

Repent!

Scripture Reading — Mark 1:9-20

“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Mark 1:15 —

When I was a boy, I enjoyed helping my uncles with the oat harvest in the hot summer sun. By harvest time, we had almost forgotten that in those same hilly oat fields we’d had to clear thousands of rocks from the face of the ground back in March. We had picked up rocks and thrown them on a wagon. That was hard work!

Just as clearing the rocks was crucial to a golden harvest, so clearing the obstacles from our heart and life is needed for entering God’s kingdom. The kingdom is the rule of God on earth, inaugurated by Jesus’ great work in the power of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist saw Jesus, and he saw the kingdom. The two are inseparable. The way to enter is to repent, to say, “I’m sorry, I will turn from my offensive behavior—please forgive me.”

People in the United States have often seen tearful public confessions by political leaders whose adultery has been discovered. The last episode I watched was unusual. Not just sorry for being caught, the person confessed moral failure, named his offense, appeared genuinely sorry, begged forgiveness from his family, and pledged to change.

This is what God is looking for from anyone who desires forgiveness—a clean heart, a new life, and a desire to be counted in God’s kingdom. Repentance opens the door to eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Father in heaven, I am truly sorry for breaking your commandments and discrediting your love. Jesus, I throw myself down at your cross, begging forgiveness. Amen.

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Printed on July 8, 2020

