

Baptized Into the Revolution – 7/2/2006

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Turn to the book of Luke, Chapter 3. We're going to look at ten verses this morning, and I'm going to entitle this "Baptized Into the Revolution." When I say that, this is as good a time as any to make a disclaimer; the revolution I'm talking about is not the revolution that Americans are celebrating this weekend. That's the American Revolution, and that's a good thing; that's fine; Fourth of July fireworks and all that; but the kingdom revolution isn't that. And I get asked all the time on the July 4th weekend why don't we have flags in here and sing patriotic songs or whatever. And it's because the 4th of July, while it's an American holiday, and we're as patriotic as anybody and go out to see the fireworks and celebrate freedom and all of that, but July 4th isn't a kingdom or Christian holiday. The American Revolution, like most revolutions, happen by overthrowing another government, and it happens with violence and things of that sort. It was a power-over revolution and good things came of it. Good things sometimes come out of revolutions. But the revolution that's going on in this world that unites us together, it's not the flag that unites us, it's the cross. The revolution that's going on, if your life is surrendered to Jesus Christ, is a revolution that always looks like Jesus. It's a Jesus-looking revolution because it's spreading a Jesus-looking kingdom, and it always has a Calvary flavor to it. We spread God's kingdom in this world not by having power over others, but by exercising power under others. It's the power of self-sacrificial love; it's the power of service; it's the power of humility. And our one job in life is to spread that kingdom in all times, in all places, to all people. No ifs, ands, or buts. And so the kingdom revolution is very different from the American Revolution or any other kind of revolution, and we go out of our way to keep those two things separate. So celebrate the 4th of July if you want to, but what we're here to do is to celebrate the cross and celebrate the kingdom of God. Amen!

Luke, Chapter 3. I've got two points that will be carved out around two sections of scripture that we'll be studying here. The first is the first four verses. In the first two verses, as I said two weeks ago, Luke uses the dignitaries of his day simply as calendar props because they're not really centrally important to what God's up to in this world. From those calendar props, we are able to determine that these events are happening between 27 and 28 A.D., and then Luke says in verse 3:

"John," the Baptist, "went into all the country around the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

Pause for a moment here for a review. What we saw two weeks ago was that in the two centuries leading up to the time of Christ, there was a growing awareness that something was happening. God was getting prepared to do something new in this world. There is a new age coming, a new era coming; the Lord is going to come to earth. And some people, as they were getting this awareness, noticed in the Old Testament, Isaiah 40, that there was a prophesy that the Lord would come in the wilderness and that people are to go out in the wilderness and to prepare a way for the Lord. So we know from history that there were several communities of people who moved out into the wilderness, which was the Jordan region outside of Jerusalem, and formed something like monastic communities as they were waiting for the Lord to return. What they all had in common was that they practiced baptism as the initiation rites into these end-time communities. Most scholars believe that John the Baptist had some relationship with one of those communities. The most famous of these communities was the Essenes. They were the ones that collected the library of books that we discovered in 1947 that's called The Dead Sea Scrolls. These are the books that Dan Brown in The Da Vinci Code screws all up. The Essenes are the most famous of these desert groups, but there are a number of others around. John's message is very consistent with the message of those groups. Then, it says here that he was practicing a baptism of repentance. The word baptism comes from the word *baptizo*, which means to dip or to immerse. The word repentance is simply the word *metanoia*, which means to turn around. So what the original audience would hear Luke saying was that John was out in the wilderness dipping people in water for a turn-around. Dipping for a turn-around. As people turned their lives around, they would be dipped in water as a way of signifying that they had been turned around. The turn-around is turning from a life of self-centeredness to God's way of doing life and all that that entails.

Then Luke tells us that that baptism for a turn-around was for the forgiveness of sins. What that means is this: The turning, *metanoia*, that's manifested in the dipping. The *baptizo* brings about the forgiveness of sins. I say that to say this: Neither Luke or any other New Testament author nor any other Jew in the first century would have dreamed that the baptism brings about the forgiveness of sins apart from the turning-around. It's not that baptism is a magical rite that washes away your sins; rather, it's the turning of a heart toward God, submitting toward God, and manifesting it in baptism that brings about the forgiveness of sins. That's why, for example, you could have a man like the thief on the cross who at the last minute of his life surrenders his life to Christ and Jesus says, "You'll be with me today in Paradise." Even though he couldn't get baptized, he was still saved, he still had the forgiveness of sins because his heart had been turned around. That's all by way of review. Let's move on to the next couple verses.

