

Then he got married *AND his wife was patient*. She said: “I don’t mind your habits ... *if you don't mind sleeping on the couch.*” Since he did mind he was open to change, so he enrolled in a 12-step program for slobs. Months later, when his in-laws arrived for a visit, *he was a new man!*

But then came the moment of truth. His wife went out of town for a week. *At first he reverted to the old man*. He figured he could be a slob for six days and clean up on the seventh. *But something strange happened*. He could no longer relax with ✦the bed unmade, ✦clothes on the floor, or ✦dirty dishes in the sink. Initially his new life was only important to his wife, *but now it had become important to him!*

In a similar way, when a person receives God’s forgiveness in Christ, *his new life is real*; therefore, he really tries to honor God in all his ways – *whether anyone is looking or not!*¹

Application: Let’s *apply* this sermon:

- Since fruit comes from repentance (God’s work of making us sorry and giving us faith), *are YOU repentant?* Y N
- Having answered YES, *I challenge you to take inventory of your abilities and possessions*; then honor the Triune God by using them in service to others!

“True repentance hates the sin, and not merely the penalty; and it hates the sin most of all because it has discovered and felt God's love.” (W.M. Taylor)

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Please share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!
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¹ Adapted from: Billy D. Strayhorn, Thunder in the Desert

Instruction about Repentance!

Based on Luke 3:7-14 NIV

John the Baptizer said:

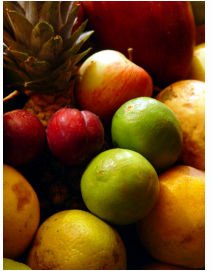
“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

Then he went on to describe such fruit!

Can you see the fruit of repentance in your life?

2nd Sunday of Advent – 2009

Sunday, December 6 → 8:15 & 10:45



Main Point: *Repentance has fruit!*

Introduction: Dear friends, *sin brought death*, so God sent His Son so that we THROUGH HIM would have life both now and forever! *That is a radical change* – from spiritual death to everlasting life! **GOD IS THE ONE WHO WORKS THAT CHANGE; He does so through repentance!**

So what is repentance? GOD enables people to:

- See Him as the creator, provider, and judge.
- See their sin and be sorry for it (wanting to sin no more).
- See Jesus as the ONE Savior of all.
- Receive Jesus as their Savior from sin, death, and hell.

Whenever such repentance has been worked by God; ***THEN PROOF, VERIFICATION, FRUIT WILL BE UNMISTAKABLE!*** That statement brings us to Luke 3:7-14:

1. **The Setting:** John the Baptizer – *the one sent by God to prepare the way for the Savior* – was baptizing in the Jordan River. A great number of people made the journey into the desert to hear John’s preaching and receive his baptism – *a baptism marked by repentance!* In other words, *those showing the proof of repentance*

were baptized while *those without the proof* were denied. The proof is both ✦ a *sincere* confession of sins and ✦ a *significant* outward change worked by God!

2. **When many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to be**

baptized (Matthew 3:7): John addressed them with these words:

- a. ⁷ **“You brood** [offspring, children] **of vipers** [even children of the serpent, the devil]! **Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”** Lenski wrote: **“John leaves this somebody unnamed since only the devil prompts a man to try to flee from God’s wrath by mere outward religious acts** (Luke 3:7, p. 187).” But John was NOT trying to be rude; instead, he wanted them to ✦ know of God’s coming wrath, ✦ know that no one can escape by an *insincere* use of baptism, and ✦ allow God to work repentance in their lives!
- b. **Memory Verse** → ⁸ **“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance** [literally, fruits worthy of repentance].” The change worked by God from *death to life* AND *hell to heaven* will certainly result in *dramatic changes!* But Lenski wrote: **“We often encounter a superficial repentance; it brings forth...a passing regret, a few tears,... a few sighs, an excuse or two, a wish to be different, a resolve to change by one’s own efforts, a brief outward betterment, and the like** (Luke 3:8, p. 188).”
- c. John even anticipated the *weak excuses* of the Pharisees and Sadducees; therefore, he said to them: **“And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’”** Back then (Luke 16:19-31), in

the OT (Ezekiel 14:12-20), and today, some people have concluded that their relationship with a *godly person* could save them. *But let us not be deceived!* There is only ONE SAVIOR; **Jesus is the ONE with whom we must have a relationship!** That is why we at Bethlehem want all people to *KNOW Jesus Christ!*

- d. **God sincerely wants to work repentance in ALL PEOPLE;** however, *for those who continually refuse,* John said: ⁹ **“The ax is already at the root of the trees...”** Think about *the process:* ✦ due to a lack of fruit, trees are selected for removal, ✦ the ax man approaches a selected tree, and ✦ he places his ax where he will chop. All that is left is to chop and throw into the fire! Some, *even now,* are that close to eternal punishment!

3. **Those who are new in Christ want to do His will:**

- a. ¹⁰ **“What should we do then?”** the crowd asked. ¹¹ **John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.”** ¹² **Tax collectors..., “what should we do?”** ¹³ **“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,”** ... ¹⁴ **...some soldiers..., “...what should we do?”** ... **“Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely--be content with your pay.”**
- b. A man had been a slob most of his life. *He didn’t understand the logic of neatness.* ✦ *Why make a bed – if you’re going to sleep in it again tonight?* ✦ *Why put the lid on the toothpaste tube – if you’re going to take it off again in the morning?* He admitted he was sloppy!