

# DAY TO DAY REPENTANCE

*“He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” —LUKE 3:3*

Repentance literally means to change the mind. It is a change of thinking, which requires us to turn from dependence upon ourselves to dependence upon God. John the Baptist’s message was, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near,” and it dealt with two important issues – pride and greed. We first come in humility to God, confessing our sin; and then we are to live generously with our belongings, honest with our finances and content with what we have.

These are genuine marks of true repentance, but John also talks about sexual immorality. “But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison” (Luke 3:19-20). Herod had committed adultery by marrying his brother’s wife, and John, having rebuked him for it, was imprisoned and eventually beheaded.

We live in a day when sexual promiscuity is very much as it was in Jesus’ day. The Roman Empire became renowned for its sexual permissiveness. Moral truth, however, does not change with the times because moral truth remains consistent with the character of God. Pride, greed and sex are three areas in which people often fall. Pride breeds a false sense of entitlement, privilege and power. Greed exploits others to our own advantage and sexual immorality runs rampant in society today. John cuts right to the core, and tells the people to turn from their self-indulgent ways. He deals with their past by urging them to confess

their sin, and with the present by telling them to live generously and honestly.

John also deals with the future. “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Luke 3:15-16). John knew he could take people only so far. He could make them aware of their sin and bring them to a point of confession, but it would only be Jesus who could baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Getting rid of our sin and being forgiven is necessary, but it is only clearing the decks in order that the Lord Jesus might implant His Holy Spirit within us. The indwelling of His Spirit is what empowers us to live new lives that begin to exhibit righteousness and godliness. True repentance is lived out day to day in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It is His ongoing presence within us that will enable change.

***PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for your presence within me. Enable me to live everyday in repentance, completely dependent upon You.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living a life of repentance, trusting and depending daily upon Jesus?***