

Introduction:

1. A lot of people like to say the Bible is too hard to understand. Indeed, some parts of the Bible are hard to understand. The Apostle Peter even said so, 2 Peter 3:15-16. Paul wrote some things that are difficult to understand, and I agree with that. Peter also wrote some things hard to understand.
2. But, not everything in the Bible is hard to understand. Every once in a while you come across a statement that is so plain, so bold and so simple that no one could misunderstand it. One of those statements is found in Mark 6:12.
 - a. In this context, Jesus sends the twelve apostles out to preach the gospel to the cities in Israel.
 - b. Their message was simple: It is that people should repent. They needed to change their ways!

The Lesson:

I. The message of repentance was not a new message.

- A. It is a message that was preached earlier in this same book by John the Baptist, Mark 1:4.
 1. The baptism of these people was an expression of repentance. It was a pledge that they would change their ways. As they were baptized, they confessed their sins, Mark 1:5.
 2. The book of Luke records some of the specifics of John’s message of repentance, Luke 3:8, 10-14. It was a message of sharing (turning away from selfishness); a message of honesty (turning away from stealing and extortion); a message of integrity and contentment (turning from corruption, bribery and complaining).
- B. The message of repentance was not only preached by John, it was also preached by Jesus, Mark 1:14-15. Like John’s message, this was a message to the Jewish people.
 1. Radical change was coming. It is the time of the kingdom. Men must turn from their corrupt ways and turn to the gospel—the good news of the kingdom.
 2. When Jesus preached repentance, His manner was different than John, even though His message was the same. According to Mark 1:21-22, Jesus taught as one having authority.
 - a. That is, He spoke as one who is the source of authority. John the Baptist got His message from God; the twelve got their message from God; Jesus is God! Authority springs from Him.
 - b. Some examples of this can be seen in Mark 2:5, 19, 28. These are all statements that the disciples could not make about themselves. Only deity could make such statements. When Jesus preached repentance they were hearing directly from God that this was His will for their lives.
- C. But, returning to our original text (Mark 6:13), the simple message of repentance—that men should change their lives—was preached by the twelve. What applied to men then, applies to men today. People should repent! But, it may be that a lot of people don’t really know why!

II. Repentance—a basic need of mankind. Why?

- A. We must repent of sin or we will never be right with God.
 1. God requires that we forsake evil conduct, Isaiah 55:7. We must repent to be forgiven.
 2. Men disobey God when they sin; but they also disobey God when they refuse to repent, Acts 17:30. God commands all people to repent. No sinner is exempt from repentance.
- B. Please allow me to give you a short list from Colossians 3:5-8 about the change men must make. “Change” is what repentance is. But it is not just any kind of change. Repentance involves forsaking things that are wrong. To repent is to have a change of mind that produces a change of life. We cannot continue to do the things God has forbidden us to do and be right with him. We must change!
 1. Sexual immorality (fornication). What may be accepted in society is not accepted with God. Please note that verse 5 identifies several overlapping sexual sins: uncleanness, passion and evil desire. These words would include such sins as pornography, looking on another to lust, entertaining impure thoughts toward another. People should repent!
 2. Covetousness. Whether it is desiring another man’s wife, money or car, it is wrong. People should repent of this form of idolatry! (Those at Colosse had repented!)
 3. Anger and wrath. These words are talking about violent and fierce passion that expresses itself by harming others. People should repent!

4. Malice. Ill-will, hateful actions or spiteful speech against another must be repented of.
 5. Blasphemy. Speaking against God or taking God's name in vain is common in modern America. "OMG" is so accepted that no one gives it a thought. People should repent.
 6. Filthy language. Let no one who is a Christian tell dirty jokes or use foul language. People need to know that God is very unhappy with people who do so. People should repent.
 7. Lying. With some people lying is a way of life. We can understand when some people lie to try to get out of trouble. That is still a sin and must be repented of. But some people make up lies and tell fantastic and dramatic stories for what appears to be no purpose. Is it just to get attention? I don't know, but it must be repented of.
 8. This is only a partial—and very general—list of things people need to repent of from only one text. We could offer numerous other texts. But let's do something different.
- C. Let's make a practical application of repentance and what value it can be to you right now in your life today. Many of the problems we face in life could be solved if we just repented.
1. How many marriage problems could be solved if men and women would repent of a stubborn, uncooperative disposition?
 - a. Sometimes people ask for help with their marriage, but are stubborn in maintaining their own will. They refuse to do what God says. How can that help?
 - b. You may be able to change your marriage by repenting of a stubborn mindset!
 2. Whether in or out of marriage, how many personal problems with others could be solved if we would repent of an impatient spirit?
 - a. How many problems with others could be avoided altogether if people would repent of having a mean spirit, and a wicked, trashing-talking tongue?
 - b. When a woman talks down her husband to his face or behind his back, will she have a better marriage?
 - c. When a husband curses his wife and is cruel to her, will that help the marriage?
 - d. Some people think that the way to win arguments is to put the other person down— whoever uses the most profanity and screams the loudest is the winner. How well does that work? Everybody loses in that case. People need to repent.
 3. Heated anger and violence and host of other things could be eliminated from our lives if we truly repented of having a short-temper and self-will.
 4. Some people wonder why they have so much trouble with their kids. Maybe they need to repent of their refusal to discipline. Some kids need to repent of their disobedience to parents. Life is better for everyone when people do what God says.
 5. Some people wonder why they have no money in life. With some folks, it is because they are careless in the way they use their money. God made you a steward over what you have. People need to repent of poor stewardship.
 6. Some folks wonder why they have one problem after another and life is generally bad.
 - a. Everything seems to go wrong in the family, on the job and in the church. It is one trouble after another.
 - b. And while some people just seem to have problems through no fault of their own, there are other folks who are in general disobedience to God—doing what they want to do and not submitting to God in all the critical areas of life. Can they expect things to go well when they habitually resist God's will? They need to repent and give their lives over to God.
 7. Some folks wonder why God seems so far away. Maybe it is because they don't pray, don't read the Bible and make excuses about why they can't come to worship.
 - a. They can go everywhere under the sun every day of the week, but can't go to worship on the Lord's day. They find money to spend on everything they want, but nothing for God. Then they wonder why they don't feel good about their relationship with God!
 - b. They need to repent of excuses, laziness, worldliness and a dozen other things. We will never feel better about our relationship with God when we resist His will. Repent.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus was right in Matthew 6:33. Things are better when God is in the very center of our lives.
2. God will take care of us, but we must repent of putting other things ahead of God.
3. And if we want to go to heaven, we will never get there carrying the burden of our sins.