

Repentance: An Invitation

Goals: To help people understand that repentance is a good thing, but that it's also more than just "being sorry" - it includes recognition, renunciation, and restitution.

Openers:

- What images or ideas come to mind for most people when they hear the word "repent"?
- Describe an observable change that took place in you, or in someone you know, when you (or they) became a Christian.

Scripture:

Luke 19:1-10 (NLT) *Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."*

Digging Deeper:

Observations

- From the text what kind of reputation did Zaccheus have?
- How would you describe Jesus' actions toward Zacchaues?
- What adjectives would you use to describe Zacchaues' responses to Jesus?

Interpretations

- How do you explain why Zacchaeus gives half his wealth to the poor and repays people he cheated even more than he owes them (like 4x more!)?
- When Jesus describes what's just happened, why do you think He says: "Today, salvation has come to this house"?
- Where do you see Zacheus "recognizing" his sin? Where do you see him "renunciating" his sin? Where do you see him making "restitution" for his sin?
- What makes this story good news or Zaccheus?

Applications

- Write down an area where you think Christ might be inviting you out of 'the trees' - maybe an area that you need to turn away from, and turn towards Christ instead.
- When you're trying to turn away from sin, which of the "3 R's" of repentance (recognition, renunciation, and restitution) do you find the hardest to do?
- Why would "repentance" from whatever Jesus is calling you away from, be good news for you?