

Episode 47

"He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." - Luke 3:3

This is the moment where we see the sign of the people of God begin to shift, from circumcision to baptism. We will only see the implications when we get into the book of Acts, but this is where it begins.

John is calling for repentance. To understand the full implication, we need to understand that John is calling the people of God, Israel, to repent. To change their minds, to change their ways and come back to God. Being people whose identity was defined by being uniquely chosen by God, you can understand how this was insulting. They had been chosen by God to be a unique people living under His laws to put on display how good God is. If you've read the Old Testament, you know that they struggled to achieve this.

Enter John. Calling for a renewed repentance, a renewed urgency to live according to God's ways. Therefore the sign of baptism was used to signify a cleansing, a purification and even more a rebirth into being the people of God in a new and fresh way.

The beauty of baptism is that it becomes an inclusive sign for men and women, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, Jew and Gentile. A sign that all are included, all it takes is for that acknowledgment of our need for God. Repentance is that change of mind leading to a changed life, as Rory likes to say that re-places us in the penthouse, restoring our right relationship with God.

If this describes you, then be reminded today of the Father's words over Jesus as He was baptised, that He also speaks over you, *"a voice came from heaven saying: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'"* If you don't feel like that today, know that it is on offer and God is inviting you to repent today.

As you go into your day today, meditate on these words of Eugene Peterson:

"Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection, God raising you from the dead as he did Christ. When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive—right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant cancelled and nailed to Christ's cross."
Col 2:12-14 The Message

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