

# Grace & Peace

JANUARY 24, 2012

## REPENT! THE FIRST WORDS OF JESUS...

...in Mark's gospel are these:

*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee,  
proclaiming the good news of God, and saying,  
"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;  
repent, and believe in the good news."*

Repent. When many of us hear that phrase, we think of a wild-hair person on a street corner with a sign: "Repent, the end is near." When you check with the dictionary, you get the impression that repenting means feeling sorry. Here's the Merriam-Webster definition:



**re·pent**/ri'pent/

- Verb:
1. Feel or express sincere regret or remorse about one's wrongdoing or sin.
  2. View or think of (an action or omission) with deep regret or remorse.



That's simply not what Jesus meant by "repent," in his first words reported in Mark's gospel. The Greek word in Mark 1:14 is "Metanoite." And Jesus was using the imperative to implore his hearers (and us) to "turn from" and "turn to." Repentance is an action, not a feeling. The act of repentance is an act of will that causes you to turn from your old way of living, thinking, behaving, and turn to making a commitment to a new way of thinking, of doing—a whole new way of life. And the life Jesus calls us to is summarized in the

two words we find in verse 17: Follow me.

If we're honest with ourselves, we need to continually repent. We need to repent over and over. We are like sheep, and we go astray. We need to continually listen for the voice of Jesus and his daily invitation to "follow me."

Have you chosen to repent lately? What are you turning from? What is Jesus calling you to turn to?

***May you be given the grace to follow.***

