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an altar to heathen gods in the very temple of Jehovah where he set up a carved image.

He caused his children to pass through the fire; he dealt with witches. In addition to all this, he shed some blood.

Among the victims of his persecution, according to a very ancient tradition, was the prophet Isaiah whom Manasseh sawed asunder because the prophet rebuked him for his sins. He made the people of Israel worse than the heathen themselves.

In the noon-time of his wickedness, prosperity. He was captured by the Assyrians who mutilated him, put him in an iron cage, and carried him prisoner to Babylon.

There Manasseh, softened by his sufferings, repented of his sins and called upon God. When he had been restored back to the throne of Judah he devoted the strength and energy left and the remaining years of his reign to undo the great evil he had done to Israel. With sorrow and contrition he threw away the strange gods, he repaired the altar of God, and did what he could to persuade the nations to follow God.

Manasseh sinned against a godly training and as a son of the godly fathers. Now and then you see that and if you have listened to the bitterness of such an unbeliever as Manasseh, you realize how wonderful was his repentance.

THE WORD IN HUMAN SPEECH THAT OPENS HEAVEN Luke 13:3 and 5

Introduction

What is the word that opens heaven? What is the word that no one can pronounce without the Holy Spirit? What is the word that brings the sinner back from the far country to his father's house? What is the word that pronounced by man gets a response from heaven? What is the word that Job used after God answered him out of the whirlwind?

What is the word with which Jesus began to preach? What is the word with which Peter addressed the multitude on the day of Pentecost? What is the word that David spoke when the prophet Nathan rebuked him for his hideous transgression?

What is the word that Manasseh, the aged and wicked King of Judah, spoke in captivity? What is the word that Peter uttered when he went out into the night and wept bitterly? What is the word that opened the gates of Paradise to the dying thief? What is the word that is very appropriate for the saint and is most appropriate for the hardened sinner? What is the word that cannot be spoken in Hell, and which no one in Heaven needs to hear?

The word that I have in mind is the word "repent", except ye repent. And repentance is a word which rings through every prayer in the Bible, from beginning to end. It was the burden of the preaching of the prophets; it was the first word used by Christ Himself. Repentance sums up the Gospel. As He is risen from the dead, the disciples go forth to preach repentance and remission of sins through His name. Repentance is the word that opens heaven for only a forgiven sinner can enter heaven, and only a sinner who repents can be forgiven.

The Bible is rich in its illustrations. When we tell the story of men who have repented, we see how full and glorious the Gospel is. And it can be proven by the Scriptures; it illustrates that the word "repent" opens heaven. There are instances of it that are most beautiful and that are wonderful.

I want to describe or illustrate this by three people in the Old Testament. First I want to use an old man; second, I want to talk about a man in his middle life; and third, I want to talk about a young man to prove that repentance is appropriate for people of all ages and of all stages of life.

I. An Old Man Repents

We don't talk much about old people today. Everyone tries to disguise the fact that he is old or that he is getting old. The whole are popular; preaching and popular literature is upon youth. And, no doubt, to a very degree its over balanced.

But the fact is there are lots of old people in the world, and they ought not to be passed over and forgotten. Their souls are the same value in the sight of God as the soul of a boy or of a youth in his teens.

There is another striking and very solemn fact too about old men and that is that if they have not repented before they grew old, they hardly ever repent. Therefore, the story of the word that opens heaven in reference to this man is most remarkable.

Manasseh is the Prodigal Son of the Old Testament. He had for a father one of the Godliest men in the Bible, Hezekiah. And he had, no doubt, a godly Mother.

He ascended the throne when he was 12 years of age at the death of his father. His reign was a long nightmare of wickedness, idolatry, and cruelty. He built altars to Baal, and he made groves and worshipped all the hosts of heaven. The climax of his (idol worship) was the building of

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sin. In every story of a breakdown like that of David it will be found that the very sin in which the man was indulging dulled and blunted his sensibilities. Who can understand this error? Cleanse Thou me from (secret faults.)

God waited a long time for David to repent, and then God sent the prophet Nathan. And Nathan, who was a skilled preacher, told a story about a rich man and how cruel he was because he had numerous flocks and herds but he had a guest to come and visit him and he took the poor man's pet lamb and slew it for the table of his guest. When he heard the tale of almost unblievable hardening of heart, David reached for his sword saying, "Bring that man before me. As the Lord liveth he shall surely die."

