

Reflection Questions: Luke 3:1-14

For the message, "Preparing the Way for the Lord" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on January 20, 2019

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Luke 3:1-14

1 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."

10 And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" **11** And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." **12** Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" **13** And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." **14** Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

A summary of the message: What does it mean for me to prepare the way for the Lord in my life? It means bringing the real you before the real God for real change. Preparing the way for the Lord in your life means preparing the way for the Lord's transformation of your life. And this happens as we continually turn back to the Lord (repentance + faith) which leads to new life and new fruit in our lives.

Key Quotes:

- [Psalm 139:23-24](#), "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."
- [Martin Luther](#), "When Jesus said, "Repent!", he meant the entire life of the believer be one of repentance."
- [John Calvin](#), "Repentance is not merely the start of the Christian life; it is the Christian life."

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- When you hear the words “repent” or “repentance,” what sorts of ideas or images come to your mind? Are these words familiar to you or hard to define?
- John the Baptizer knew that there was a true kind of repentance (turning to the Lord) and a fake kind of repentance (going through the motions). According to him, how can you tell the difference?
- Read the above quotes from Luther and Calvin. What is the point they are trying to convey? And how does that line up with your lived experience in following Jesus?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- How does this text help us to see/ understand the kind of church we want MHC to be? In other words, how would our community of faith look differently if we truly bore fruit in keeping with real repentance? What would our community of faith look like if we just practiced fake repentance?
- What kind of community is this text calling us to become for the sake of the world? What is lost if we ignore the message?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- What does this mean for us as we live out our faith in the city?
- How does this text serve as Good News for those outside the faith?
- Can you imagine if just the Christians in our city took this message to heart? Describe how things would change?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

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