

The Gathering Growth Guide

John the Baptist Week 3 // Repentance 101

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Luke 3:1-19

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

In the final week of our 3 part series on John the Baptist, Paul focused on John's message, which was a very simple one: *repent*. But the problem that we encounter when we say that word is the images that all of us have in our head of angry preachers and picket signs. To help clear up the confusion, Paul offered 7 comparisons between man's idea of repentance and God's idea of repentance, and then shared 3 characteristics of a repented life.

1. **The comparison between man's repentance and God's repentance:** Man shows us how bad we are; God shows us how good He is. Man wants to make us better; God wants to make us new. Man leads us to a 360; God leads us to a 180. Man makes repentance feel like the end; God makes it the beginning. Man points people to hell; God points people to Jesus. Man argues about the truth; God talks about the Truth. Man's approach to repentance hardens hearts; God's approach softens hearts.
2. **The characteristics of a repented life:** People who choose to live a lifestyle of repentance will have 3 distinct characteristics growing in their lives (each of these are found in Luke 3:11-14 at the end of one of John's repentance messages). Practically what this means for us is that if these qualities aren't growing greater in our lives, then we may need to make repentance a more regular practice in our walk with Jesus. They are: generosity (Luke 3:11), honesty (Luke 3:13), and humility (Luke 3:14).

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Paul showed a number of pictures that illustrated what many picture when they think about repentance (angry preachers, hateful picket signs, etc.). What were some of the emotions you experienced as you saw those images?
- Would you say that you have considered repentance more of a one-time experience or more of a daily experience that should be repeated?
- Looking back over your notes from the past week, was there anything that confused you or really caught your attention?
- Read Proverbs 28:13 and discuss what a refusal to repent leads to and what a willingness to repent leads to.
- I think John the Baptist was on to something. His mission was to prepare the way, and the message to accomplish that was repentance (Luke 3:4-5). How does repentance create an environment in which Jesus can enter and operate in our lives? How does not repenting do the opposite?