Then Nathan put the sword in its proper place and said, "Thou art the man with the riches and wives and honors." David had taken the wife of a poor soldier in the army to gratify his pleasure. Thou art the man.

If Nathan had talked that way with any other King but David, his head would have come off. But David repented and said, "I have sinned." There is no doubt either about the sincerity of his repentance for immediately the prophet answered, "The Lord hath put away thy sin."

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Suffering, hardship, and pain sometimes intensifies a man's rebellion to God, but if accepted in humility, it can turn man back to God. That was what happened in the case of Manasseh.

Now, we may scoff at death-bed repentance, if you will, and certainly this was almost a death-bed repentance for Manasseh, for he brought to God only the (dregs of his life.) Yet, for that reason the man's repentance is more memorable.

We need to thank God that (no one) is ever too far gone, too hardened in his transgressions to repent. To the youth who had turned from God and to the Old Man we have the words spoken "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord where he will have mercy and unto our God for he will abundantly pardon"

II. David Repents

We leave the Old Man who repented and opened the doors of heaven to a (man in middle life) who is at the head of the list of great penitents. You (never omit David) when you think about repentance. He was one of the greatest sinners and yet one of the greatest saints in the Old Testament. Enemies of God have often scoffed at David and his high title because

the Bible says that David was a man after God's heart.

They fix David's terrible fall and his transgressions and hold that up as an example of an Old Testament man because of the tragedy involved.

But a Christian man who knows his own heart and who knows that the heart is destined above all else will never be troubled by the fall of David. On the contrary, he will rejoice that the Bible records this dark chapter of David's life.

If David had not fallen so low, his repentance would not have been so wonderful and so blessed of God.

In his prayer of repentance, he prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and then shall I teach transgressors Thy ways."

That is what David has been doing all through the ages, teaching men the deceitfulness of sin in their heart and of the wonderful mercy of God.

I think that Nathan is among the most courageous preachers and yet the most tender preacher of whom we have any record. That is what every preacher ought to be, courageous in declaring the will of God and the word of God and yet tender in seeking the repentance of sinners.

The human heart is the same from age to age and there is

nothing new or old in David's sin. He fell in love with a beautiful woman who happened to be the wife of another man.

Although he was King and according to the custom of the age might have done as he pleased, David tried to cover up his crime by the murder of the woman's husband. He sent him into the foremost of the hottest battle with orders to his commanding officer to retire from him so that he would fall fighting the foe. But it was just the same as if David had slain him with his own hand. This indeed was the worst sin.

The murder of Uriah comes as we study the sinners progressive steps into sin that one sin makes it necessary for a second transgression and another and another and the second is always worse than the first and the third than the second.

God waited for David to repent. The extraordinary thing is that David had been schooled in the thought of God and naturally a man of such deep religious feeling could have gone through these terrible transgressions and his conscience not have constantly pierced him and rebuked him.

But apparently this sin had strangely blinded him and it cast a shadow over him. He was not able to see this tragic

degeneration.

Here is a large, over-grown boy bubbling over with life and fun, untempered by restraint of morality. No longer dare we talk about all teen-agers as a single group. Some of them bring us a thrill. These Christian, teen-agers are a joy to work with, being intelligent and high minded, disciplined and self directed. How different they are from the doomed, the beatniks, the Beetles of whom Samson might have been the grandfather, unkept and cruel.

Samson was smart; and he was strong. He was so strong that he could smash everything in his sight. Apparently he had (no purpose in life) except to satisfy his lust. When this cry of danger came to him, he could, in his own strength, hurl it back. But all the while his (soul was sick); his spirit was starving) and (Satan smiled.) Really we do not know the age of Samson at this time, but we may think of him as a young man. He was a Nazarite, dedicated by his parents to God, and as a Nazarite he did not cut his hair and he did not drink strong drink. So he fell prey to a most notorious temptress, She determined to find the secret of his great strength so she could sell him to the Philistines. When at last, in true (Hollywood style) she stepped up the pace, he told her the secret of his power, that it lay in his long hair. So she

Yet, forgiven and (heavens doors open) through repentance, David must bear the penalties of his sin. There was nothing strange about that because a man can sin for years against his body and against his mind, and if he turns and repents, he's forgiven, but, the God who forgives him does not cancel the (law of retribution) in the man's own body. "For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Nathan told David that because his sin would cause the enemies of God to scoff and rejoice, the sword would never depart from his house. It never did. Time and time again we see the judgment of God upon his house.

