

INTRODUCTION

Malachi 4:5-6a

Through Malachi, God promised to send a prophet who would turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.

Luke 1:16-17

Through the angel Gabriel, God renewed that promise

see Luke 1:77 for how that turning of the hearts is connected to salvation by the remission or forgiveness of sins through the tender mercy of God

Luke 3:2-3 When John the Baptist began preaching, God fulfilled His promise

Look at the ministry of John the Baptist with me today, to see the connection between his preach of repentance, and a man being blameless, having ruling his household well, having his children in subjection.

BODY

- I. To Preach Repentance Is to Proclaim Salvation By Forgiveness of Sins
 - A. Sinners are in danger of the wrath of God to come
 1. Lu 3:7 there is wrath to come, and the need to flee from it
 2. Lu 3:9 every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire
 3. Lu 3:17 He will separate the wheat from the chaff; the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire
 - B. But God is merciful; He provides salvation; He saves sinners from the wrath to come
 1. Lu 3:6 all flesh shall see the salvation of God
 2. Lu 3:17 He will gather the wheat into His barn
 - C. He does this by forgiving or remitting the sins of those who repent
 1. Lu 3:3 repentance for the remission/forgiveness of sins
 2. full remission
 3. remission of both
 - a) guilt, and
 - b) penalties
 4. when God remits or forgives a person's sins, that person is no longer subject to God's wrath; he need not fear the wrath of God to come
 - a) he is not chaff to be burned
 - b) but instead wheat to be stored up in God's barn

To preach repentance is to proclaim salvation by forgiveness of sins

II. To Preach Repentance Is to Turn Men's Hearts

- A. If God's promise was that the prophet He sent would turn men's hearts; and if what the prophet did when he came was to preach repentance; then to preach repentance is to turn men's hearts; and an essential means by which God turns men's hearts is to have someone preach repentance to them
 - 1. sometimes it happens that a person reads about repentance in the Bible
 - 2. normally it happens that a person hears a preacher preaching repentance
- B. Look how the people's hearts are turned!
 - 1. they have been looking to the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were highly corrupt, whose lives were hypocritical, and whose doctrine was erroneous
 - 2. they accept John's evaluation that those who teach and practice such false religion are the brood of vipers, the offspring of snakes
 - 3. now they are asking God's true prophet what they should do
- C. True repentance, as preached by John, turns men's hearts to what is right, as known through God's law
 - 1. Note: doing the good works that are your duty is not repentance! Repentance takes place in the heart, then a person does the good works that go with repentance.
 - 2. See how John taught the repentant their duty
 - a) Luke 3:11 to the man who is well off: share with the poor
 - b) Luke 3:12-13 to the tax collector: collect only what is appointed
 - c) Luke 3:14 to the army soldier or police officer
 - (1) do not use intimidation or violence
 - (2) do not accuse anyone falsely
 - (3) be content with your wages
 - d) Luke 3:19 to Herod, you should not have your brother's wife
 - 3. See how the things John taught are right from God's law
 - a) love your neighbor as yourself
 - b) thou shalt not steal
 - c) thou shalt not kill
 - d) thou shalt not bear false witness
 - e) thou shalt not covet
 - f) thou shalt not commit adultery

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- III. To Preach Repentance Is to Turn the Hearts of Those Who Need Salvation to the Wisdom of Those Who Know Where It Is to Be Found
- A. The promise from God through Malachi was that the prophet would turn the hearts of the children to their fathers
 - B. The promise from God through Gabriel was explained more broadly, that the prophet would turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just
 - C. You see that broader form of this promise fulfilled in the scriptures
 - 1. John is preaching here to Roman soldiers, among others
 - a) their hearts had been devoted to many false gods, whom they worshiped through idols; in that there was no forgiveness of sins, no salvation from the wrath to come
 - b) now their hearts are turned to the wisdom preached by a Jewish prophet dressed in camel hair out in the wilderness
 - 2. this promise continues to be fulfilled in all who preach repentance; e.g. Paul as he travelled and preached to the pagans in Athens; he turned hearts to the wisdom he preached, about Jesus and the resurrections, even though it sounded like foolishness to the unrepentant
 - D. That broader form of this promise is of great importance, and is the way of salvation for all of us. But to pursue a better understanding of what we are studying in 1 Timothy 3, we need to consider that promise as given through Malachi in terms of fathers and children

To preach repentance is to proclaim salvation by forgiveness of sins

To preach repentance is to turn men's hearts

To preach repentance is to turn the hearts of those who need salvation to the wisdom of those who know where it is to be found

IV. To Preach Repentance Is to Turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children

A. When repentant people ask, “what shall we do?” And when tax collectors, or soldiers, or anyone else who is repentant asks, “what shall we do?” the answer is that you should obey God’s law as regarding your particular situation

