March 27th – The Evidence of Faith

"So the people asked him, saying, 'What shall we do then?' He answered and said to them, 'He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise. Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, 'Teacher, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Collect no more than what is appointed for you.' Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, 'And what shall we do?' So he said to them, 'Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.'"
(Luke 3:10-14)

John the Baptist was the forerunner of our Savior Jesus. God raised Him up to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah. John didn't mince words when he preached – "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Not exactly the feel-good message we hear in so much "Christian" preaching these days, but it was important that the people be confronted with their sins. It's still vitally important that we are confronted with our sins!

The people got the message. Jews from everywhere started to come to John at the Jordan River to be baptized. Keep in mind that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance – it was a symbol that the people were setting aside their sins and recommitting themselves to holiness. It's a testament to the power of God's Word that people started coming from all walks of life to repent of their sins. Tax collectors, soldiers, sinners – all of them (and all of us) in desperate need of repentance.

What is repentance? Repentance is the act of renouncing one's sins and turning to Jesus in faith and obedience. For the everyday Joe, it meant being generous. For the tax collector, it meant more honest transactions. For the soldier, it meant doing a job without hate and deception. In every case, repentance is the evidence of faith. If a person is not willing to repent of his/her sins, then they're not ready to follow Jesus. Does your life demonstrate the evidence of faith that comes through repentance?