There was a vile conduct and (incest of Ammon.) There was (murder of Ammon) by Absalom. There was the (rebellion of Absalom); there was the (death of Absalom); there was the (sorrow of David) as he cried for his son which was slain.

David had suffered, but he suffered as a forgiven man. The joy of salvation had been restored to David. His repentance had opened for him once more the gates of heaven. Only one path will bring him back to self respect and communion with God and that is the path of repentance.

The only path open to some of you this morning that will lead you back to (self respect), to respect among the citizens and Christians, and to (genuine fellowship) with the

saints is the path of repentance.

If we were to go off to heaven today, there would be great music. It would go down the streets. You would certainly be inspired by the thousands of people who would sing the praises of God. And time would fail us. Today, if we could talk about Paul in his moment of greatness, how he became the great enemy of Christ and then in his supreme moment of life he became the greatest friend of Christ, simply by repentance.

The woman who was a sinner, who washed the Saviour's feet with the tears of repentance and love, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Peter who when he cursed and denied his Master, was called to himself by the look of love when Jesus turned and looked upon him, and went out into the night to weep bitterly. Those tears of repentance that washed his soul and brought him back to Christ, and of that poor thief who hung at the Redeemer's side on the cross and who, while his companion mocked and cursed, repented of his sin and asked Jesus to remember him. That is wonderful music. Sinners give to the church on earth and to the church in heaven because they have been cleansed.

In the Prodigal who said, "I have sinned against heaven

and in Thy sight," and his father came to greet him. He opened heaven by repentance. He reopened his home, a place in his family, by repentance. But now I come in the last place to discuss not only the old man who opened the gate of repentance, not only the man in middle life, but I want to come next to the next portion.

III. Samson Judges 16:20

As I think of this young man, of the youth, what a tragedy. Today you can see some such tragedy on every hand; on the national scene you've seen such cases. We think of the (T. V. scandals), the kick-back, bribery, victims of alcoholism. On the social scene that which decays, and all of this seems to be the normal fruit of soft, self-indulgent individuals.

When we pull up the shades of (our shallowness) and take a quick look at reality, we feel a sense of pride and shame. Such an experience differs from our picture of (how a decent) person ought to act in Christian America. We realize that even decent and nice Americans are subject while the Devil retails his ware. Why? Well, like Samson, when young, so-called Americans are suffering from deterioration of soul. When a young man like Samson sees the enemy approaching head-on, full blast, ready to crash, it is a sign of soul

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devilish talk.

As a pastor, we keep the confidences of people in strict secrecy, but oh the cry and anguish of souls to roll off the consequences of unconscious soul deterioration among once wonderful young people, no one of whom meant to do it. So late does one learn that nothing in the form of pleasure can ever be worth the cost of an outraged conscience and the burden of endless remorse. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7.

Some day everything goes wrong. The sense of guilt and shame become unbearable. One gets caught, and then one tells it all. "I never meant to do it. I never intended to go so far. When everyone else was doing it, I didn't realize my error. I thought I could just shake it off."

And he awoke out of his sleep and said; "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." He knew not that the Lord had left him.

May the church of the living God bear a people that have forsaken God as this young fellow, and it depends on whether or not you awake before it's too late to repent. If he does so awake to his perilous state, he will discover not that God has forsaken him but that he has forsaken God.

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Two preachers were talking the other day about a Memorial Day Sunday Service and the attendance was way down. One of them said, "Well, it was such a nice day, our people went off to the beach to try out the new boats and the new motors, and I'm afraid," he said, "that we're living too close to the beach."

Another pastor said, "Well, we have had the same experience in our service, however, I do not feel that our problem is that we live too near the beach, but rather that we do not live near enough to God."

Now the end of soul deterioration, unless the young man wakes and turns to God, in this situation is death, "For the wages of sin is death." His love, His kind of long suffering, but His love cannot earnestly cancel out His justice or His final judgment. His redeeming blood can cleanse his soul from every guilty sin. Meanwhile, God is not lurking at the next corner to hammer a young man down into Hell. Even now, He is waiting anxiously for a man to repent, but He wishes for him to open his heart in order that he might come in.

