

### 3 • Repentance is a Change of Behavior

Last week's lesson emphasized that repentance is more than, "I'm going to stop sinning and start behaving." Repentance means I'm going to stop loving sin and start loving God the way I should have all along. **Repentance is a change of \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to a**

**change of \_\_\_\_\_.** Listen to the way John the Baptist put it in [Luke 3:8-9](#):

"Bear \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ repentance... Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Jesus would eventually tell a parable using the same sort of word picture as he called people to repent ([Luke 13:3, 5](#)):

"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then \_\_\_\_\_ it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if \_\_\_\_\_, you can cut it down.'" ([13:6-9](#))

God often uses "fruit" to describe what comes out on the outside (our behavior) because of what is on the inside (our hearts).

Listen to Jesus' warning in [Matthew 7:15-20](#):

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but \_\_\_\_\_ are ravenous wolves. You will \_\_\_\_\_ them by their \_\_\_\_\_. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits."

Or, to apply the same principle to our study, people will recognize repentance in our lives by the "fruits" of our repentance. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior. Remember [2 Corinthians 7:10](#): "Godly \_\_\_\_\_ produces a \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to salvation." That's exactly what Paul shared in [Acts 26:19-20](#):

"I...declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and \_\_\_\_\_ to God, performing \_\_\_\_\_ in keeping \_\_\_\_\_ their repentance."

**What is repentance?** A change of mind that leads to a change in behavior.



## For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ Let's think about the phrase John the Baptist used in [Luke 3:8](#): "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance." In your own words, what does that mean?
- ▶ Why might some who heard John have been tempted to say, "We have Abraham as our father" in response ([3:8](#))? What would they have meant by that?
- ▶ Can you think of some examples in the Bible of men or women who were caught doing something wrong, or suffered the consequences of their bad decisions, or even experienced regret or embarrassment, but failed to repent? How does that happen? *Why* does that happen?
- ▶ We'll get to Jesus' parable of the barren fig tree in just a moment, but let's notice together *why* Jesus told the parable. In your own words, what was Jesus communicating in [Luke 13:1-5](#)?
- ▶ What does [Luke 13:8-9](#) have to do with repentance? What's the point of this parable?
- ▶ "You will recognize them by their fruits," Jesus says twice in [Matthew 7:15-20](#). Is that a popular message today? The same Jesus said in the same chapter, "Judge not, that you be not judged" ([7:1](#)). How can [Matthew 7:1](#) and [7:20](#) both be true and appropriate for disciples of Jesus?
- ▶ What sort of "deeds in keeping with their repentance" might Paul have had in mind in [Acts 26:20](#)?
- ▶ Maybe one of the clearest passages we could use to summarize these important principles is [Galatians 5](#). What sort of things must we "turn from" according to [5:19-21](#)? What will it mean to "turn to" God according to [5:16](#), [18](#), and [24-25](#)? Finally, what sort of "fruits in keeping with repentance" will we then bear according to [5:22-23](#)?