

The Road to Repentance

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In Romans 2:4 Paul declares that God leads men to repent by the goodness He expresses to us. *The goodness of God* refers to His favors and expressions of love. Such goodness does not overpower or miraculously “lead,” but when duly considered, will influence us to repent. Repentance is the mental determination to forsake sin and to embrace God's way. As in other passages, it is here used to include all that God requires of men to receive grace and pardon. We may think of repentance as a destination with a road approaching it. God's acts of goodness become directional signs urging us to repent.

- **The Natural World Is the Result of God's Goodness.** How can one admire the beauty, design, and the consistency of natural laws of our earth, to say nothing of the universe, without standing in awe of the Designer? Truly, “The heavens declare the glory of God and firmament showeth his handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). Even the Gentile nations without the written law of God were without excuse for this reason: “The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity” (Rom. 1:20). Such natural blessings make soberminded people want to serve the source of them.
- **The Gift of Christ Is the Goodness of God.** Not only in natural blessings, but more so in spiritual blessing, is the goodness of God seen. He did not send some dispensable angel from an obscure corner of heaven. “He gave his only begotten Son” (John. 3:16). He “spared not his own Son but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). Surely, this gift is the landmark demonstration of God's goodness and it continues to persuade right-thinking people to repent.
- **The Longsuffering of God Expresses His Goodness.** In the scales of eternal justice, sin must be weighed and found wanting. While sin demands punishment, because of God's goodness toward men he delays execution of judgement, giving us time and opportunity to repent. The Lord is “longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). “Despise thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering?” (Rom. 2:4).
- **The Gospel Is the Product of God's Goodness.** It is the comprehensive gift, for in it are revealed all the other gifts of God's goodness. The Gospel not only brings to our attention all the richness of God's goodness but God has also made it the very instrument of man's redemption. It is “the power of God unto salvation” and through obedience of its truth our souls are purified (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:22). God must be amazed at our continued impenitence!

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