This morning as we continue with our OLD TIME GOSPEL sermon series I would like to preach AN OLD TIME GOSPEL SERMON ON REPENTANCE.

If you have your Bibles with you this morning I would like for you to turn to the gospel of Matthew, chapter 3, verses 1-3.

Read: Matthew 3:1-3

P R A Y E R

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Introduction

One of the greatest challenges every preacher faces each week is the challenge of preparing two fresh new sermons.

In my office at home I have one whole filing cabinet filled with several thousand sermons my dad wrote during his 38 years in the preaching ministry. One of my valued treasures is this old notebook containing several of dad’s sermon outlines he preached over 50 years ago when he first started out in the ministry.
Throughout my 32 years in the ministry I have tried to discipline myself to write two brand new sermons each week. And while I haven’t always been successful in achieving that goal, I would estimate I have now written close to 2,000 sermons.

TRANSITION

JOHN THE BAPTIST had just one sermon...........

“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

JOHN THE BAPTIST was perhaps one of, if not the most unusual PREACHER God ever called into the ministry.

JOHN’S idea of a two-piece suit was a garment made of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist. John the Baptist would never be caught dead wearing a white shirt and tie.

JOHN THE BAPTIST never preached from behind a pulpit, nor did he ever preach inside a church building......a synagogue.....or the Temple in Jerusalem that we know of.

Instead, John would go out to the HOT, DUSTY JUDEAN DESERT day after day to preach the one sermon that burned in his soul like a BLAZING FIRE........

“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near..........”

JOHN’S one sermon didn’t have any homiletical structure to it...............It didn’t have THREE MAIN
POINTS and several SUBPOINTS.

His one sermon had NO ILLUSTRATIONS....NO JOKES .........and NO TEAR-JERKING STORIES.

His sermon was just a SIMPLE, POWERFUL, STRAIGHTFORWARD MESSAGE that cut right to the very soul of a man..........

“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near!”

JOHN THE BAPTIST didn’t preach the HEALTH and WEALTH GOSPEL.........HE didn’t promise people CARS and BOATS and FINANCIAL PROSPERITY.

JOHN simply preached a message from GOD that called all men into accountability for their sins.

JOHN THE BAPTIST wasn’t worried that his preaching might make him unpopular.........or........that he might “step on people’s toes”........or.......”ruffle someone’s feather’s.”

JOHN THE BAPTIST didn’t preach to please people......HE PREACHED TO PLEASE GOD.

In a day and time when all the self-righteous religious leaders were preaching their vain human traditions, John the Baptist stood as God’s “lone voice” of truth to sinful man!

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TRANSITION
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Throughout history, GOD has always raised up MEN to preach the message of REPENTANCE.
NOAH preached repentance!
ISAIAH preached repentance!
ELIJAH and ELISHA preached repentance!
JEREMIAH preached repentance!
EZEKIEL preached repentance!

JESUS CHRIST preached repentance!
ALL THE APOSTLES preached repentance!
OUR RESTORATION FOREFATHERS all preached repentance!

AND THE PREACHERS of just one generation ago were still preaching REPENTANCE!

WHERE ARE THE VOICES CALLING FOR REPENTANCE TODAY?

.......We hear the voices of POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

...........We hear the voices of CONSERVATISM and the voices of LIBERALISM.

.......We hear the voices of TOLERANCE and the voices of SECULAR HUMANISM.

.......We hear the voices of THE HEALTH and WEALTH GOSPEL and the “FEEL GOOD” religion.

BUT WHERE ARE THE VOICES CRYING OUT FOR THE REPENTANCE OF SINFUL MAN?

WHERE ARE THE VOICES THAT ARE CALLING MAN BACK TO GOD!

...........Is the message of REPENTANCE outdated?
......Is the message of REPENTANCE too old-fashioned?

I submit to you this morning (evening) that now more than ever before, the message of REPENTANCE needs to be preached from every pulpit across AMERICA!

What we need today are MORE PREACHERS like JOHN THE BAPTIST! PREACHERS who aren’t worried about their own popularity...............PREACHERS who aren’t concerned about keeping their job..............PREACHERS who aren’t afraid to “step on toes” and “ruffle feathers” and “confront man with his sins.”

I truly believe one reason why many of today’s FAMILIES are in the pitiful condition they are in is because PREACHERS have stopped preaching the NEED OF REPENTANCE!

I believe one reason why many of TODAY’S CHURCHES are in the pitiful condition they are in is because PREACHERS HAVE STOPPED PREACHING THE NEED OF REPENTANCE!

And I believe with all my heart that one of the biggest reasons why AMERICA is in the pitiful condition SHE is in is because PREACHERS HAVE STOPPED PREACHING THE NEED OF REPENTANCE!

It is getting harder and harder to tell the difference between CHRISTIANS and NON-CHRISTIANS.

Many who claim to be CHRISTIANS lived for the DEVIL before they walked down the aisle to accept CHRIST and they are STILL living for the DEVIL!

Our CHURCH PEWS today are filled with CHURCH
MEMBERS who want to...........

    DRINK UP!
    SHACK UP!
    STIR UP!
    AND ACT UP!

But don’t want to......STRAIGHTEN UP!
    FESS UP!
    CLEAN UP!
    GIVE UP!
    OR LOOK UP!

The attitude that many CHRISTIANS seem to have these days is “PREACHER, I don’t mind if you preach about SIN.......just as long as you don’t preach about MY SIN!” “I don’t mind if you tell the other guy he needs to straighten up, but don’t talk to me about MY SINS......MY HABITS and MY LIFESTYLE!