Luke 3:4-6. *"As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low."*

These are just Old Testament metaphors for bringing justice in the world.

"The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation." (TNIV)

Let's break it down. John was saying we're to make straight paths for the Lord; prepare the way for the Lord and make it straight. And the metaphor that John the Baptist is creating here is this: There's a king who is coming to his city, and the job of the people is to prepare a roadway for him so he doesn't have to go over the sand dunes on a horse without a roadway. We want to make a roadway for him, and we want to make it straight; we want to make it easy for him. So we're to prepare a roadway in the wilderness for the Lord to come back. That's what John the Baptist was preaching; that's what all these desert communities believed they were doing; they were making a way for the Lord to return or to come to this world.

Now, John and all these other monastic communities out in the desert, in fact, all Jews at the time, believed that when the Messiah came in the wilderness, he would immediately bring down every mountain; he would immediately fill every valley; they thought he would immediately make straight every crooked road; they thought he would immediately make smooth every rough road. In other words, they thought immediately God would bring His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. And they thought that the Messiah, with military might, would overthrow the Romans and restore Israel to sovereign status and eradicate all injustice in the world; they thought that would happen immediately. Now, as we look back on this from the perspective of people who come after the time of Christ, and as we look at the whole New Testament, what we discover is that the people who got this intuition that the Lord was coming in the wilderness were right in one respect but were mistaken in another respect. They were right in the fact that the Lord was coming. In fact, John the Baptist was God's ordained person to point out that the Messiah was here. The Lord did meet them in the wilderness because the Lord is Jesus Christ. But they were mistaken in another respect. What we learn in the New Testament is that the coming of the Lord and the building of the kingdom is not instantaneous. There are, actually, two aspects to the Lord bringing His kingdom to this earth, to make the earth the way He always wanted it to be; there's two aspects to it. And like bookends, they're held together by a First Coming and a Second Coming. It's really one aspect of one coming, but it's got two different segments to it. The Lord would come the first time, we learn in the New

Testament, in a humble way to inaugurate the kingdom and then His people are to build the kingdom and the kingdom grows like a mustard seed, as Jesus taught. It's a subversive, quiet kingdom, not a lot of fanfare about it; it doesn't even usually look like we're winning, but the kingdom is growing one soul at a time as people replicate what Jesus did for them. As they do it in their life, the kingdom grows. With every act of Christ-likeness, with every soul that comes under the dominion of the king and the kingdom grows, we're laying the runway strip for the Lord to come back, a modernized John the Baptist metaphor. It's like we're laying down a runway strip so the Lord can land here and set up his kingdom once for all. Now, there are two aspects to that, and there's coming a time when the Lord will return again and finish up the work He began with his first coming and the work that his people have been continuing throughout this world.

Here's a chart that might help you contrast the way the New Testament presents the end-times as opposed to the way most Jews in the first century saw it. The traditional Jewish view was that humans fell; we rebelled against God. That means we came under bondage to Satan. So they referred to this era as "this present evil age." They were looking forward to a time when the Messiah would return; and they believed, when He returned, he would immediately bring about "the age to come," which was the kingdom of God; when God would again reign on earth. That was the customary Jewish view. What we learn in the New Testament is that there was a fall, which as the Jewish view held, brought us under bondage to the principalities and powers. This is why the Bible says that Satan is the god of this age, Ephesians 2:1-2; John 16:11; Luke 4:5-7, et al. The Messiah comes, that's what Jesus did the first time, and he brings his kingdom; and so, in one sense, the "age to come" is now. But, in another sense, the world is still in bondage because the mustard seed that He planted with his first coming needs to grow. He'll return, and that's when he'll reap the harvest. At the Second Coming, he'll bring down every mountain, fill every valley, make straight every crooked path. At the Second Coming, God will make the world the way the world is supposed to be. But it's at the Second Coming when the kingdom will come in all its fullness.

So you can contrast the two comings this way. When the Lord comes the first time, he begins the revolution and, if you're surrendered to Jesus Christ, you're part of this revolution. You're not part of a religion; you're part of a revolution because it's revolutionizing the world.

