

April 30

Scriptures: Read Luke 3

Key Verse: “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance…” (Luke 3:8)

Overview

John the Baptist must have seemed a rather arrogant fellow to some—how many preachers do you know who address candidates for baptism as a “brood of vipers”? He was so opposite the typical evangelist/prophet with their promotional schemes and follow-up plans. In fact, when people (multitudes of them) showed up for his baptismal ministry, he seemed surprised that they’d come at all—“who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” Nor was he above knocking religious and national heritage, “Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’. For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham as our father’. For I tell you that out of these assessing your worth as roughly equivalent to a stone! He seemed to many to be an obnoxious man with an offensive message.

The whole point of John’s baptism was, “repentance for the forgiveness of sins”. Notice it wasn’t “confession” for the forgiveness of sins. Without question, confession is vital to the redemptive process, but confession is relatively passive; once you’ve confessed, then what? Confess again? And again? Repentance, on the other hand, is active. What’s more, it’s creative.

For example, how’s this for active and creative: “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same…” To tax collectors, he says, “Don’t collect any more than you are required to.” To occupying soldiers, he says, “Don’t extort money… don’t accuse people falsely… be content with your pay.” This is the fruit worthy of repentance.

Repentance means turning away from a sinful choice and choosing or walking in the opposite direction. Yes, we must confess our sin—that’s step number one. But then comes the arduous and sometimes life-long challenge of choosing the new direction and the new values 0 every day until the day we enter His presence.

Prayer

Lord God, we thank You for the privilege of confessing our sins and for Your promise of forgiveness. Help us to repent so that the “Fruit”—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control, will show to you and others that we are repentant people.