

Repentance and Confession

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, August 17, 2025
PASSAGES	Matthew 3; Acts 19; 2 Timothy 2; 1 John 1; Romans 5; James 5; Psalm 32; Matthew 11
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:24:04 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Confession is your mouth saying what is true. Repentance is your whole self turning around and walking the other way. Jesus asks for both, and he asks for the second one not to make you miserable but because the thing you are gripping is already killing you.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Confession and repentance are two different things, not two words for one thing. You can confess your neighbor's sin, your spouse's, your country's, your ancestors' — but you cannot repent on anyone's behalf but your own.
- ◆ The Ephesian believers did not merely admit they had practiced magic. They burned fifty thousand pieces of silver worth of scrolls in public. Confession with nothing behind it is just words.
- ◆ It is better to fall on the cornerstone than to have it fall on you — better to humble yourself before God than to be humbled by him.
- ◆ Repentance is a long labor, and stumbling is not disqualifying. Steadfastness is produced by trying, failing, and starting again.
- ◆ Whether repentance feels like sacrifice or relief depends almost entirely on how attached you still are to what you are being asked to drop.
- ◆ Confession to one another is a congregational activity with wisdom attached — safe people, not cornered strangers. And the goal when someone confesses is restoration in a spirit of gentleness, because we are fellow beggars.

- ◆ The kingdom of darkness is not a strong tower. Psalm 32 calls concealment a strength dried up as by the heat of summer.

► 1:24:04

Matt opened with church business that turned out to be the sermon's own premise. Hope does accidental discipleship well, he said, and relational discipleship sometimes — but on-purpose, premeditated discipleship is a growth area, and it has been a prayer focus of his for a while. Out of that came a summer pilot of a study called *Rooted*, which he and Glenn Tompkins each led. What he liked about it was that it refused to stay theoretical: the group fasted for a day and then prayed for two hours instead of discussing prayer; they talked about service and then did a service project. This message took one of that study's rhythms and preached it.

1. A revival built on confessed sin

► 1:29:30

“Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.”

MATTHEW 3:5-6 ↗

This is John the Baptist as the promised messenger going out ahead of the Lord (Malachi 3:1, which Wes had preached the week before) — and the movement he led ran on confessed sin, out at the river, deliberately away from a corrupted temple system, while still returning the people to their long-standing covenant with the God of the Old Testament.

► 1:30:32

Confession that is real shows up in behavior:

“Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.”

ACTS 19:18-20 ↗

2. The distinction the rest of the message hangs on

► 1:31:06

“Confession and repentance are different things,” Matt said. “They’re not just different words.” Confession involves your mouth saying what is true, and its reach is wide: you can confess your brother’s sin — *he hit me* — your spouse’s, your countrymen’s, even your ancestors’. What you cannot do is repent for any of them. Repentance is a change of heart in which you were going one direction and now go another, and it only ever works in the first person.

The reason that matters is the first thing out of Jesus’ mouth: *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Saying sorry is not the whole of it. The Ephesians did not just concede that magic was wrong; they burned the scrolls.

► 1:33:00

Matt granted that this hurts, and then set the alternative beside it:

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone... The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

MATTHEW 21:42-44 ↗

Better to fall upon Jesus than to have him fall upon you. Better to humble yourself before God humbles you. The same two moves sit side by side in Paul’s seal: 2 Timothy 2:19 — naming the name of the Lord is the confession, departing from iniquity is the repentance.

3. Not just freedom from, but usefulness for

► 1:34:27

Hearing and doing is the difference between the house on the rock and the house on the sand (Matthew 7:24-27) — and the point of the doing is not merely staying clear of bad things. It is entry into honorable work.

“If anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:21 ↗

God's generosity is, in Matt's word, scandalous — the laborers hired at the eleventh hour are paid like the ones who bore the heat of the day (Matthew 20:1–16), and the kingdom will be full of people with enormous sin lists. But maturity wants more than a pardon and an exit. It wants the walk.

4. Repentance as a long labor

► 1:35:49

That walk is bumpy on purpose. James 1:2–4 counts trials as joy because testing produces steadfastness — and Matt was careful about what that verse does not say. It does not require getting it right the first time. Steadfastness is produced by trying, tripping, and starting over. “Repentance can be a long labor of love,” he said, “but continue on in it.”

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

1 JOHN 1:7 ↗

It is the blood that cleanses, not the progress. Walking in the light is named as fellowship, not as a performance on a stage. And Romans 5:2–5 traces the chain out: suffering to endurance, endurance to character, character to a hope that does not put us to shame.

► 1:38:54

Whether letting go feels like loss depends on where you are standing. Loved back into focus on Christ, many dark things simply become repugnant — “Oh goodness, thank you. I didn’t want this. It was killing me.” But Matt conceded the other side plainly: the more fixed you are on the desires of the flesh, the more his cross feels like a burden rather than freedom. To someone trying to earn salvation, or not wanting it, repentance looks burdensome and odd. To someone desperate for a savior, it is all glory.

