

## Some Ruminations regarding Repentance:

1. John the Baptist set the stage for (in Matthew 3), and Luther continued, the emphasis that repentance is essential for the Christian life.

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent,” he willed the entire lives of believers to be one of repentance. – Martin Luther

2. Repentance can be a focus on particular acts of sin, but repentance concerning our sinful nature can also be a particular focus.

As an example, please see Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, /And in sin my mother conceived me.”

3. Godly repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10), superintended by the Holy Spirit, will be a pathway to appropriating by faith the mercies of God ministered through the finished work of Christ for us.

“Repentance is begun when we acknowledge our sins and are sincerely sorry for them; it is completed when trust in the mercy of God comes to this sorrow and hearts are converted to God and long for the forgiveness of sins.” – Martin Luther

4. Repentance involves a radical reassessment of our conduct and lives (Romans 12:1-2). It is clinging to the truth of Christ in His Word and not relying on the vagaries of feelings or the self-justifications of the evasive soul.

The Greek word *metanoete* itself . . . means “repent” and could be translated more exactly by the Latin *transmentamini*, which means “assume another mind and feeling, recover one’s senses, make a transition from one state of mind to another, have a change of spirit.”  
– Martin Luther

5. Repentance superintended by the Holy Spirit will find rest (please see Hebrews 4:9-11) in the work of Christ in our behalf.

No one, not even an angel of heaven, could make restitution for the infinite and irreparable injury and appease the eternal wrath of God which we had merited by our sins; except that eternal person, the Son of God Himself, and He could do it only by taking our place, assuming our sins, and answering for them as though He Himself were guilty of them. This our dear Lord and only Savior and Mediator before God, Jesus Christ, did for us by His blood and death, in which He became a sacrifice for us. – Martin Luther

Pitfall 1 - To believe that baptism unaccompanied by repentance and faith puts us in a right relationship with God;

Pitfall 2 - To look at our discrete sinful actions and be oblivious to the sinful nature that is a source of these sinful acts;

Pitfall 3 - To believe that our God would have us mired in a life of misery and guilt and regret;

Pitfall 4 - To believe that we can live in a world of rebelliousness and sin against God and not believe that we need to be renewed in our minds and regularly drink in God's goodness and grace through Word and Sacrament;

Pitfall 5 - To believe that God wills repentance without understanding that He wants our souls to be at rest in Him;