

# *You Can Begin Again*

## **When You Tell the Truth**

Pastor Derwin L. Gray – August 27, 2017

1. Open in prayer.
2. Pastor Derwin said, "Jesus does not play hide and seek with us. He is not hiding from us; we hide from Jesus when we refuse to tell Him the truth about ourselves. We hide from His loving embrace of grace when we refuse to repent of actions that dishonor God, ourselves, and others." Discuss this statement.
3. John the Baptist was a prophet who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy about the one who would prepare the way for the Messiah. Read Luke 3:3-6, read the paragraph below, and then discuss what repentance means.
  - The definitions of both the Hebrew and Greek terms are required to grasp the full meaning of repentance. The Hebrew demands "a change of action," while the Greek demands "a change of mind." The saved person receives a new mind and heart. He thinks differently and lives differently. Instead of "What's in it for me?" the question is now "What is God's will?" Repentance is not an emotion that fades or a total sinlessness, but a new relationship with the Holy One who progressively transforms the believer into a holy one. (Utley, R. J. (2004). *The Gospel According to Luke* (Volume 3A, Lk 3:3). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International).
4. Pastor Derwin said, "Telling God the truth about ourselves (repentance) awakens forgiveness, which is the pathway to a new life."
  - Can you share a time in your life when you repented and it led to deeper intimacy with Jesus and transformation in your life?
5. Pastor Derwin said, "We often live in unrepentance because we often don't know the character of our Abba." Discuss the following statement about God by Scot McKnight:
  - "He creates us to love Him; He desires our fellowship [and friendship]. So, truth-telling is not an opportunity for head bashing, but an opportunity for the heart of Abba to be thrilled by [forgiving and reconciling with His children]." Scot McKnight, Ph.D. *Jesus Creed*, 70.
6. Read Luke 3:7-9.
  - Here's the Context: These Jewish leaders were trusting in their racial lineage. The rabbis believed that God's promises to Abraham and his descendants were unconditional promises, but the Old Testament prophets clearly declare they are conditioned on a faith response. Neither the merit of the Patriarchs nor the covenants of the Old Testament can replace repentance, personal faith, obedience, and perseverance. The gospel does not focus on genealogy, but on faith. Utley, R. J. (2004). *The Gospel According to Luke* (Volume 3A, Lk 3:8). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.
  - How do you see ethnocentrism and religiosity being played out in culture today?
  - Read Galatians 3:26-29. How are we rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into God's Kingdom?

7. Read Luke 3:10-14.

- John the Baptist is teaching us that God's people live lives of generosity, not greed. He is teaching that God's people do not practice corrupt business practices that defraud and take advantage of people. He is also teaching us not to use power in an abusive way or take advantage of people and to be content in our wages. Discuss these comments.
- Pastor Derwin said, "Only the power of God through the Holy Spirit can unleash the Kingdom of God in our lives." How can we live out the Kingdom of God?
- Read the following words of Theologian Henri Nouwen and discuss Pastor Derwin's statement:
  - o "I am beginning now to see how radically the character of my spiritual journey will change when I no longer think of God as hiding out and making it difficult as possible for me to find Him, but, instead, as the One who is looking for me while I am doing the hiding." Henri Nouwen as quoted by Scot McKnight, Jesus Creed, 70.

6. Close in prayer, asking God to bless Mission: UIO!