

REPENTANCE IS REAL



THE DIVINE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

“Repentance is a divine gift, and there should be a smile on our faces when we speak of it. It points us to freedom, confidence, and peace. Rather than interrupting the celebration, the gift of repentance is the cause for true celebration.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Divine Gift of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 38.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE, THERE'S A PATH BACK TO PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

By Joshua J. Perkey

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Have you ever felt like your sins are so great that you can't be forgiven? You're not alone. Think about Corianton, the son of Alma the Younger who left his missionary work to chase after Isabel, a harlot in the land of Sidon. Not only did Corianton "forsake the ministry,"¹ but the sin he engaged in—breaking the law of chastity—was "an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost."²

But that wasn't the end of it. Because of what Corianton did, many of the Zoramites refused to believe the teachings of his father, the prophet.³

This young man had a pretty stern lecture coming.

Imagine how Corianton must have felt—probably pretty miserable. His father, Alma, had to explain the doctrine pretty intensely for him to understand the plan of salvation and the fact that there is right and wrong, blessing and judgment, based on how we live our lives. But he also taught about the beauty of repentance and becoming clean again.

Corianton could trust in his father. After all, Alma had been through sore repentance himself. As Alma explained to his son Helaman, when he realized the scope of his own sins, he "was racked with eternal torment" and his "soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree . . . with the pains of hell."⁴ Alma even said, "The very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds."⁵

That's pretty severe, but it's not the whole story. For three days, Alma was so sick he couldn't move his body as he suffered excruciating pain.⁶ But then he remembered the Savior and called silently to Him for help.

"And now, behold," he said, "when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more. . . . And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul

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was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain! Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy."⁷

Have you ever wondered if Corianton, like his father, worried that he couldn't really repent? Do you think he felt his sins were so great that he believed the lies that whisper to us that we can't really be forgiven or that we can't change?

And have you ever felt that way yourself—that awful feeling that because you've done something wrong, you're terrible, maybe even worthless—that things are so bad you should just give up?

Don't believe those lies. They are some of the most effective weapons Satan has, and they simply aren't true.

That's the beauty and the miracle of the gospel—that through repentance and the grace of God bestowed through the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we all can repent. We all can change. We all can become what we have the potential to become.

That's how it worked for both Alma and his son. In spite of all of Alma's sins, repentance wiped away his pains, and he found peace and true joy again. Even after all Corianton had done, he was invited to repent and was called back to the ministry.⁸

And Corianton responded. He did repent and return to the ministry to preach the word.⁹

He learned what we all need to learn and remember: the Atonement of Jesus Christ is real. Christ truly did suffer for our sins and made a way for us to be forgiven. Through repentance, we can feel clean, pure and worthy, whole and happy. No matter what we've done, there's a way back. It's through repentance, and it's very real. **NE**

NOTES

1. Alma 39:3.
2. Alma 39:5.
3. See Alma 39:11.
4. Alma 36:12–13.
5. Alma 36:14–15.
6. See Alma 36:16.
7. Alma 36:19–21.
8. See Alma 42:29–31.
9. See Alma 43:1–2.