When He comes the second time is when he's going to consummate the revolution. You might think of the first coming as D-Day. D-Day is Normandy Beach, June 6, during the Second World War. Historians tell us that on D-Day when we won that battle, the war was, in principle, ended. But it still took a year of important battles to fight before V-Day was declared; that's Victory Day. So, also, the Lord coming the first time is D-Day. He deals a death blow to the

enemy; his fate is sealed; the seed is planted; but we're still waiting for V-Day, and that will happen when the Lord returns the second time. When he comes the first time, he is victorious in principle; but, when he comes the second time, he'll be victorious as manifested fact. He'll manifest what was, in principle, true already. In fact, kingdom people, our job in every area of our life is to strive to manifest as fact what was true in principle at Calvary. See, we take the victory at Calvary, and we try to apply it to every area of our life; to manifest it; that's our job as kingdom people. When the Lord comes the first time, he plants a seed. He calls it a mustard seed; it's the smallest of all seeds. It grows subversively underground but, eventually, it will take over the whole garden. He plants the seed, and it's growing in each of our hearts.

When He comes the second time is when He'll reap the harvest. There's a time to sow and a time to reap. The time to reap is coming. The first time the Lord comes, he comes in mercy. In fact, it's outrageous mercy. He opens up all of the traditional conceptions of what it is to be a child of the king. Jesus comes, and he opens up this door, and he says, "Anybody who wants, can come in." Ollie, ollie, in free. God will have mercy on you; there's no ifs, there's no ands, there's no buts. Whatever your history is, whatever your situation is, whatever your struggles are, you can be a child of the king just by submitting to him. It's an age of unprecedented mercy. And that's how the kingdom is growing. But that age will come to an end, and that will happen when he returns a second time. Or you die. The second time he comes in judgment, because when you reap the harvest, and we'll see this later on in Luke, Chapter 3, you burn up everything that's not consistent with the harvest; it will be a time of judgment. When he came the first time, he came in a lowly form. He allows himself to be crucified to express God's love to all people and to ascribe unsurpassable worth even to His enemies. But when He comes a second time, the era is being brought to a close, and now he doesn't come in this lowly way, He comes triumphant.

When the Lord returns a second time, and I assure you He is going to return. There's no question about that, no one knows when, no one knows exactly how, and I wouldn't give a whole lot of attention to that. Just know this, He's going to return and, when He does, this is when everything that is inconsistent with the kingdom of God will be cast out. When He comes the second time, then He'll fill every valley and tear down every rebellious mountain and make straight every crooked road. When He comes the second time, He'll rid the world of everything that's not consistent with His character so that the entire creation becomes the dome in which He is king; the kingdom of God! When He comes the second time is when he's going to get rid of all violence, get rid of all hatred, get rid of all war. When He comes the second time, he's going to get rid of all greed, of all racism, he's going to get rid of all nationalism and all the things that have divided humanity. When He comes the second time, he's going to tear down every wall that human beings have ever used to construct divisions among people. When He

comes a second time, he's going to get rid of poverty, he's going to get rid of sickness, disease, and everything, everything that's inconsistent with his character and his kingdom. That's why it's good news if you're a kingdom person; it's judgment news if you're not.

And I say all that to say this: This era of unprecedented mercy is going to come to a close; we don't know when, but it will come to a close. And I encourage you; I implore you; if your life isn't surrendered to the king, to do it so you're ready for His return. It's good news for the kingdom person; we long for this day. In the New Testament, they pray, "Lord, come quickly," because you're just sick and tired of the mindless loss of life, of the violence, of the injustice, oppression, rebellion, and pain of the world. You're tired of it, and you want to see God come and set up His beautiful kingdom. But, if you're not aligned with the king, that news isn't exactly good news to you, is it? Because everything that is not consistent with His kingdom is cast away and burned up. It's very easy to make it good news for you. And that is to surrender your life to Jesus Christ; accept His mercy and join the revolution. Baptism is, simply, the sign that you've done that. Baptism is God's ordained covenantal sign that you've turned; you've turned your heart, you've surrendered your life to the king and now you're washed and ready for the king to return.

Baptism is also something else. It is the covenantal sign that not only are you individually ready but that you've joined the community of those who are still out in the wilderness preparing a way for the Lord. You are now one of the ones who are preparing the way of the Lord. That leads me to the second group of passages that I want to preach on.