Well my FRIEND if that is the attitude you have then I am talking to you this morning! (EVENING)

    TAKE A SOUL-SEARCHING LOOK AT YOURSELF
    RIGHT NOW.

Have you lost your spiritual JOY and ENTHUSIASM? There’s a reason for it!

Have you lost your hunger for God’s word? If so, there’s a reason for it!

Have you lost all desire to spend time alone with GOD in PRAYER? If so, there’s a reason for it!

DO you feel as though you are just going through the motions in your spiritual life? If so, there’s a reason for it.

And I will tell you what that reason is, the reason you are experiencing all those things is because your relationship is NOT right with GOD......and
the reason your relationship is NOT right with GOD is because of SIN!

What is standing between you and God right now? What is that one sin that is holding you back?

Is it the SIN of pride?
Is it the SIN of bitterness?
Is it the SIN of drunkeness?
Is it the SIN of bitterness?
Is it the SIN of lust?
Is it the SIN of self-righteousness?
Is it the SIN of jealousy?
Is it the SIN of resentment?
Is it the SIN of unforgiveness?
Is it the SIN of an un-controlled tongue?

Do you know there is.............

Only ONE THING that can restore your JOY and PEACE.

Only ONE THING that can pull you out of the PIT of DESPAIR and DEPRESSION.

Only ONE THING that can put an end to your life of DEFEAT and help you live a VICTORIOUS LIFE in CHRIST.

Only ONE THING that can heal your fractured relationship with GOD.

Only ONE THING that can bring healing to your fractured human relationships.
AND THAT IS TO REPENT AND GO BACK TO GOD!

In II Corinthians chapter 7, verses 10 and 11 we find one of the clearest descriptions of TRUE REPENTANCE you will find anywhere in the Bible.

So if you would, turn with me to that scripture and let's look at it together.

II CORINTHIANS 7:10, 11 GODLY sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness... what eagerness to clear yourselves... what indignation... what alarm... what longing... what concern... what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

You notice in these two verses, Paul mentions two kinds of sorrow: First, he mentions GODLY sorrow, and second, he mentions WORLDLY sorrow.

Godly sorrow brings about TRUE REPENTANCE. While worldly sorrow brings death.

What many people, including lots of Christians, mistake for REPENTANCE is nothing more than the wounded pride of getting caught in sin. That kind of
sorrow only leads to guilt and shame and depression and self-pity and a sense of hopelessness. People go to their graves with that kind of sorrow.

JUDAS ISCARIOT is a case in point. Judas was not sorry for the results which his sin brought upon Christ, JUDAS was filled with remorse because of all the guilt and shame his sin brought upon him. That remorse, that sorrow didn’t lead to a changed man, it lead him to go out and hang himself.

TRUE REPENTANCE on the other hand leads to LIFE!

Paul lists SEVEN MARKS of TRUE REPENTANCE in VERSE 11.

**MARK #1:** TRUE REPENTANCE produces an EARNEST DESIRE to do **right**. If one says he or she has repented but goes right back to their old sinful ways they have NOT truly repented.

**MARK #2:** TRUE REPENTANCE produces an EAGERNESS to clear one’s name of any **association** with **sin**.
MARK #3: **TRUE REPENTANCE** produces an **INDIGNATION or ANGER** that one would ever allow himself to allow himself to dishonor the precious name of Jesus by sinning.

MARK #4: **TRUE REPENTANCE** produces a new **FEAR or REVERENCE** for **GOD** and **GOD’S commands**.

MARK #5: **TRUE REPENTANCE** produces a **LONGING** to restore one’s relationship with **GOD** as well as with those he or she sinned against.

MARK #6: **TRUE REPENTANCE** produces a new **CONCERN** to carefully guard against ever going back to the sin that damaged one’s relationship with God and others.

MARK #7: **TRUE REPENTANCE** produces an **AGGRESSIVE READINESS** to pursue a life of holiness.

Simply put, when one TRULY REPENTS it **ATTITUDE**, a changed **HEART**, a change in **BEHAVIOR** and a change in **DIRECTION**.

*Godly sorrow produces true repentance!*
C O N C L U S I O N

If you have Internet Service you are very familiar with the term VIRUS. Every time you go on-line you run the risk of some "hacker" planting a VIRUS into your computer via the internet. And once this VIRUS gets inside your computer you will start to notice a tremendous decline in your computer’s performance.

...........Your computer will SLOW DOWN and not operate as smoothly as it once did.

...........Sometimes it will totally FREEZE UP and fail to respond to COMMAND KEYS.

...........AND UNLESS THE VIRUS IS STOPPED IT WILL EVENTUALLY CAUSE THE HARD DRIVE ON YOUR COMPUTER TO COMPLETELY CRASH.

This is why you have to have some sort of ANTI-VIRUS PROTECTION on your computer such as NORTON.....or MCAFEE .........or ZONE ALARM. And even with this protection there is no 100% guarantee a virus still can’t find its way into your computer.

Satan is the most devious "hacker" of them all. He is always trying to find a way to plant a spiritual virus in our heart. And the way he does this is when we expose ourselves to SIN.

And once that “spiritual virus” gets inside our heart we begin to see a noticeable decline in our “spiritual
performance.” We don’t function as smoothly as we once did. We don’t respond to commands as we once did. Sometimes we totally “freeze up” spiritually and stop functioning. Unless something is done about this “sin virus” it will eventually lead to a complete crash!

Thank God we have the best SIN VIRUS PROTECTION of all and that is THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. My friend if there is sin in your life this morning YOU NEED TO REPENT and bring it under the cleansing blood of JESUS! DO IT TODAY!