5. Confession is a congregational activity

► 1:39:55

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

JAMES 5:16 ↗

Matt asked for wisdom with this, bluntly: do not corner someone of the opposite sex in the hallway on the strength of a verse. Bring things to light like adults, with people it makes sense to bring them to. And confess your own things, not other people's — because only your own are ones you can then repent of.

► 1:40:55

What is owed to the one who confesses is fixed: [Galatians 6:1–2](#) — restore him in a spirit of gentleness, watching yourself, bearing his burden. Even the escalating process in [Matthew 18:15–17](#) aims at a brother regained, and the tax collector line is about how traitors were regarded, not a divine position on the IRS. [Love covers a multitude of sins](#), and it is a privilege to extend the covering we ourselves live under — but also an obligation: [Romans 15:1](#) puts bearing with the failings of the weak in exactly those terms. We are fellow beggars of the mercy of God, and none of us has the right to act like we never needed any.

6. The kingdom of darkness is a poor refuge

► 1:42:57

“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Blessed is the one who fears the LORD always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.”

PROVERBS 28:13–14 ↗

Resenting this is like a child complaining about a bath and a cooked supper. “I have to repent, confess, and walk in wholeness and healing,” Matt said. “I have to let go of this stuff that’s killing me.”

► 1:44:09

Psalm 32:1–5 says the same from the inside: bones wasting away through groaning, strength dried up as by the heat of summer — until “I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity,” and the iniquity was forgiven. That withering, Matt noted, is the sort of strength loyalty to the kingdom of darkness actually supplies.

7. Who you are being asked to trust

► 1:45:11

Then the message turned to character, because the command is only as good as the one giving it. [Psalm 145:8–9](#): gracious and merciful, slow to anger, mercy over all he has made. [Psalm 147:2–3](#): he

gathers outcasts and binds up wounds. [Isaiah 54:10](#): the mountains may depart, but his steadfast love will not. And the same character in the flesh:

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30 ↗

So [1 Peter 5:6-7](#) becomes reasonable: humble yourself under a mighty hand that cares for you. Bring anxieties, yes — and then keep going. Bring the failures, and the moments you are hoping he will simply gloss over when you stand in front of him.

8. Where to start

► [1:48:40](#)

Matt named specifics rather than leaving repentance abstract: theft; lying, including the strategic omission of truth; deliberate exposure to sexual imagery — he said *imagery* on purpose, so nobody could exempt a prestige drama on a technicality; bitterness nursed into hatred and then acted on; and cowardice, which [Revelation 21:8](#) lists first among the disqualified.

If that is too much at once, start where [Romans 10:9](#) starts — confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord — then follow him by reading a gospel like Matthew to learn what he is like, with Galatians after it as a short filter for reading the gospels rightly. And as you read, ask the honest question: can I trust this man?

► [1:50:21](#)

For everyone else — the long-walking included — the assignment was one question put directly to God: *Lord, where do I need to confess and repent?* Matt knew the nervous tick that comes with it, and said that is the tell. “Oh no. I was tightly gripping that little bit of darkness, wasn’t I?” He compared it to Bilbo agreeing, so easily, to hand Gandalf the ring. When obedience is impossible to picture as life-giving, that is the moment the leap of faith is being asked for — and faith in action is what repentance is.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Matthew 3:5–6
- Malachi 3:1
- Acts 19:18–20
- Matthew 21:42–44
- 2 Timothy 2:19
- Matthew 7:24–27
- 2 Timothy 2:21
- Matthew 20:1–16
- James 1:2–4
- 1 John 1:7
- Romans 5:2–5
- James 5:16
- Galatians 6:1–2
- Matthew 18:15–17
- 1 Peter 4:8
- Romans 15:1
- Proverbs 28:13–14
- Psalm 32:1–5
- Psalm 145:8–9
- Psalm 147:2–3
- Isaiah 54:10
- Matthew 11:28–30
- 1 Peter 5:6–7
- Revelation 21:8
- Romans 10:9

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Where have you been confessing something for years without ever repenting of it — saying the true words, but not changing direction?
2. The Ephesians burned scrolls worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. What would the equivalent action be for something you have already admitted is wrong?
3. Matt said whether repentance feels like sacrifice or relief depends on how attached we still are. Which does it feel like for you right now, and what does that tell you?
4. Who are the safe people you could confess to, and what has kept you from doing it? What would it take for you to be that safe person for someone else?
5. Ask the question Matt asked: Lord, where do I need to repent? What came up — and what are you going to do about it this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KOL812fsxs&t=5044s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.