Luke 3:7. *"John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him..."*

Surgeon General's warning here; pastoral warning; if you came to get your ears massaged, this isn't going to be your message. It's going to get kind of tough right now because we go verse by verse, and this is in the Bible, so we've got to preach it. So, you want to hear the straight word? You okay with that? Truth. Can you handle the truth? All right. Here's some truth. John said to them:

"You brood of vipers!"

Lovely! A little teaching moment here. John here is a Jewish prophet talking, primarily, to Jewish leaders in this verse. Vipers is an Old Testament metaphor for leaders who spread poison and mislead the flock. All that John says here, in terms of confronting these leaders, presupposes an Old Testament covenantal context where the leaders understand that the job of a prophet is to confront them in very strong terms. So they understand what's going on. I

say all that to say that you shouldn't use John the Baptist in this passage as your paradigm for evangelism today. All right? There are people who do this. You go out on street corners and start calling people vipers or something of that sort. If you want to know how to evangelize people who aren't under this Old Testament covenant, go to Acts 17 and look at the kind and gentle way that Paul interacts with those Gentiles. That's how you evangelize in New Testament times. But we're still dealing with people who are in this covenantal context. So John says:

"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

That's that judgment thing I just talked about.

"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Don't even begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe 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."

It's going to be burned up.

"'What should we do then,' the crowd asked. John answered, 'The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.' Tax collectors also came to be baptized. 'Teacher,' they asked, 'what should we do?' 'Don't collect any more than you are required to,' he told them."

Okay. Let's break this down. John the Baptist is simply saying get ready, the king is coming, we're laying down the runway strip for Him; He's going to show up anytime. We don't know when, but when He does, you've got to know this; you've got to be ready. So get yourself ready, turn from your present way of living and turn to God's way of living, which is about sharing what you've got; which is about not cheating people. Now, why does John say produce fruit that is fitting for repentance? Why does John say don't even think about saying "We have Abraham as our Father"? Here's why. We know that in the first century a lot of Jewish leaders and, therefore, a lot of other people who were following them, put their trust in their nationality and in their religious observations. These people would say, "We're ready for God to show up anytime because we are, after all, Jews. We have Abraham as our Father. We are the chosen people. And just by the virtue of being born as a Jew, that's good enough. And we keep religious observations; we keep the Sabbath, we keep the Laws. Those ungodly Gentiles

don't do that, so we're ready because of our nationality and our religious observations." And what John is saying here is don't even begin to think that way. If it was all about your nationality and if it was all about keeping a couple of religious observances, God could make stones do that! What God wants is the one thing God can't do with stones; and that is, He wants your heart. He wants you, in the core of your being, to turn, to make a choice and turn from getting life from your religion and get life from God. Turn from your self-centered way of getting life to a God-centered way of getting life. Turn from your unjust practices and start practicing justice. Turn from your hoarding ways of doing life and start sharing with others. What God wants is for you to choose to surrender your life to Him. He can't make rocks do that; it wouldn't be real then. What God wants is for you to choose to manifest that truth by obeying Him, by being baptized. But it's got to be real! It's got to be real! And that's why John the Baptist adds this little ditty about the axe being laid to the root of the tree.

What John is saying is that a real fruit tree brings forth real fruit; that's how you know it's a real fruit tree. If you're not bringing forth fruit, if it's not real, then the only thing you're good for is to be cut down and used as firewood. Real fruit trees are supposed to bring forth real fruit! It's not enough that you happen to look something like a fruit tree, and it's not enough that your dad or mom was a fruit tree. The question is, "Are you a real fruit tree?" If you're a real fruit tree, you're going to bring forth fruit. Now, John isn't saying, by your own self-will crank out fruit and then you'll become a real fruit tree; that's works-righteousness. You can't do that. But what John is saying is that, if you are a real fruit tree, then bring forth the fruit that's fitting for a real fruit tree. And how do you become a real fruit tree? You turn, you surrender your life to God, and you start living life God's way. And the evidence of that, the fruit that comes out is stuff like this: When you've got more than you need and there are people around you who are in need, you share what you've got with others. If you've got two shirts and someone has none, give them one of your shirts. If you've got extra food and someone doesn't have food, give them some food. And what it looks like to turn and live life God's way is that you have integrity; you don't cheat. Even if it's to your own advantage, you don't cheat. See, this confronts something. In our hyper-individualistic culture, we've sort of individualized repentance so that repentance has become like being by your bedside saying I'm sorry and maybe feeling a little regret over something, which is a good start. But, see, turning your life is turning your life, and you can't turn your life without it impacting how you treat other people; how you relate to other people. There's a community dimension to repentance; so the way you treat your neighbor, the way you treat your brother and sister, the way you treat your wife and kids, everything is affected when you turn. And, when you really turn, it has community ramifications.

