

## Conversion to the Good News - Luke 13,1-5<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

In the passage from Luke's Gospel, chapter 13, verses 1-5, Jesus twice affirms: *"If you do not convert, you will all die in the same way"*. Jesus wanted the Jews to change their minds and live a converted spirit so that they would not enter the way of death. So, to better understand His teaching, we need to understand what conversion is and why He wants us to convert.

**Keywords:** Conversion, Luke's Gospel, spirit, death

### Introduction

In the passage from Luke's Gospel, chapter 13, verses 1-5, Jesus twice affirmed: *"If you do not convert, you will all die in the same way"*. Jesus wanted the Jews to change their minds and live a converted spirit so that they would not enter the way of death. So, to better understand His teaching, we need to understand what conversion is and why God wants us to convert.

### What is conversion?

First of all, what is conversion? In Latin, the word 'convertere' is a combination of the prefix con- (with, together with) and vertere (to return). Thus, conversion means turning to one's heart, admitting sins, shortcomings, inadequacies, and repenting in order to change one's heart, thoughts, and actions for the better. In Greek, the noun for conversion is 'μετάνοια' (metanoia: conversion) which includes the prefix μετά- (meta), meaning change, and the word νοια (noia), meaning the change of mind. Therefore, to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/13>. Lc 13,1-5: *"At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate\* had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way, they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them\*—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!"*. (Truy cập ngày 1/8/22)

convert (μετάνοεω) means to change one's mind towards what is holy, noble, and better.<sup>2</sup> Thus, according to the Greek, conversion is first a change of mind, then a change of actions and lifestyle. In other words, if we change our outward actions without changing our minds, we cannot call it conversion.

In the Old Testament, King David is a concrete example of this spirit of conversion. After committing adultery with Beth-seva and killing Uriah, God sent the prophet Nathan to warn the king about the mistakes he had committed. With an upright heart, he did not deny responsibility but humbly confessed his sins. He said to God: *"Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love; in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions. Thoroughly wash away my guilt, and from my sin, cleanse me. For I know my transgressions; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your eyes."*<sup>3</sup> He changed his attitude before he changed his behavior. Therefore, God was merciful and forgave his mistakes. Although He did punish David, God did not let him die.

And in the account of the Gospel of Luke, chapter 13, from verses 1-5, when some people came to tell the Lord (the fact) that some Galileans were killed by Pilate, or through the story of those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them, the Lord twice reminded them that *"if you do not convert, you too will perish."* The Lord told them to convert not because they did something wrong but because they had not changed their minds. It seems that they still keep the mindset that those unfortunate people died as a result of sin, and they lived better and more justly, so they did not fall into the same situation. They were framed in their limited thinking, so God warned them. The same thing happened in the Corinthian community that Paul did not hesitate to admonish: *"Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall."*<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, suppose anyone comes to God with pride and pride, thinking that he is completely free from sin, that he is more holy than others. In that case, no matter how he is in a great position or performs many good deeds, there is still no spirit of conversion in him, and he can easily stumble at any time. Therefore, conversion is not an outward appearance, but it must come from a change of mind and inner-thinking and then a change of outward behavior.

Second, why does God want us to convert? Yes, conversion helps us to be aware of our sinful condition so that we can quickly return to God, who is rich in mercy. Indeed, if sin leads us to follow the devil's shadow and away from God's love, the conversion will help us to turn to Him. When we know how to convert, even though *"our sins are as*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://hdgmvietnam.com/chi-tiet/duc-giesu-kito-duong-keu-goi-hoan-cai-41529>. (Truy cập ngày 1/8/22).

<sup>3</sup> <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/51>. (Truy cập ngày 1/8/22).

<sup>4</sup> <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/10>. (Truy cập ngày 1/8/22).

*red as crimson, as deep as a crimson cloth.*"<sup>5</sup>, He will generously forgive and love us with all his heart. He does not judge us by our sins but on our sincere conversions to deal with us. He understands us and sympathizes with us. He grieves when we sin but rejoices when we sincerely convert and quickly return to His teachings.

The admonition on conversion in the Gospel of Luke chapter 13 was also repeated by Jesus in other preaching times. Specifically, in the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord warned the townspeople who refused to convert: *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds are done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And as for you, Capernaum: 'Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld.' For if the mighty deeds are done in your midst had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."*<sup>6</sup> Thus, for the Lord, conversion is a decisive condition for us to live or die, be lifted up to heaven or go to hell, and be rewarded or punished on the day of judgment.

As human beings, surely, everyone has sinned, and everyone is confused and weak at times, but if we remain inert in our sins and do not know how to repent, we voluntarily step into the worldly way of death. And if we know how to open our minds and sincerely convert every day, then surely, we will walk on the path of life.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, through the passage from Luke chapters 13:1-5, the Lord reminds the Jews and all of us to live a penitential attitude at all times. God wants us to have the courage to change our minds, to turn to God for mercy. Each of us should not give in to our own lusts do not close ourselves to the darkness of sin, but we should be ready to let the light of God's Word shine in order to move forward in His ways. Each of us needs to turn to the Holy Spirit, who is the Advocate who will sustain and help us to continue living a positive and conscious conversion throughout our lives. As we live the spirit of conversion, we will experience God's great love, and we will certainly walk the path of life that He has promised us.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/1>. (Truy cập ngày 1/8/22).

<sup>6</sup> <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/11>. (Truy cập ngày 1/8/22).

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## Biodata

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