

Sunday Gathering Summary –Bible Study & Missionary Update

Overview

This Sunday' s gathering included a missionary update from Caleb and Emily Arnold, prayer for their ministry in Mexico, and a Bible study in Luke 3 focused on repentance, John the Baptist' s ministry, and preparation for communion.

Core Scripture:

- Luke 3
 - 1 John 1:5-7
 - Ezekiel 36:25-27
 - Matthew 16:20-27
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Missionary Update: Caleb & Emily Arnold

Background:

- Caleb and Emily Arnold are missionaries in Chihuahua, Mexico, working with an indigenous people group.
- They have been sent and supported by this church for 11 years.
- The Arnolds will return to Walla Walla in June for about a year to reconnect with the church and community.

Ministry Highlights:

- Focus on church planting among a people group with a New Testament translation but no established church.
- Ongoing Old Testament translation work.
- Outreach to people working at the local landfill; prayer requested for open doors to share the gospel.
- Weekly Bible study at their home with about 10 adults and 15 children; prayer needed for softened hearts.
- Discipleship efforts through a new workshop built to foster relationships, especially with local men.
- Homeschooling their children; prayer for good friendships and a healthy childhood.
- Praise: Two women from the local group came to faith this past year.

Prayer Requests:

- Safe travel back to Mexico and fruitful final six months before furlough.
- Continued spiritual breakthroughs and effective discipleship.
- Smooth transition for those covering their ministry during their absence.
- God' s provision for their needs and ongoing prayer support from the church.

Support:

- The church supports Caleb and Emily as a body and encourages individual support through Ethnos360 if the Lord leads.
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Bible Study: Luke 3 –Repentance & Preparation

Historical Context

- Luke specifies the time of John the Baptist' s ministry, grounding the gospel in verifiable history.
- The presence of multiple rulers (Roman and Jewish) and high priests (Annas and Caiaphas) is highlighted to show the real, historical setting of Jesus' ministry.

John the Baptist' s Ministry

- John preached a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," preparing people for Jesus.
- His baptism was a public act of turning from past ways, not itself the means of salvation.
- Repentance, biblically, is not just feeling sorry but turning around and living differently.

Repentance Explained

- **Repentance = Action:** Not just emotion or confession, but a change in direction and behavior.
- **Examples:**
 - Those with extra should give to those in need.
 - Tax collectors should stop extorting and collect only what is fair.
 - Soldiers should avoid intimidation and be content with their wages.
- Repentance bears visible fruit—real-life change.

Repentance vs. Salvation

- Repentance alone does not save; it prepares the heart for receiving the salvation Jesus offers.
- Many try to live better lives by their own strength but need the cleansing and empowering work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
- The rich and those who love sin struggle to receive salvation because their hearts are not ready to give up what they value most.

Jesus' Teaching on Discipleship (Matthew 16)

- To follow Jesus, one must deny self, take up the cross, and be willing to lose one' s life for Christ' s sake.
- True discipleship means letting go of personal ambitions and treasures to pursue Christ and His kingdom.

God' s Promise: New Heart & Spirit (Ezekiel 36)

- God promises not only to cleanse but to give a new heart and put His Spirit within believers.
- This enables true change—living according to God' s ways is possible only by the Spirit' s power.

Communion & Closing Reflections

Communion Meaning:

- Remembrance of Jesus' body broken and blood shed for the remission of sins.
- Communion is an ongoing invitation to repent, receive forgiveness, and ask anew for the Spirit' s help.

Encouragement:

- Repentance is not a one-time event but a continual turning to God.
- If struggling with repeated failure, remember God' s provision: His blood cleanses, and His Spirit empowers.
- The church is invited to partake in communion as a declaration of dependence on Jesus for forgiveness and transformation.

Prayer:

- For the Arnolds' ministry, for softened hearts in Mexico, and for spiritual fruit.
- For all present to experience true repentance, Spirit-empowered living, and deep fellowship with Christ.

Key Takeaways:

- Support and pray for missionaries as an extension of your own heart and treasure.
- Repentance is more than feeling sorry—it' s a real change in direction and action.
- True change and discipleship are only possible by God' s Spirit, not self-effort.
- Communion is both a reminder of Christ' s sacrifice and an invitation to ongoing transformation.

Blessing:

- Prayer for God' s blessing on the congregation, their fellowship, and the week ahead.