Now, the particular words that John uses here are presupposing an Old Testament context that doesn't apply today. But this message is so crucial for American Christians to hear because, as I see it, we've got a whole lot of people who are going around with the mindset that they've got Abraham as their father, or something like that. Maybe not "I've got Abraham as my father so I'm okay," but, perhaps, "I've got the Pope as my father, so I'm okay. I was raised Catholic, so I'm okay." Or people say, "I was raised in the Lutheran Church, and I've got Luther as my father; I've got Lutheran heritage, so I'm okay." People say, "I'm a Baptist, glory to God, and I've got the Baptist or Anabaptist as my Father. I've got a good inheritance. I was raised the right way and, therefore, I know that I'm ready." Tons of people say that. Other people are saying, "I know I'm ready because I've done a couple of religious observances. I go to church every Easter and Christmas." Or there are people who rely on a magical prayer, "I've said the sinner's prayer eight years ago," and so they think they are ready.

But what John the Baptist is saying here is that you can't inherit the kingdom, you can't crank out the kingdom on your own. It's not enough that once in a while there's something that looks like kingdom activity. You've got to be part of the kingdom. And the way you become part of the kingdom is by reality, in the core of your being turning your heart and surrendering your life to God. But all over America we've got people who think they can inherit the kingdom. You're riding on the coattail of how you were raised or a religious prayer that you prayed or some religious observance that you engage in. I recently read a report from George Barna, the report is seven years old, but he did a study, it was a follow up on a Billy Graham crusade, and what he found was that over 90% of the people who made decisions in this crusade, one year later there was absolutely no discernable difference in their life in terms of praying, how they treat people, how they live, what they do with their resources, or in going to church. Their life was exactly the same one year after their decision for Christ as it was the year before their decision; except for maybe one thing. And that is that these people thought they were ready because they prayed a magical prayer at a Billy Graham crusade. Now, thank God for the 10% for whom it meant something, but this is what scares me, to be honest with you. This is why when I ask people if they want to surrender their life to Christ and raise their hand as a pledge, I go out of my way to make sure that they understand that this isn't a magical fire-insurance prayer. That this is saying wedding vows, and don't do it unless you're committing your life. Because, the last thing I want is somebody walking out of here and they haven't turned their life but they have a false assurance that now they're okay when, in fact, they're not. That's irresponsible on our part.

Repentance is turning; it's turning your life. It's not a magical prayer; it's not about an inheritance; and it's not about whom your mom or dad is. It's about genuinely, in the core of your being, turning; and, when you genuinely turn, there's fruit; you turn from your old way of

living to a new way of living. You turn from hoarding your goods to sharing your goods. You turn from not caring about others to caring about others. You turn from not caring about the poor to caring about the poor. You turn from being greedy to not being greedy. You turn from being dishonest to being honest. You turn to God's way of doing life, which is about love, about outrageous generosity, and about speaking truth.

When the turning is genuine and you start living in that mode, you are part of the community of those who are laying down the runway strip for the Lord to return. Every act of Christ-likeness, every kingdom act, every aspect of your life that is surrendered to the king is another brick in the foundation for the Lord to return. You are now preparing the way of the Lord. And it's not just you individually; it's a community thing because repentance is a community thing. We together are a billboard for what God is up to in this world. Our life, to the degree that it is surrendered, is an advertisement for a kingdom that's coming, of a different kind of king, a different way of doing life, a different way of thinking, a different way of looking at others, a different way of treating others; it's a billboard for that, and we're laying down the runway for the Lord to return.

