

**Skegness Community Church - Weekly Bible Study 2025**  
**52 passages of Scripture that every believer should know**

**Week 14 THE FORGOTTEN WORD IN OUR VOCABULARY**

**Matthew 4: 17**

**“From that time on Jesus began to preach -  
repent for the kingdom of heaven is near”**

There seems to be a forgotten word in our Christian vocabulary - the word Repentance. The call to repent is strangely absent today. Yet it is the message of all the Prophets. It was the message of John the Baptist as he preached in the wilderness (Matthew 3:1-2). It was the message with which the Lord Jesus commenced His ministry (Matthew 4:17). It was also the message with which he concluded His ministry (Luke 24:46-47). It was the message of the Apostles as they preached and later scattered throughout the known world (Mark 6:12). It was the message that birthed the church at Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38). It was the missionary message of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:30). And in the last book of the Bible, it is the message of John to the churches of Asia (Revelation 2:5). In fact, this call to repentance is woven throughout the tapestry of the entire Bible on almost every page. Repentance is not only one of the forgotten words of our time but also one of the most misunderstood. What really is repentance? How is it applied to our lives? These are legitimate questions that deserve a definitive response in a Christian world that, in some places, is more concerned about being “seeker” friendly” than biblically literate and legitimate.

**JESUS’ PERSONAL MANDATE COMMANDS IT “Repent.”**

This call from our Lord is not offered as an option but as a command. And that command gives rise to two important questions: *What is repentance?* And *Where is repentance?* So what is repentance? First, note it is not simply being sorry for our sin. The rich young ruler went away “sorrowful,” but he didn’t repent (Luke 18:23). Repentance is not regret, or merely wishing that the deed had not happened. Repentance is not resolve. It’s not like a New Year’s resolution. And repentance is not reform - it’s not just turning over a new leaf. Judas Iscariot reformed, but he did not repent (Matthew 27:3). *Repentance* comes from a Greek word that literally means “to change one’s mind”. It’s a change of mind that affects a change of will and, in turn, brings about a change of action. This process is beautifully illustrated in the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. After finding himself broke and broken, the son “came to his senses” (v.17). This change of mind brought about a change of will and consequently a change of actions. Repentance is a change of mind, which in turn will bring about a change of actions. *Where is repentance?* That is, where is repentance in salvation? Does repentance precede faith? Or does faith come before repentance? Repentance and faith are both gifts of God’s grace. They are different sides of the same coin, they are inseparable. Repentance alone will not get you to heaven, but you cannot get there without it. Jesus’ personal mandate commands it: “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is near”.

**JESUS’ POSITIVE MOTIVE COMMENDS IT  
“for the kingdom of heaven is near”**

Many people see the fear of God’s punishment as the primary motivation for calling people to repentance. Jesus used a different approach. He said, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near”. This positive motive commends the call to repentance: Jesus emphasises the goodness of God’s grace. Paul was right on target when he said, “God’s kindness leads you towards repentance” (Romans 2:4). Our dear Lord finds us in the dark, often disoriented by the issues of life, takes us by the hand, and as the Bible says, His “kindness leads (us) to repentance.” When all is said and done, what difference does it make if we drive a luxury car, eat vitamin-enriched foods, wear expensive designer clothing, live in a mansion, and are buried in a mahogany casket in a cemetery as lovely as a botanical garden .... only to rise up in judgement to meet a God we do not know? Jesus still calls us, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.” And it is His kindness that leads to repentance. Jesus’ positive motive commends His call to repent.

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As you memorise this verse this week, meditate on what repentance is not ... And then on what it is. Remember that it is the kindness of God that takes you by the hand and leads you to repentance.