



Check-In

Check in. Last week's challenge was to make a plan to unite yourself to the poor. How is this going?

Scriptures

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.'" So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people. **-Luke 3:1-9, 1**

Quotes

"Repent is one of the loveliest words in our language. It pays us human beings a sublime compliment, for it says that we can do something about the course we have taken... we need not continue in the same destructive path." **-J. Ellsworth Kalas**

"We don't build the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God builds us. We don't construct this divine reality; rather, this divine reality constructs us, transfiguring our very essence from within." **-Leonard Sweet**

Did You Know?

C.S. Lewis was a British author, theologian, and professor best known for *The Chronicles of Narnia* and his works of Christian apologetics, including *Mere Christianity* and *The Great Divorce*. Once an atheist, Lewis came to faith through a deep intellectual and spiritual journey, becoming one of the most influential Christian thinkers of the 20th century.

For Lewis, repentance is not a stern obligation or a heavy burden but an invitation to come home. In *The Problem of Pain*, he writes, "God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself because it is not there. There is no such thing." Grace is the gift of God Himself, calling us back to where we truly belong. For Lewis, repentance isn't just about fixing mistakes but surrendering to grace and allowing God to make us new. This grace is not about erasing the past but redeeming it, helping us become who we were always meant to be. Repentance, for Lewis, is the joy of coming home to God's love.

Prayers

Spend some time sharing prayer requests with each other. As the small group leader, we ask that you do two things:

1. write them down
2. ask someone to pray

Discussion Questions

- John's call to repentance wasn't just for individuals but for communities. What might repentance look like for a society today? What role do individuals play in creating change?
- The sermon compared repentance to a process, like planting a seed. What areas of your life are in the "waiting stage," and how might you trust God's grace to help them grow?
- The prophets often connected repentance with justice—caring for the oppressed and marginalized. How can repentance lead to practical actions of justice and love in your community?

Something to Think About

Is C.S. Lewis's view of repentance different from how you have thought about repentance? In what way? How might the idea of repentance as "coming home" change the way you think about repentance and your relationship with God?

What do you need to change in your life?

