

## Sermon Summary: Repentance

1. Jesus affirms the importance of repentance in today's Gospel—repentance is a central theme in Luke. The language of “repent and believe” has been appropriated by popular American Christianity.
2. 1 Timothy, on the other hand, never mentions repentance when it comes to Paul's conversion: “But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief” (1:13)—not because Paul repented. Indeed, Paul doesn't turn to God here at all; God turns Paul to him out of mercy. This is God's work!
3. The core of justification by grace is that God, as was the case with Paul, searches for us—God seeks us out. Repentance, then, **is a sign of God changing us**, a sign of God already working in our lives, not something that comes from us initially. See Romans 9-12 and Acts 9.
4. What's most fascinating about our readings today is that, though Paul doesn't repent, God does according to Exodus 32! God feels angry and rejected by His people. He threatens to lash out but then, thanks to Moses, feels compassion for them and repents.
5. The fact that God repents challenges our way of thinking about God. God changes! What do we do with that? Answer: imitate God (Ephesians 5)!
6. What a shocking message to hear on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11. Were we right to rebuild the towers or attack another nation in response? This is a question for **each of you** to consider in light of Exodus 32 and our Gospel for today. Amen.