

God in Christ deliberately and purposefully laid down his life for each one of us. Shouldn't we take his offer of reconciliation seriously? Isn't that enough to make us change our minds, turn around, and come back to our heavenly shepherd? God's kindness and forbearance and patience "is meant to lead you to repentance" (Romans 2:4). But most just keep driving...right over the edge.

Repentance towards God is central to the message of Christ. God doesn't want us to run ourselves off the edge and into the abyss. He calls us to change our thinking, turn around and come back to him, because he has great things in store for those who accept his invitation.

"Repent therefore and turn back, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19

CONTACT INFORMATION:

*Please contact us if you wish to know more
or if you have any questions.*

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by Brett Christensen

“Unless you repent, you too will all perish!” Luke 13:5



On a foggy night in January 1975, a ship brought down 127 metres of the Tasman Bridge in Hobart. Cars kept coming over the rise of the bridge in the dark, unaware that a section of the bridge had gone. One driver said he realised in time what had happened, stopped his car and tried to warn others. But people took no notice and kept going, plunging 45 metres into the river. Some managed to stop their cars in time and escaped with the car's front hanging over the edge of the gap.

Can you imagine how it felt to have people disregard your attempts to warn them to stop? I can. The dreadful reality of a world in rebellion against God is that, unless people stop going in the direction they have chosen, they too will face a terrible end. But when Christ's followers tell people this, almost everyone disregards our warning. That's the way it has been for the 2000 years

since Christ sent people out to sound the warning that “God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed, having given proof to all by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

What does this word “repent” mean? The Greek word in the Bible literally means *change [one's] mind*. God calls everybody to *change their mind!* About what? Acts 26:20 tells us that Paul declared to people “that they should repent and turn to God, doing deeds worthy of repentance”.

So the change of mind God calls everyone to is a change of thinking that will produce a change of action, a change of direction. Humanity has turned away from God, but God's calling us to turn back to him. He doesn't want us to keep going and perish. He “is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

And God doesn't just call us with words. He calls us with tender love, pleading like a shepherd calling his sheep which have wandered away. “For you were like sheep going astray,” Peter writes to people who had repented, “but you have turned back now to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25).

God didn't shake his finger at the world, barking from heaven, “Repent!” He came down to earth personally, in a form to which we could relate – the human being called Jesus the Christ – and stepped into the lives of weary, messed up people like us. He showed us the way we should be living, the way we should be treating each other – even those who hate us – and the way we should respond to and approach God. And he told people to “repent”; that is, to change their minds and start living the way that he showed us to.

This wasn't empty talk. Jesus *lived* the message, then he *died* to make our forgiveness possible. What could more powerfully cause humankind to stop and think again about their rebellion against God?

