

Making Room in Advent | Week 4 - Make Room Through Repentance

Message Big Idea

We make room for God to have center stage in our lives through repentance.

Scripture

Luke 1:76-80, Luke 3:1-6

Points to Keep In Mind

1. Advent means “coming.” It is a season of transition between what is and what will be. The characters we read about in the Christmas story were experiencing that transition. God was at work in their lives, and as we dig into their stories, we’ll find that God wants to work in our lives similarly.
2. To help us understand the word repentance in the first century, we can look at how the term was used in contexts outside the Bible. Josephus is a well-known first-century historian and military leader whose writings often corroborate many of the things we find in the Bible. In his autobiography, Josephus recounts an incident in 66 AD when a rebel leader plotted to take his life. Josephus discovered the plot and foiled it. Josephus pulled him aside and asked him to repent. In the context of Josephus’ words, it wasn’t about feeling sorry or groveling; he was asking the bandit to change his mind and be loyal to Josephus. Jesus’ call to Israel was to repent – to rethink their idea of what it meant to be the people of God and to trust in his way of the Kingdom. He called them to rethink their ideas about the violent revolution and trust his way of enemy love and forgiveness instead.
3. In each of our lives, there are mountains to be brought down, valleys to be filled in, crooked roads to be made straight, and rough roads to be smoothed. Honesty is the quickest path to liberation, meaning if you want to experience freedom and flourishing in your life, the first step is telling the truth about which areas need repentance.
4. Repentance is unpopular because many of us are “addicted” to justifying our actions and instead pointing out the evil in others. Sometimes we cling to old ways, even if they no longer serve us well because their familiarity provides a sense of comfort or control. To repent, we must address the resistance in our lives to make room for Jesus.
5. “Everybody wants to change the world, but nobody wants to change the toilet paper”? The science and psychology regarding change suggest that starting small is the most effective way to change your life. What is one practical change or spiritual practice you can keep consistently?

Next Steps

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism
4. What are you learning from the Community Daily? communitychristian.org/daily
5. If anyone in your small group is seeking professional counseling, you can always refer them to our resource page: communitychristian.org/mentalhealth