



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of August 8, 2021

Please use these questions to stay connected as a church to meditate on the same sermon preached from God's Word this week. May this be a fruitful time for the building up of our church and for the spread of the gospel.

Sermon Text

Luke 3:1-9

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" 7 He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 9 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

If you were not able to listen to this week's sermon, then please refer to this link to listen prior to answering these questions, <http://hawaiichurch.org/sermononline>

Summary

In the midst of evil rulers and empty religion, John the Baptist was a herald who preached a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in order to prepare the hearts of men to receive the coming Messiah. A prepared heart must go beyond religiosity and is so much more than simply being a child of Abraham. A heart ready to receive the Messiah must turn from sin and turn to God in faith. True repentance is more than what comes out of your mouth. True repentance is seen in the fruit that comes from your life.

Discussion Questions

1. Luke starts his narrative about John's ministry by listing the depraved rulers and religious leaders who appear almost like a "gallery of villains". It's in the midst of such oppressive leadership that Luke tells us "the Word of God came to John". What should this tell us about the importance and priority of the Word of God in relation to the chaos in the world around us? What does this tell us about the fear and sense of hopelessness that we sometimes feel today as we witness our own leadership quagmire or experience some other personal crises?
2. John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Explain how repentance is connected to forgiveness, and whether a man can truly be forgiven if he is unrepentant. Why do you think some people will never repent of their sin and turn to the Lord for forgiveness? Have **you** truly repented from your sins? How do you know? (this question is further explored in question #3)
3. Explain how true repentance is more than just an intellectual understanding of one's own sinfulness and a desire to change. In Luke 3:5, he quotes from Isaiah 40 to describe the radical change in

the landscape that will occur in preparation for the coming Messiah. Do you think true repentance (turning from sin and placing one's faith in Christ) should result in a radical life change? If so, what does this look like in a person's life? What does it mean to bear fruit in keeping with repentance?

4. Why would John use such harsh words - calling them a "brood of vipers" - when he addressed the crowds who have come to him in the wilderness? Do you think he hated these people or loved them? What do you think he understood about the spiritual climate of the society in which he lived and what insight do you think he had into the hearts of those whom he addressed? In our sermon we heard that "true repentance is not what comes out of your mouth, but what comes out of your life." How is religiosity & ceremony different from repentance & faith?

5. John refuted the religious man who was relying upon his heritage as a "child of Abraham" to ensure his right standing before God. In what ways do people, even within the church, rely upon other things to save them besides true repentance and faith? How should these people be addressed and why might this be a difficult thing to do? Why does Jesus' work on the cross compel us to love people enough to do the difficult task of confronting people in their sin?