TITLE: **TO REPENT OR NOT TO REPENT (PRACTICAL EXAMPLES)**

TEXT: **EZEK 18:20-24; 2 CHRON 24:15-22; 2 CHRON 33:1-17**

THESIS: The purpose of this sermon is to discuss the process of repentance, looking at examples of negative and positive reactions to sin. A sinner must feel godly sorrow for his sins, repent of those sins, then God will forgive him, *regardless of what those sins were!*

INTRO: There are so many people today who believe that they've sinned too much for God to forgive them…gone too far for God to take them back. Some of these people simply use this as an excuse so they won't have to change. Others really believe this. A proper recognition of one's sins is vital in order to spur on repentance (1st step in any recovery is recognizing you have a problem). But one must also understand that there is NOTHING he can do that God won't forgive…**IF** he repents! God demonstrated this numerous times, two examples of which we'll look at today.

I. REPENTANCE REQUIRED:

A. **Eze 18:20-24** – the soul that sins shall die. If the wicked turn to righteousness…and if the righteous turn to wickedness…
B. **Lk 13:3** -"unless you repent you shall likewise perish"; **Acts 17:30** - "...but now commands all men everywhere to repent"
C. **2 Cor 7:10** – "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation…but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

II. REPENTANCE REFUSED:

A. **2 Chron 24:15-22** – King Joash's epitaph might read that he was "mostly good"
B. But Joash demonstrates two negative things for us:
   1. Following men and not God
      a. First, he followed a good man (Jehoiada)
         - **2 Kings 12:2** – he "did right in the sight of the Lord all his days *wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him*."
         - He put his faith and trust in a man (a *good* man even). But this was not enough.
         - How many in the church are only following the preacher! What happens when the preacher fails?
      b. Then, he followed evil men
      Acts 17:11 – the Bereans were noble because they searched the scriptures to see if what a good man said was true!
   2. Failing to repent of his sins
      a. Sin separates us from God (**Isa 59:1-2**), but *all* sin can be forgiven, **if we *repent* of it!**
      b. Joash was given opportunity to repent. In spite of his wickedness, God sent Jehoiada's son (Zechariah) to Joash.
      c. Joash not only wouldn't listen to the prophet, but he killed him!
      d. Unpardonable sin is any sin for which we refuse to repent (**Heb 4:4-6**)

III. REPENTANCE RENDERED:

A. Wickedness of Manasseh (**2 Chron 33:1-11**)
   1. Built the high places and altars for idols (v. 2-5)
   2. Caused his children to pass through the fire (child sacrifice / dedication to false gods) (v. 6)
   3. He even built his own idol and put it in the temple! (v. 7)
   4. He caused the nation of Judah to sin…to do worse than the surrounding nations (v. 9)
   5. As He did with Joash, God also tried to reason with Manasseh, but he would not listen (v. 10)
   6. So God allowed the Assyrians to take Manasseh into captivity (v. 11)
B. Repentance & Forgiveness of Manasseh (**2 Chron 33:12-17**)
   1. He could've done as Joash did (or as Ahaz did - 2 Chron 28:22 – he sinned even more against God)
      This is the approach so many take today. "I'm too far gone now…might as well live it up!" (or, anger with God)
   2. He besought the Lord; he humbled himself greatly; he prayed (probably after praying to his idols and false gods)
   3. God heard him, forgave him, and restored him to his kingdom
   4. Manasseh then brought for fruits worthy of repentance (v. 14-16)
      a. He repaired Jerusalem
      b. He got rid of the idols
      c. He repaired the altar of the Lord
      d. He commanded Judah to serve God
   5. Manasseh "got caught!" Sometimes we define 'worldly sorrow' as 'being sorry you got caught.' But godly sorry can and sometimes does follow worldly sorrow, as it did in Manasseh's case.
C. There is *no sin* that God cannot forgive, IF you will repent! How many times do we hear people say, "God could never forgive me for the things I've done!" Are your sins really unforgivable? Have you done worse than Manasseh?

CONCLUSION: Do you have a sin for which you haven't repented? Don't beat yourself up…repent! God will forgive!