

## Too Dirty to be Cleaned

It was a beautiful clear day but our car was pitifully dirty from the wet dirt and gravel county roads where we live. We went to our usual drive through car wash in Farmington, NM, expecting our usual service. But this time we were *too dirty!* **What?** Yep, the man who normally took our money said our car was too dirty for their car wash!

I asked what I should do and he literally said I should go to another place and clean the car myself, then come back for the deep cleaning they offered. Sandy and I laughed ourselves silly, but we did go to the self-wash place they suggested, washed off the big chunks, then returned for their excellent *finishing services*.

But the whole event made me think of Jesus. Jesus? Of course. Many people today think they have to clean themselves of their sin *before* they can come to Jesus (or even go to worship). That is precisely backward. Jesus came to “seek and save that which was lost,” (Luke 19:10). ***We literally cannot become clean before we come to Jesus!***

Be careful here. We *do* need to repent. Jesus said in Luke 13:3-5, “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” In fact this is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus repeats Himself twice, word for word – a very strong emphasis indeed! That repentance is vitally important, but does not, in itself, constitute nor deliver forgiveness (cleansing) of sin.

Repentance is a simply biblical word for “turning around” or “heading the other way.” When we repent of sin, we change our lifestyle from pursuing sin to pursuing Jesus and the joyful lifestyle He has in store for us (John 15:11).

But at that point we are not cleansed of guilt. A bank robber may stop robbing banks, but still go to prison for previous robberies. Repentance is **not** a “pre-wash” that gets rid of most of our *sin-dirt* so we can go to the *finishing wash* of Jesus’ blood.

Only the blood of Christ can wash away our sins (I Peter 1:17-19). We come in contact with His blood through **faith** (John 8:24), **repentance** (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:36-18), **confession** (Mark 8:29-38) and **baptism** (Romans 6:1-4; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

In John 14:6, Jesus said ***No one comes to the Father but through Me.***” To get “through” Jesus, we must get “into” Jesus – salvation is “in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:10). To get “into Jesus” we must be “baptized into Christ” (Galatians 3:27). **Then and only then** are we truly washed in the blood of Christ. All our life of mud and sin is cleansed away and made new – “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Get to the washing place and see the washing person, Jesus. He has never turned away honest, seeking hearts, no matter how dirty their souls!

-Ray Wallace