

Repent and Believe

by Peter John Schrock

Part of the Greatest News and most Powerful News is found in these two very simple words...REPENT and BELIEVE. While meditating on these words I am now finally starting to grasp the great power that exists within them. They truly do have the power to change a person's life and though it is a great mystery, it is very simple in how it works.

Let's take a peak at a simple concept. Different people have all sorts of opinions on various things. For instance some people think that when food falls on the ground it is no longer good to eat. While other people have a certain amount of time that the food can sit on the ground before it isn't good to eat and then there are even other people who think that food is always still good to eat, regardless of the time it has been on the ground (very young children tend to fall in the last category). Here we see this basic principal at work. The way a person sees food when it falls on the ground effects how they will react to that food on the ground. One person will throw it away while another will reach down, grab it quickly, and pop it into their mouth before their time limit is up. The idea here is that these people really believe that the food is safe or is not safe to eat and they respond NATURALLY as a result of what they believe.

Now if a parent wants to teach their children not to eat food that is lying on the ground, they simply need to change the child's perspective about food on the ground. Once the child accepts their parent's belief that the food may harm them, they will naturally refuse to eat it. The power that effortlessly changes people's actions is rooted in changing their perspective of their surroundings.

Likewise, this is the very same idea expressed in these very powerful words, "REPENT and BELIEVE." The word 'repent' means a "Change of Mind." This change of mind is just like the change of perspective when it came to eating food that falls on the ground. When a person's perspective changes they naturally bear fruit of

their new way of thinking. John the Baptist understood this principal when he talked about repentance: "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance...The ax is already at the root of the tree and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown in to the fire" (Mat 3:8,10 NIV). John understood the principal that if a person's view of something changes then their actions will naturally follow as fruit of their change of mind. It is here that the second part of the good news comes into play...Believe. It is true the people need to change their mind or rather, have their mind changed, but their mind must be changed so that they accept and BELIEVE the views and perspective of Jesus and the Apostles. Jesus and the apostles, through the scriptures, have given us a fairly clear picture of what a Christian perspective and view of the world should be. Christians should see sin and the world as something that can be overcome in Christ (1john 5:4). They should see Christ's action on the cross and be filled with love for others (1john 3:16). They should see evil as something to be avoided and be filled with mercy and compassion for others and so on...(Read Bible for More).

The instruction to Repent and Believe is a comprehensive change of thinking and not a simple saying of: "I am sorry" and "I am forgiven." Sorrow is not to be confused with repentance because "Godly sorrow Brings repentance..." (2 Cor 7:10). Sorrow is not repentance rather it precedes repentance. Likewise believing what God says is not simply uttering words. When a person wonders why their life has not changed once they have prayed a prayer, they need to come to realize that they have not really followed through with the instruction to Repent and Believe. If a person does really repent and believe their life will produce fruit in keeping with that repentance because people live in accordance with what they believe. As James boldly says, "FAITH without deeds is DEAD." Therefore hear the Good News: Change your Mind, Accept Christ's Way of Thinking, and you will find Life.