. And so he is saying that, if we do not repent, even if we're in the church, if we do not repent, we will be. We will perish, we'd be cut down.

And the, the idea is similar to that, which he says elsewhere in John cut down and thrown into the fire. So the church is Jesus's church, just like the vineyard is the man's vineyard. And if you are in the church you are Jesus's tree. He has set you apart as his own.

Even if you never come to repentance or faith, the Lord Jesus has set. You apart from the world is belonging to him by putting you in his church. Now, does that increase or decrease your need to come to faith? Does it increase or decrease? Your need to repent of your sin.

The fact that you are in his church and he has set you apart as his and he expects what from you in the language, he expects holiness, right? That, isn't that the fruit that Jesus is talking about here? That's connected to the the discussion about the Galileans and the discussion about those on whom the tower of Solomon fell.

And so he expects his fruit from you but it's his fruit. It's not just for him but it's also his fruit that only. He can produce you need to look to him now. God gives gives us abundant help for repentance. You see the idea around it and fertilize it.

We could spend the time, but we won't to go to Hebrew is six and all the advantages that you are given by being a member of his church. But being a member of his church, does not automatically mean that you have spiritual life in Jesus Christ. And so you need to look to Christ for that spiritual life to give you that repentance without life and fruit bearing, granted to our souls by God's grace.

If God doesn't give your soul life and make you bear fruit, you will not repent. There are many members of many churches who don't repent and who die in their sin. In Matthew chapter 7. Jesus says many, it's one of the scariest little scariest little words in the Bible.

Many will say to me in that day. Lord Lord in your name, did I not in your name? Did I not in your name? Did I not? And what does Jesus give as the evidence for him? Never having done them. He will say to many in the last day.

Depart from me. I never knew you. You workers of iniquity workers with law. It's literally in the text workers without the law. Okay? So it's even people who work that stuff but it wasn't working at what he commands in his law. That didn't learn to love him as their king and to love his law as the rule for their life and to obey him and so repentance is necessary.

Repentance is necessary. We have we have a whole savior in Jesus Christ who gives us a whole salvation and part of that salvation is the repentance that he gives us. And if you like it, where do you find it? Not in yourself. You find it in him.

Think we'll just summarize. The acts passage Paul is an Athens, he's waiting for his friends just before the portion that you see on the page there versus 22 through 31. He has been walking along and he's provoked been provoked in his spirit and he starts preaching. And they take him to the area because, which is kind of a place where different conversations like this would take place.

And that's where we pick it up in verse 22. And he says, you know, he he's seen all these idols which is, which is what provoked him in his spirit and he proclaims to them. The one whom they ought to be worshiping man, is created to worship. He will always worship.

Even if he tries to be atheistic, he ends up, he ends up a worshiper of something and Paul announces to them, why this is true? Because God made everyone and God made every thing. And he especially to man gives man life and breath and makes us to live and move and have our being in him.

Therefore we are called in that sense God's offspring and and therefore since verse 29 since we're the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divine nature is like gold or silverstone something shaped by art and man's devising. Now, when he says truly these times of ignorance, God overlooked.

But now commands all men everywhere to repent, He specifically talking about the idolatry in Athens, isn't he? We could start with a lot of different sins. It's very instructive. I think that the apostle here starts with the sin of idolatry many other sins in Athens he could have picked on but that was that was the one.

Now what he's saying in verse 30 is not that those who were idolaters before did not perish in their sin but he's saying is that in the providential way in which God, interacts with nations, God had restrained, judgments that would fall upon nations for false worship. He didn't restrain him with Israel.

Did he when you read your profits and the Old Testament? He punishes Israel for false worship but he he's warning the Greeks and he's warning. The Romans that God is going to be punishing nations for their idolatry from now on, truly these times of ignorance, got overlooked, but now, commands, all men everywhere to repent, why?

Because he has appointed a day on which he will judge the world and righteousness by the man whom he is ordained, he is given assurance of this to all by raising him from the dead. So he's announcing an Athens. And X17 that there is a new age in God's dealing with the nations.

Not only is this the agent which the gospel goes forth to all the nations but it's an age in which nations are going to be held accountable for false worship in a way that they weren't before. And the young men's group, can that likes to discuss such things that lunch can talk about how this is authorization for or this is the the the warrant for urging the civil magistrate to enforce both tables of the law because God threatens our country.

If we do, not nationally conscientiously worship, the Lord Jesus Christ and the triune God who has revealed himself in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Think that's, that's all I'll say about that. But the reason that he gives here for why God is doing that, in the age of the gospel is again. Same as tower of salome same as pilot, the blood pilot mixing the blood, the galleons of their sacrifices, as a warning to all that, we will stand before.

Jesus, that the resurrected one who is king of kings and Lord of Lords who punishes the nations for their idolatry, in the age of the gospel that you every one of you is going to stand before Jesus. Kids, when you study history every nation that you see destroyed from the resurrection, to now has been destroyed in part, and you could even say, primarily for failing to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, that puts the US and China and really all the current nations just about in a, in a dreadful position.

But the Lord's says to us and acts 17, the reason for that dreadful position, or one of the reasons for that dreadful position is to remind you that you're going to stand before Jesus. And that if you stand before him without repentance, you will perish spray.

Lord, we pray that you would help us to view holiness and obedience to your law to be repentance. Love for you delight in your law. As absolutely necessary, we pray that by your spirit's mercy to us, you would. So you would make us so amazed at your grace and such worshipers of Jesus that we would never trust and our repenting.

But we pray that you would help us never to downplay the need of repenting in the need of holiness. Since you don't downplay it, we have a hard time, maintaining a proper balance in our hearts and minds Lord. So we pray for the help of your spirit, we pray that he would give us of the mind of Christ who pray that you would give us right balance and write proportion.

Most of all, we pray that you would make us hate sin, love you. And cling to Christ for that hate and that love which we ask in his name. Amen.