

30 Days Together
“Immanuel - God With Us”
#30daystogether

Day #22 – Dec. 17th

Text: Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”

John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Devotion: Curtis Pruitt

John the Baptist, the great forerunner for Christ, proclaimed repentance “in the wilderness of Judea”, saying “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near!” God’s kingdom has come near: in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the promised Messiah! John’s proclamation to repent was spoken with urgency. We need to get ready! Confess your sins and repent! Now!

Repentance often seems impossible to me. Too often do I believe the lies of Satan the accuser. Too often do I lack faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. Too often do I fail to believe that Jesus’s death and resurrection is enough to secure my salvation.

John’s words still call out to us today. In Advent we prepare for and are expectant of the Nativity of Jesus. But we also cry out to God, “Maranatha—come Lord Jesus, quickly!” We eagerly await for Jesus to come again to shield us from the “unquenchable fire that will burn up the chaff.” We cry out for Jesus to raise our bodies from the dead, glorify them and give us the new Heavens and new Earth. Are we ready? We need to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

We don’t need to think of repentance as impossible. Rather, we should be expectant of repentance in the same way we are expectant of the coming of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will keep producing the fruits of repentance in you. Remember your baptism and know you are a child of God. Confess your sins and

hear the words of Absolution and know you are forgiven. Partake in the Lord's Supper and believe the words "my body broken for you; my blood shed for you, for the forgiveness of your sins." Repent and produce good fruit! Our Lord Jesus is coming again soon!

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your son Jesus into the world to die on a cross for the salvation of the World. Father, send your son Jesus again quickly! Jesus, thank you for enduring the cross for me. Lord, give me faith to believe that your son Jesus died for me and that is enough. Holy Spirit, produce the fruits of repentance within me today. Amen.