To be committed to the kingdom means that you're committed to manifesting now everything that will be true when the Lord returns. You are a slice of the coming kingdom here and now. You are, as we sometimes say, the already amidst the not yet. And that's why the Bible calls us first fruits. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you are the first fruits. First fruits were the part of the crop that was picked ahead of time, it ripened early; and you are the evidence that there's a coming harvest. You show the corn that's still in the husk what it is to be, real corn. You advertise your yellowness, and that attracts other corn to ripen, and now they let themselves get picked. And now the analogy is getting a little bit weird. It's first fruits, not first vegetables; so I had it really screwed up from the very beginning. But, see, this is the job of kingdom people, this is what we're about. It's not about religious stuff; it's about how we live. When the Lord comes the second time and sets up His kingdom, there won't be any dishonesty. So, what it means to belong to the kingdom is that you commit to living honestly now. When the Lord comes back the second time, He's going to tear down every mountain of rebellion; so we commit to tearing down mountains of rebellion right now. When the Lord comes back and sets up His kingdom, he's going to make straight every crooked road; so we commit to making crooked roads straight right here and right now. We manifest that this new age is already upon us, and it's being manifested in us. When the Lord comes a second time and sets up his kingdom, he's going to fill every valley of despair; so we commit to filling up valleys of despair right here and right now. When the Lord returns, everything that's not consistent with his beautiful character will be eradicated; so we try to eradicate everything in our life that's not consistent with his beautiful character, and we do it right here and right now. We're the first

fruits of the coming kingdom. When the Lord comes the second time and sets up his kingdom, there will be no more violence; so we pledge to eradicate all violence from our hearts right here and right now. When the Lord returns a second time, he'll get rid of all hatred; so we commit to purging hatred in our life right here and right now. When the Lord comes, his love shall reign over every square inch of the earth; so we commit to letting his love reign over every square inch of our life right here and right now. When the Lord comes, he's going to abolish all racism; so we're a people who commit to purging out all racism in our own lives right here and right now and manifesting it in every way, shape, and form that we can. When the Lord returns a second time, in the kingdom of heaven there will be no greed; so we commit to getting rid of all greed right here and right now.

Our job is to be heaven on earth; a window into the future; the first fruits of the coming harvest. When the Lord returns, he's going to eradicate all sickness and disease; so we commit to coming against all sickness and disease in Jesus' name and the power of God right here and right now. Our commitment, our turning is to manifest in the already what is not yet true around the world, and our act of doing so is what lays down the runway strip; this is what it means to turn. And there is coming a time when the Lord sees that the runway strip is sufficiently laid, and now it's time to trolley in on the earth and set up his kingdom once and for all. This is what repentance looks like. The meaning of the term is shown by the fruit it has in our life. And we do that in our lives individually, and we do it in how we relate to one another. And now you're part of the community of those who, like John the Baptist, are making a way for the Lord, proclaiming the coming kingdom. And baptism is, simply, God's ordained way of declaring that you are making yourself ready, you have been washed with this end-times washing, and you're part of the community of those who have committed their life to laying down the runway strip for the Lord's return when he'll set up his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, and now the creation will be what God always wanted the creation to be.

Now, let me say one more word about this. On the one hand, repentance is a life-changing decision that we make; in the core of our being, we pledge to commit to living this. But you can't pledge to do it perfectly because we're not perfect. In fact, I'll say this: On one hand, repentance is something we do at a point in our life that changes the direction of our life; on the other hand, there is no one who is perfectly turned. Just as the Lord is building his kingdom through a process here on earth, His kingdom building in us is also a process. He's slowly ripping away the husks to manifest the real corn that we are. And so, repentance isn't just a one-time thing we did in the past as a magical thing, it is a lifestyle. And so, I encourage all of us to always be living in this question, "Lord, what part of me isn't heavenly? What part of me is not consistent with your character?" Maybe there are attitudes, maybe there are behaviors, maybe there are practices that we do that are not consistent. Maybe they have been part of

our life all along, and we haven't noticed. But, in time, the Lord brings it to our awareness and then what the Lord asks of you is to repent, you turn. It doesn't mean that you're always sorrowful and have great grievance, you may have that you may not, but it means you're aware and now you turn from it. In all of our life we're to be losing husks, letting the Holy Spirit rip off of us things that don't belong there; and, in doing so, we are laying down the runway strip for the Lord to return.

Would you close your eyes to pray?