B. And what is God’s law regarding fathers?

1. you can read it summarized very briefly in the New Testament scriptures:
Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.
2. you have been learning it much more fully in the longer Old Testament scriptures
 - a) Abraham commanded his children to keep the way of the Lord
 - b) parents are responsible to chasten their children
 - c) Eli knew the evil deeds of his sons, but did not restrain them; he honored his sons more than God
 - d) David
 - (1) was angry at his son Amnon’s misdeed, but didn’t do anything about it
 - (2) did not displease his son Adonijah at any time
 - (3) taught his son Solomon to value wisdom above anything else
 - e) a father who withholds his rod hates his child, but a father who loves his child disciplines him
 - f) a wise father uses the rod and reproof together to drive foolishness out of his children and give them wisdom in its place
3. you have heard it read from Deuteronomy today
 - a) To love God with all your heart, soul, and strength Deu 6:5
 - b) To keep God’s commandments diligently yourself Deu 6:17
 - c) To teach God’s word diligently to your children, both the law and the gospel
 - (1) you teach your children God’s law
 - (2) when your children ask you questions about God’s law, you tell them the gospel Deu 6:20-23
 - (3) when you explain the gospel to them, you tell them that is why you keep God’s law Deu 6:24-25

CONCLUSION

- V. And that brings us to the instruction of our Lord's apostle in 1 Timothy 3. A man should be made a church pastor or deacon only if he rules his own household well, having his children in subjection or submission, or under obedience
- A. a man who has been brought to repentance by God's tender mercy has his heart turned to his children; he should ask of the Lord Jesus Christ, "what am I as a father to do?"
 - B. as we have been learning together, and as I have just reminded you, the answers are in the Bible
 - C. let it be that all of us produce fruit in keeping with repentance in the area of how we deal with our children; let every man aspire and strive to do his God-given duty toward his children
 - D. and let the church, when it evaluates men as to qualification for office in the church, think in those terms
 - E. let everyone, and let the church as a body, pray the Lord will work according to the means He has prescribed, to have children in subjection and to have men faithful in their duty toward them
 - F. let all trust that when our hearts are turned to our children, that he will turn their hearts also toward us, and so they will hear from us the message of salvation by repentance and forgiveness of sins
 - G. let the church trust that when we are producing fruit in keeping with repentance in the area of raising our children, the Lord Jesus will raise up for us blameless men, who rule their own households well, whom we can set in office to pastor and serve until He comes back

Jeremiah - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer: Psalm 103:10-17

Thad - Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-25

Chris Jeff - Congregational Prayer

Lord's Supper

Benediction Psalm 103:19

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 719 "A Shelter in the Time of Storm"

Audrey - Trinity 286 "We Gather Together"

Allison - Trinity 581 "To Thee, O Lord, I Fly"

- I. God Grants a Man Repentance
 - A. He causes him to know God's law, and how he has broken it
 - B. He makes him know that God commands all men everywhere to repent
 - 1. he might read it himself in the Bible
 - 2. usually he hears the preaching of repentance
 - C. That repentance is a turning of the man's heart
- II. God Directs the Repentant Man to His Duty
 - A. Note: doing the good works that are your duty is not repentance! Repentance takes place in the heart, then a person does the good works that go with repentance.
 - B. See how the repentant want to know their duty (Luke 3:10)
 - C. See how John taught the repentant their duty
 - 1. Luke 3:11 to the man who is well off: share with the poor
 - 2. Luke 3:12-13 to the tax collector: collect only what is appointed
 - 3. Luke 3:14 to the army soldier or police officer
 - a) do not use intimidation or violence
 - b) do not accuse anyone falsely
 - c) be content with your wages
 - 4. Luke 3:19 to Herod, you should not have your brother's wife
 - D. See how the things John taught are right from God's law
 - 1. love your neighbor as yourself
 - 2. thou shalt not steal
 - 3. thou shalt not kill
 - 4. thou shalt not bear false witness
 - 5. thou shalt not covet
 - 6. thou shalt not commit adultery
- III. God's Law Directs the Repentant Father to His Duty

- I. What an Israelite Father's Responsibility Was Toward His Children
 - A. To love God with all your heart, soul, and strength Deu 6:5
 - B. To keep God's commandments diligently yourself Deu 6:17
 - C. To teach God's word diligently to your children, both the law and the gospel

1. you teach your children God's law
2. when your children ask you questions about God's law, you tell them the gospel Deu 6:20-23
3. when you explain the gospel to them, you tell them that is why you keep God's law Deu 6:24-25