If I might take one out of secular history, Bobby Burns, who wrote many poems, great thoughts, but he was headstrong. He had splendid powers of the body and from a leading family

way of hope. To receive Christ does not mean that immediately and forever you will be free from temptation. The noblest saints of God have been exposed to the Devil's fire. But Paul said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." There has no temptation taken you but such that has come to man. But God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." I Corth. 10:13

Some people speak as though they are angels when they talk about the other man's problem. But a sure way to escape the way open to every time of need is that of repentance.

You need to put out your (spiritual radar) and when it's found you need to thank God for His promise that there is a way of escape. Yes, the Lord wishes you to do your part to flee. He does not wish you to yield to sin for Christ died for sin and He opened a way of escape. Throughout this process of soul deterioration we find there is one word that opens heaven.

"Be of sin the double cure, save me from its guilt and power." But Samson came back to himself and with his repentance the pardon. He was changed

- 2 ideas Expressed in N.T.:
- (1). Emotional Element - godly sorrow, regret,
 - (2). Change of mind or attitude - more than

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of Scotsmen, he was a hero. He soon began to make of himself not of God. He thought he was responsible for his success, so he quickly gave way to two evils, liquor and lust. And then it was not long before he knew not the Lord and was departed from Him.

Another Scotch writer who might have labored for many years and increased his usefulness, but after a few months at the peak of his poetic powers, he wained because he turned to the bar and was taking a free drink from any person who whistled to him. At the age of 37, Bobby Burns died. Now another Scotchman, Robert Louis Stevenson, declared, "The Almighty was most merciful, kind to take him so fast." He had trifled away his life and he must pay the penalty.

Do you think that Bobby Burns wanted to die that way? Do you not suppose that again and again he said to himself, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he knew not that the Lord had departed from him.

The only escape from such deterioration and from such lowering of self and there is no contradiction about the needs of the soul. The great burden that you have and the helplessness, even though you are on the brink of the bottomless pit, the weakest is the worst. Man or woman here, there is a door-

took down the flag that stood for loyalty to God.

Here was a case of unconscious deterioration. Here is the world's young athlete who did not know that he had become as weak as water when he woke up out of his sleep and said "I will go out as at other times." I will go out and make myself free from this situation. I can handle it. I can escape the viles of this evil one." And he thought that he could declare his independence from the Devil. But no sane young man ever deliberately decided to deteriorate. No teen young person ever meant to become a drunkard or to let down the moral bars or to become a slave to sin, but, when night after night he seeks his companions among the Philistines among people who are not holy by God's standards, when night after night he keeps doing this, unconsciously he deteriorates, and he leaves his soul helpless. And why? Because God's patience is destroyed

Thus does God's book set up a danger signal for young people today. Many of them constantly breathe the atmosphere of mark at all costs. Of a lot of petting, this just won't hurt anybody.

The youth says, "Social drinking never leads to alcoholism, not with the young fellow who knows how to handle his liquor." And before long they begin to believe all this

devilish talk.

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Intellectual - involves The Will or The Heart.
Mark 1:4 Lk 17:3 Acts 2:38

Change direction of one's life -
" Attitude Toward God and Sin.

Hating to loving ↑ loving to hating.

Text: Except ye Repent: Submission to God's way.
Surrender to God's Will.

"It is absolutely impossible to change & reverse
moral trends unless we ourselves are changed from
the inside out. Moral reform only through Repentance.

Judas: repented only in sense of remorse - No
idea of abandoning sin.

Therefore Repent & turn - be converted.
Can't Repent without turning life over to God -

John the Baptist preached Repentance - Show that your
hearts have been changed - insisting on the
expression of it in everyday living.

"By their fruits you shall know them - not
everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall
enter the Kingdom of heaven" - Mat 7:20.

Philippian Jailor demonstrated Repentance -
Social pressures -

People do not Repent & Become converted
until they know they are sinners &
" " Need a Saviour.

" Judgement is inescapable -

Never enjoy life in its fulness until Repent
"I'd come that they may have life & have
it abundantly"

Only normal man is converted one - Peace
with God - free from guilt -