Weekly Study of Sunday's Message
November 22, 2026 ***"Clean Slate: The Journey Towards Renewal" Repentance".***

I Intro.
We're flying through November. Since this series pairs with our Advent series, we'll be ready for the first Sunday of Advent next week. Can you believe we're moving into the Christmas season? There's a lot going on at NCC and you'll want to keep up with everything that's happening. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.
We're finishing our four week journey towards Advent, observing and practicing the four classic ordinances of many churches that prepare people seeking God to be with God. These ordinances are: **Examination. Confession. Absolution. Repentance.** These ordinances invite us to face something…in order to receive something. We're talking about the process, and the work of transformation.
"Clean Slate: The Journey Towards Renewal", will prepare us for Advent. Renewal is the process of finding the inner real you, removing all that's not you. I want you to deeply feel, and experience the freedom and Hope, Joy, Peace, Love that comes from practicing each of these ordinances.
We are creating a 'meeting place' to abide with God. To restore and renew us like we were created to be. By helping us strip away all of the buildup that clings to us as we go through life.
The first week in our service on Examination we did the work of seeing where we were disconnected from God. And it's out of this place we found **HOPE**. The second week we practiced Confession and we felt the **PEACE** that comes from honest, sincere confession. Last week we experienced the **JOY** that comes from absolution. And today we wrap up this series with the intentional choice of repentance which is an act living in and reflecting **LOVE**.

III Sunday.
I want to start with this bold statement. **Repentance is designing a life worth living.**
What's your thoughts about this?
Let's hit the scripture. we're going old school today. With a word like repentance, you have to do a root word study of it. But first, scripture. Then we'll weave together the idea of repentance, and how that life is described in this passage. Hear this understanding Romans 11 talks repeatedly about mercy, and the vastness of God's grace.
Romans 12:1-2. ***Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper***

worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Let's talk about repentance. Repentance is not a second round of guilt. Repentance is not rehashing the list again. Repentance is not just going through the whole examination, confession, absolution process again. Repentance is an intentional decision to design our life to live a specific way. Everyday you're deciding what things will be important, and what things you're going to not care about. And those choices will dictate the direction of your life. How you will interact with the things in the world. And we're saying that a life of repentance is the better way.

So, what does repentance look like lived out? This is where we return to our scripture.
1. Repentance, a change of direction, begins with an understanding of mercy. Mercy and the vastness of God's grace, is spelled out in Romans 11. Like confession, this Romans 12 passage begins with a picture of the end result of repentance. Where honest repentance leads you. Also, this teaching is not a demand. This is a natural response by us, to the spiritual work of examination, confession, and receiving absolution. Because we have an understanding of God's love and mercy we've experienced through examination, confession, then absolution, we CHOOSE repentance.
Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy
Because you now get it, understand, feel the significance of what's been done FOR you. You have a break in a relationship with another person, you go to them to reconcile, you pray that there will be an appreciation for your desire to mend it. This is a stark realization that your life has been going in the wrong direction. Appreciating the insight of examination. The humbling act of confession. The joy of absolution. All is not lost. We CHOOSE to change direction. Living a life of repentance is the recognition of what's been done for us. And what would be a natural response from us.

2. Repentance is a full on 180 change in how we live. Since the prior three ordinances involved our whole body. Examination, Confession, Absolution. Then this commitment to repentance is a full body commitment.
"Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."
There is an understanding that this life of repentance is full on commitment. We sing the song *"All to Jesus I surrender"*. **How much do we surrender to Jesus?** ALL. Since your body carries the weight and harm of the things you say or do. Then your body also must be the place where this commitment is made. Repentance is you intentionally choosing a 180° change of direction of your life. You're driving to some marked location, you pass it, then you have to do a u-turn and head back in the opposite direction. AFTER realizing you were going in the wrong direction. Doing the work of turning around, repentance, is a commitment to going in that new direction. We're headed to spend Thanksgiving with the family in Asheville. We'll be back next Sunday. This trip, because of who all will be there. will require all of me to be committed to this. Because if ALL of me isn't committed, then others will know it. And I will miss out on what this trip could be. Psalm 32 said sin wasted my body away, sapped my strength. The chosen life of a 180 degree change, will bring energy and strength to all of who we are. And though this is a full on commitment, we grow into how we will live this out.

