

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

### REPENTANCE

Romans 2:4 “. . .do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?”

There is an important Greek word found here in today's devotional verse. The Greek word is **μετανοέω** . A Greek to English dictionary defines this word as, “to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of heart, thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness.” Most all English translators translate **μετανοέω** with the word repent. Literally this word means to do a 180-degree turn. Repentance occurs when you turn away from a sin back toward God and the way His law says you are to live.

At first thought it would appear that repentance is something that you do, namely, you recognize your sin, stop doing it, get down on your knees and confess it to God and ask Him to forgive you for Jesus' sake. The reality is, repentance is God's work in you. He brings it about in your heart. His word brings you to the stop sign and causes you to stop sinning. His Spirit through His word leads you to do an about face, turn away from your sinful ways, back to the way God wants you to live. Recognizing repentance is God's work, David prayed, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.” (Psalm 51:10-12)

Luke writes in Acts 5:31, “God exalted Him (Jesus) to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.” This was the promise the Angel made to Joseph when telling him Mary would be the mother of Jesus, “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21) This work of God is the basis of Peter's exhortation in answer to the crowd's question on Pentecost, “What must we do . . .” Peter told them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” (Acts 2:38) Their repentance occurred through Peter preaching God's Law and the Gospel announcing to them His forgiveness. God in His kindness led them and He leads you to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, lead me along the paths of righteousness for your name's sake.  
(see Psalm 23)

Lord, 'tis not that I did choose Thee; That, I know, could never be;  
For this heart would still refuse Thee Had Thy grace not chosen me.  
Thou hast from the sin that stained me  
Washed and cleansed and set me free  
And unto this end ordained me, That I ever live to Thee.

It was grace in Christ that called me, Taught my darkened heart and mind;  
Else the world had yet enthralled me, To Thy heav'nly glories blind.  
Now I worship none above Thee; For Thy grace alone I thirst,  
Knowing well that if I love thee, Thou, O Lord, didst love me first.

Praise the God of all creation; Praise the Father's boundless love.  
Praise the Lamb, our expiation, Priest and King enthroned above.  
Praise the Spirit of salvation; Him by whom our spirits live.  
Undivided adoration To the great Jehovah give.  
(LSB 573)