II. What the Situation Was Among Israelite Fathers By the End of the Old Testament Period

- A. Mal 1:2 The Lord loved them, but they did not appreciate it
- B. Mal 1:6 They did not honor God as their Father
- C. Mal 1:7 They did not obey God as to how He would be worshipped
- D. Mal 1:13 They said that it was tiresome worshipping the Lord properly, so they worshipped Him improperly
- E. Mal 2:14 They have been getting rid of their wives when they get older
- F. Mal 3:1-5 God promised He would come and purify, bringing judgment on those who do not fear him
- G. Mal 3:6-7 God promised that He would return to all those who would return to Him
- H. Mal 4:4 God reminded them of their duty to remember His law
- I. Mal 4:5-6 God promised that before the great judgment, He would send a prophet to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers

III. How God Blessed the Israelite Fathers When He Sent John the Baptist

- A. Luke 1:17 John came to fulfill what was promised, and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord
- B. Luke 3:3 John preached repentance
 1. that means that repentance is a turning of the heart
 2. and that means that preaching repentance is how God turns the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers
 3. So, children's hearts being turned to their fathers
 - a) means disobedient children being ready to hear the wisdom of their righteous/just fathers
- C. Luke 3:10-14 John taught what good works are worthy to be done by those who are repentant
 1. share with those who don't have what they need
 2. do not try to get more money from people than what they really owe (thou shalt not steal)
 3. do not hurt anyone, or threaten to hurt anyone (thou shalt not kill)
 4. do not accuse anyone falsely (thou shalt not bear false witness)
 5. be content with your wages (thou shalt not covet)
- D. Luke 3:16-17 John preached the good news of Jesus Christ along with the threatenings of the law

1. He will gather the wheat into His barn
2. He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire

Repentance

1689.15.3

This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.

Spurgeon:

Repentance is a discovery of the evil of sin, a mourning that we have committed it, a resolution to forsake it. It is, in fact, a change of mind of a very deep and practical character which makes the man love what once he hated, and hate what once he loved

JRY from Acts 20

Repentance toward God - see Acts 26:15-20

1. opening of the eyes (18)

in what sense? we see in the next verse that it is an opening of the eyes to the truth of the situation

- a. you are in the darkness of sin
- b. you are under the power of Satan

- c. Jesus Christ is the Savior of those who trust in Him
- 2. turning
 - a. from darkness to light (18)
 - b. from the power of Satan to God (18)
- 3. so that you may receive things from the Lord
 - a. forgiveness (18)
 - b. an inheritance (18)
- 4. FIRST CAUTIONARY NOTE: this is inseparably linked with faith in Jesus Christ; repentance and faith in Christ are two sides of the same coin (18b)
- 5. SECOND CAUTIONARY NOTE: good works are NOT repentance, but necessarily follow true repentance (20b)

JRY from 95 Theses sermon #2

- 1. forgiveness in the sight of God - full remission of both
 - a) guilt, and
 - b) penalties

Malachi 4:5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

GEN turne the heart of the fathers to the children

KJV turn the heart of the fathers to the children

NKJV turn the hearts of the fathers to the children

ESV turn the hearts of the fathers to their children

Geneva:

turning of men to God, and uniting the father and children in one voice of faith: so that the father will turn to the religion of his son who is converted to Christ, and the son will embrace the faith of the true fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Luke 1:16-17 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

GEN to turne the hearts of the fathers to the children

KJV to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children

NKJV to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children

ESV to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children

Poole:

that is, to bring both young and old to repentance: the hearts of the fathers amongst the Jews to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, their children; and the hearts of the Jews, which, with respect to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David, are children, to the doctrine which they embraced, and the ways of God wherein those just men walked

Henry:

that is, of the Jews to the Gentiles; shall help to conquer the rooted prejudices which the Jews have against the Gentiles, which was done by the gospel, as far as it prevailed, and was begun to be done by John Baptist, who came for a witness, that all through him might believe, who baptized and taught Roman soldiers as well as Jewish Pharisees, and who cured the pride and confidence of those Jews who gloried in their having Abraham to their father, and told them that God would out of stones raise up children unto Abraham (Mat_3:9), which would tend to cure their enmity to the Gentiles. Dr. Lightfoot observes, It is the constant usage of the prophets to speak of the church of the Gentiles as children to the Jewish church, Isa_54:5, Isa_54:6, Isa_54:13; Isa_60:4, Isa_60:9; Isa_62:5; Isa_66:12. When the Jews that embraced the faith of Christ were brought to join in communion with the Gentiles that did so too, then the heart of the fathers was turned to the children.