3. Repentance begins with our mind. This commitment to offer/commit our bodies begins with our minds. How we think, what we think about, affects everything we do. Our mind is the place we live in. What we give our thoughts to is like decorating the room in which we live and decisions are made. Have you ever walked into a specifically decorated room, and you can feel the vibe of it? Changing the way we think, redecorating the room of our mind is the beginning of renewal.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The Greek word for transformed is 'metamorphoo' **Can you wager a guess what word we use that came from this word?** Metamorphosis. To be changed from one thing into another.

There are two key phrases in this passage..

Pattern- there aren't just things about the world we have to be aware of. There are patterns, structures, systems, that dictate how the world works. These pull us away, grab our hearts, are all connected. Don't be absorbed into just accepting the way the world works as normal. Be aware of them.

Be transformed- this isn't a change we just grind out. This isn't adding a plug-in to your browser. This isn't just adding different behaviors. This is a new operating system.This is a designed life that begins to change us from the inside. Which means this takes work and there is a learning curve. And that's what we're here for at NCC. To help you navigate this new way of life.

You will not be able to grit or power your way to a repentant life. Again, this is transformation…being transformed…by changing how we think. Change what goes on in your mind, and everything else will follow. Repentance has to start with an understanding of how transformation works. And what is at the heart of repentance.

4. Repentance completes the cycle of a *"Clean Slate: The Journey Towards Renewal"*. I'm about to blow your mind. You may not be impressed, but let's see. The last line in this passage is.

"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

I don't expect you to remember the very first passage we used for examination. Here is the very first line in that passage from **2 Corinthians 13**, and you find what the connection is.

"Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups. You need first hand evidence, not mere hearsay, that Jesus Christ is in you. Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it. I hope the test won't show that we have failed. But if it comes to that, we'd rather the test showed our failure than yours."

What do you notice that is a recurring theme from our very first passage, you see in this closing passage? *"TEST"*.

We've closed the circle, completed the cycle. Committing to this life of repentance will create within us the ability to see what God's will is for us.Which leads us back through the other three ordinances.

This is where we took communion in the service. But I want to focus on what communion is. And remind us about all of these ordinances, and what a life committed towards renewal brings us to the table. What's interesting about this passage and receiving communion, is how it focuses on our body. We're consuming the body of Christ. *"Unless you eat my body and drink my blood…"* We have work we do before communion is examination, confession, and receiving absolution. When we take this

bread and this cup, we make a commitment to a life lived of continual repentance. That's what this table represents.
Here we entered into a time of worship for us to focus on these four ordinances again. So go back through each of these to align your hearts to the desires and work of God. **Examination. Confession. Absolution**. And then a commitment to **Repentance**.

We practice an open table. That means everyone is welcome to receive communion. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey. Jesus introduced this new covenant to his disciples before they actually fully committed themselves to the Jesus way. They were just following him, like we do. Over these four weeks we have walked a path. We looked honestly at our patterns, named our sins, heard the word of cleansing, and now we stand at a table that asks one question: **What will you do with the mercy you've received?** Paul says, *'Let a person examine themselves, and so eat.'* You began this series by looking inward. We come to the table not as people who have it together, but as people who have been made clean and sent to live differently. Jesus does not ask you to come with a finished life. He asks you to come hungry, willing. The bread and the cup are the body and blood given for you, the mercy Romans 12 calls you to offer back to God with your whole life.
As we took communion, we took a moment to wrestle with one question: **What is one practice God is inviting me to begin?** It was here when we took communion.

IV Challenge.
I want to close this specific ordinance and then the series. Let me repeat: Repentance is designing a life worth living**.** We're practicing these four ordinances. **Examination. Confession. Absolution. Repentance.** Living a life towards continual renewal is the only life worth living.
But this isn't a one and done thing. This is a commitment to regularly doing these four ordinances.
Examination- live a life of continual openness to the Holy Spirit doing a little walk through our soul.
Confession- live a life of continual releasing sins and other things that have cluttered our soul.
Absolution- live a life of continual renewal by receiving the cleansing forgiveness and grace from God.
Repentance- making an intentional commitment to living a life of continual renewing of our mind. And to tie this in with Advent, Repentance is the root of **Love**.

Next week we begin Advent. To prepare us for the coming of The Christ. We hope you join us.