

**Where is there need for repentance in our world today, especially within the business community, and what is the true value of that from a faith standpoint? What happens if it does/doesn't happen?**

The 2023 BELIEVES sessions are focused throughout the year on “Living Our Faith According to Jesus’s Parables.”

Where is there need for repentance in our world today, especially within the business community, and what is the true value of that from a faith standpoint? What happens if it does/doesn't happen?



This was the center of the discussion with Rob Streetman, President of InLight Consulting, and author of *An Enemy Lies Within* and *The Storms Have Only Just Begun*, on Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at BELIEVES – drawing from reflections with a focus on [Parable of Forgiven Debts – Luke 7:36-50](#).

“Repentance is one of my favorite things, but for reasons you may not think of,” Streetman opened by saying.

Pointing to two references – Luke 7:36-50, and the prep questions for the session – Streetman added, “What I’ll do in my remarks is to try to build a case for repentance. It’s not only important, it’s existentially important for the church – which doesn’t simply refer to where we go on Sunday or Wednesday, but in the workplace.”

Referring to Luke 7:36-50, Streetman said, “When I first look at this, there isn’t an obvious relationship to repentance – which most of us have learned is turning 180 degrees and going from old ways to new ways. We’ll need to think differently.”

*“When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.” Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.”*

*“Tell me, teacher,” he said. “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”*

*Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”*

*“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.*

*Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”*

*Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”*

*Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”*

- Luke 7:36-50

Streetman then said, “The meaning of repentance is not to change your behavior. Literally, metanoia means to change one’s mind. When the mind changes, behavior and attitude changes. The truth is, Jesus in all of His teachings and parables was trying to get them to change how they think.”

Referring to the Parable of Forgiven Debts, Streetman then wondered aloud, “What was Jesus trying to get them to think differently, and how?”

He then shared his screen in the session to show the following diagram.



“I saw this in a worldview continuing education program put on by Chuck Colson Ministries,” he mentioned.

Why is it important?

“If all I am about is behavior modification then pressure will last for a while,” he explained. “But if thinking doesn’t change, behaviors will revert back at some point.”

Colossians 3:1-2 offers another view for a worldview mindset (“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things – Col. 3:1-2) as does Romans 12:2 (“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the

renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” --- Romans 12:2), according to Streetman.

For decades and centuries, Streetman explained that the Church has focused on behavior, values, and belief.

“We’ve handed over training in how we should think to secular humanists,” he said. “It’s a critical issue. The Church in the West has lost its influence. We’re further down the path to apostasy than we may like to think or admit.”

Streetman then went on to speak of how clinical researchers and psychologists have discovered our brain functions in two parts – left and right.

“The ‘right’ side focuses on consideration of pursuits of higher order values (e.g., goodness, beauty, and truth),” he said, “and the ‘left’ side is singularly focused on utility, and values which focused on addressing needs and wants.”

The types of utility-focused considerations Streetman referred to the ‘left’ side of the brain focusing on are:

- “What’s in it for me?”,
  - “Bottom line at all costs” (business),
- “Reduce all to lower order of value, or reject it”, and ultimately, rejecting God.

The left hemisphere reduces the higher order values to its lower perspective and function, ultimately rejecting the sacred.

“We’ve been training ourselves from a ‘left’ hemisphere perspective over decades, perhaps even centuries,” he stated. “The opposite of that, for Christians, is repentance towards the higher order values.”

Without the shift to repentance towards higher order values, Streetman said the world will continue pulling us and training us to think ‘left’ hemisphere.

“One book I highly recommend reading that touches on this topic is Harry Blamires’ *The Christian Mind*. In it he says there is no longer a Christian mind, but also that there’s nothing going on in the world that can’t be thought about from a Christian perspective.”

According to Blamire, there are six marks of Christianly thinking:

1. Supernatural orientation: It sees human life and human history held in the hands of God.
2. Awareness of evil: It is conscious of the universe as a battlefield between good and evil.
3. Conception of truth: It recognizes the truth as: Absolute and uncompromisable, supernaturally grounded, objective, revealed, discovered by inquiry (not determined by majority vote), and authoritative (not a matter of personal choice).
4. Acceptance of authority: It rejects rebellion – in all its forms – to willingly bow before the Sovereign God.
5. Concern for the person: It considers the human person as the only being created in the image of God.
6. Sacramental perspective: It recognizes the omnipresence of God in all of life, and the desire of God to make life joyful and rewarding.

Then to pause and reflect before going further, Streetman reiterated the following:

- Repentance is more about getting our mind right, versus changing behaviors first.
- We need to be more suspicious about the way we think.
- We’re really in a battle – the battle for the souls of men takes place in their mind.
- Repentance is important, and important in the business community (where we spend the majority of our waking hours).
- God hasn’t turned the workplace over to the world.

- He has authorized leaders – anyone who has influence – and positioned them for His kingdom and glory.
- There is a battle going on between good and evil, and the battle is important.

“All of this recognizes God’s concern for people,” he said.

Prior to starting and leading InLight Consulting, Streetman worked for many years at SunTrust.

“When I think about the time I spent working for SunTrust, I realize how easy it is to get our minds in tune with worldly thinking. To change requires intentionality.”

To combat this, Streetman recommends that we all find someone that’s “like a Paul (disciple) to you” or a “Barnabus to walk with you.”

He added, “Community is important. We need to think about people the way God does.”

Then he wrapped up his remarks by posing a takeaway question for everyone.

“Maybe a beginning question to open us up is, ‘How was Simon thinking wrong (in Luke 7:36-50), and how was Jesus trying to get him to think differently, and what would that mean to him to do so?’”

Tim Doyle, CTK Parishioner, then asked, “Who are we repenting to? We need to know there’s a path to forgiveness. In the work world, we need to create a path forward to bring things forward and make change.”

Streetman responded, “The notion about love is there’s higher value there, because God is love. How do I think about love? How does it affect my belief? All of this is about communicating with God.”

CTK Parishioner and business leader Charles Jones, then commented, “I am not sure people know how to get going with this, meaning the ‘conversation with God.’”

Streetman replied by mentioning the writings of Oswald Chambers and A.W. Tozer as some that could be worth reading, and then saying, “God is in us working for His good pleasure. Most of our responsibility is to let it happen.”

He added, “We have to pray. Engagement is where it is at. Initially we may try to block thoughts out but then it’s bringing them to Him (“taking thoughts captive”).”

Another session attendee followed, asking, “How do we bring that into the workplace without people feeling we are pushing an agenda?”

Streetman’s response was simple to begin – don’t bring an agenda.

“We have to pull the focus out of what we are, and how we’re to behave, and put it instead on Christ.”

Reflecting on his time at SunTrust again, Streetman acknowledged, “For much of my career, I was an outward Christian – wearing a cross everyone could see and putting Christian paraphernalia in my office. It didn’t work. It was all external. I didn’t have it in me. I had to let Him renew my mind.”

Finally, Streetman was asked how he sees all this in the context of things like social justice today.

“Grace is the power of God for everything,” he answered. “The grace of God flows down the channel of authority that God’s created. Whatever good work He wants us to participate in, we have to find God’s authority in it. We can all be under authority, but if I’m going to do so (be under someone’s authority), I need to know that person’s relationship with God. This leads me to the discernment to know, ‘Yes, this is God’s authority.’”

Streetman closed stating the following.

“We can want to go do things that are good and just, but it has to come out of a core that’s from a heavenly mindset, not worldly. Am I exercising the right mind, beliefs, and values? God has a way for everything. There are steps He gives to find the Truth.”