Gill:

the true meaning is, that John the Baptist, who is meant by Elias, should be an instrument of turning fathers with their children, and children with their fathers, to the Lord; that he should be a means of converting both fathers and children, one as well as another; and to gather persons of every age and station

Wesley:

To reconcile those that are at variance, to put an end to the most bitter quarrels, such as are very frequently those between the nearest relations

Clarke:

By a very expressive figure of speech, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs, are represented here as having their hearts alienated from the Jews, their children, because of their unbelief and disobedience; but that the Baptist should so far succeed in converting them to the Lord their God, that these holy men should again look upon them with delight, and acknowledge them for their children.

Bengel:

there may be designed to be marked the care of the fathers for the salvation of their children, as opposed to what takes place in a flight such as Jer_47:3 describes

Barnes:

He would restore peace to their families, and reconcile those parents and children who had chosen different sects, and who had suffered their attachment “to sect” to interrupt the harmony of their households. The effect of true religion on a family will always be to produce harmony. It attaches all the family to “one” great Master, and by attachment to him all minor causes of difference are forgotten.

K&D:

The meaning of this is not that he will settle disputes in families, or restore peace between parents and children; for the leading sin of the nation at the time of our prophet was not family quarrels, but estrangement from God. The fathers are rather the ancestors of the Israelitish nation, the patriarchs, and generally the pious forefathers, such as David and the godly men of his time. The sons or children are the degenerate descendants of Malachi's own time and the succeeding ages. “The hearts of the godly fathers and the ungodly sons are estranged from one another. The bond of union, viz., common love to God, is wanting. The fathers are ashamed of their children, the children of their fathers” (Hengstenberg). This chasm between them Elijah is to fill up. Turning the heart of the fathers to the sons does not mean merely directing the love of the fathers to the sons once more, but also restoring the heart of the fathers, in the sons, or giving to the sons the fathers' disposition and affections. Then will the heart of the sons also return to their fathers, turn itself towards them, so that they will be like-minded with the pious fathers.

JFB:

taken literally, this denotes the restoration of parental fidelity [Meyer and others], the decay of which is the beginning of religious and social corruption - one prominent feature of the coming revival being put for the whole. But what follows, explanatory of this, rather suggests a figurative sense. If “the disobedient” be “the children,” and to “the fathers” belongs “the wisdom of the just” [Bengel], the meaning will be, “he shall bring back the ancient spirit of the nation into their degenerate children” [Calvin, etc.]. So Elijah invoked “the God Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,” when seeking to “turn their heart back again” (1Ki_18:36, 1Ki_18:37).

MacLaren:

The interpretation of ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children’ is very doubtful; but the best explanation seems to be that the phrase means to bring back to the descendants of the ancient fathers of the nation the ancestral faith and obedience. They are to be truly Abraham’s seed, because they do the works and cherish the faith of Abraham. The words imply the same truth which John afterwards launched as a keen-edged dart, ‘Think not to say, We have Abraham to our father.’ Descent after the flesh should lead to kindred in spirit. If it does not, it is nought.

Expositor's Bible:

restoring peace and order to domestic life

RWP:

Paternal love had died out. This is one of the first results of conversion, the revival of love in the home.

MacArthur:

You know what that means? He's going to come with a message that's going to cause conversions in families. That's what he's saying. General repentance, touching all of society, young and old and when it says "turn" that's the Old Testament word used...that is quoted from Malachi 4:6, in Malachi 4:6 the Old Testament word means repent; conversion and repentance, conversion and repentance. What's going to happen, old and young are going to convert because they've repented of their sins and they're going to come back to God by faith in the Messiah and families are going to be reconciled, families are going to be brought together. I think it's in the spirit of Deuteronomy, way back in Deuteronomy 5:29, "Oh that they had such a heart in them that would fear Me, keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever." Sons and fathers, children and adults, coming back to God in repentance and conversion.

David Chanski:

I don't agree with Keil...I think it's obvious that the fathers were objects of John's ministry. He was preaching to fathers and to children.

there are unbelieving men in Israel who are dads. And their are children who are in need...

One of the primary ways in which repentance would manifest itself would be in restoration of family relationships.

JRY:

Born in sin, men care for themselves, and have only prideful, carnal concern for thier children. But granted repentance, men care for their own salvation, and for the spiritual good of their children.

If the Bible says that fathers are to do such and such for their children, and they have not been doing it, repentance would turn them to it.

So, men who are repentant, produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

Since John would turn their hearts, and since his message was, “repent,” we see a good basic definition of repentance. (which I can compare with the definition in our confession)

Deuteronomy chapters 5 and 6

-here are God’s commandments, that you may fear the LORD and keep his commandments, you and your son and your grandson (Deu 6:1-2)

-these words which I command you today shall be in your heart (Deu 6:6)

-you shall teach them diligently to your children (Deu 6:7)

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What is the duty of a father? to teach his children the commandments of God, and His mighty works of salvation. By that method, Israel could be kept faithful to God.