

**Lesson #5**  
**Teaching Outline**  
**Birth and Early Life**

**“A Voice in the Wilderness”**

Mark 1:1-8; John 1:19-34; Matthew3:1-17; Luke 3:1-22; Isaiah 40:3-5

**Principle Truth:**

**Greatness in the eyes of God is accomplishing the purpose He has ordained for our life.**

**Teaching Outline:**

- I. The Man: Greatness that Glorifies God**
- II. The Message: Repent and Be Changed**
- III. The Mission: Exposing the False; Empowering the True**
- IV. The Majesty: Coronation of the King through Baptism**

## Story 5

### Birth and Early Life

#### **A Voice in The Wilderness**

Mark 1:1-8; John 1:19-34; Matthew 3:1-17;  
Luke 3:1-22; Isaiah 40:3-5

***WE ARE THE MESSENGERS OF GOD TO OUR GENERATION SHARING THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE AND OFFERING THE INVITATION TO SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.***

#### **Story Outline:**

- I. John the Baptist calls all to REPENTANCE and preparation
- II. John's message of REPENTANCE questioned by religious establishment
- III. Jesus ministry launched after baptism
- IV. Hard hearted religious rulers reject while receptive hearts of crowd receive
- V. Jesus steps up while John steps aside

#### **Life Application Principles:**

1. REPENTANCE prepares our hearts to be open to the message of Jesus.
2. The words of God's truth are powerful when spoken by one with passion and on mission for Jesus.
3. Our primary mission in life is to accomplish the work of our Father.
4. Rejection of Jesus, the Son of God, will have devastating consequences.
5. Our religion does not save us, but true REPENTANCE through faith in Jesus Christ will.
6. Man-made rules are often made to bring glory to the man who made the rules.
7. The Holy Spirit resides in every believer's heart affirming that they belong to God.
8. Baptism is an outward symbol of an internal change of heart and a matter of our obedience.
9. With each rejection of truth, the heart grows progressively harder.
10. God moves into the heart that is open, teachable and humble.
11. Knowing when to step aside is evidence of humility and a great gift from God.
12. Knowing when to step up is critical to accomplishing the task God has for us.

## NAME OF JESUS

### Devotional Reading

#### “THE LAMB OF GOD”

One of the most precious and endearing names of Jesus in all of scripture is **THE LAMB OF GOD**. Unlike so many of His names or titles which point to His great majesty, power and strength, this name calls attention to His gentleness, innocence, purity, humility and love. To more fully understand who Jesus is and why He came is to know Him as a LAMB. By nature, LAMBS are very quiet, gentle, and meek. Innocent in their thinking they need the tender care of a wise shepherd to lead them and to guide them. Roy Hession further explains, “A *LAMB* is the simplest of God’s creatures. It has no schemes or plans for helping itself— it exists in helplessness and simplicity. The Lord Jesus made Himself as nothing for us, and became the simple **LAMB**. When He came to earth, He had no strength of His own or wisdom of His own, no schemes to get Himself out of difficulties, just simple dependence on the Father all the time.” In the greatest love ever known, Jesus, the Son of God, willingly left the majesty of heaven and took on human flesh in order to become the sacrificial **LAMB OF GOD**. Giving up all He had, Jesus came to take our place and pay the price of our sins by dying on the Cross of Calvary. No one else in all creation but the perfectly innocent and pure Son of God could accomplish such a task. That is why He rightly bears the name **THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD**.

The sacrificial LAMB as a symbol for Jesus has its roots in the Old Testament. In Genesis 3, after the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden, the killing of an innocent animal to cover man’s sin began. In the biblical story of the Exodus, when God led His people out of slavery and bondage in Egypt, it was the blood of an innocent and unblemished **LAMB** that saved them from the wrath of God.

*“Your LAMB shall be without blemish, a male, a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their LAMBS at twilight. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and lintel of the houses in which they eat it. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”*  
(Exodus, 12:5-7, 13)

From that event forward as God demanded in the Mosaic Law, the blood of unblemished innocent **LAMBS** was offered in the Temple sacrifices to take away man’s sin and bring forgiveness.

*“If he brings a **LAMB** as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish and lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it for sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of the burnt offering and pour the rest of the blood at the base of the altar . . . And the priest shall make atonement for him and for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.”* (Leviticus 4:32-35)

*“The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”* (Leviticus 17:11)

Day after day, year after year, the people of God would offer these sacrifices as payment for their sins knowing, however, that they were only a temporary remedy. As the writer of Hebrews explains, *“it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”* (Hebrews 10:4). Thus, this whole system was symbolically pointing toward what would happen when in the fullness of time, God would send the ultimate sacrifice, **THE LAMB OF GOD**, who would accomplish what the animal sacrifices could never do. Christ, as the sacrificial **LAMB** became once for all *“the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:2). Propitiation simply means that Jesus Christ’s death on the cross is sufficient to pay the price God demands for sin and to remove His wrath once for all for all people everywhere in the world. When describing the **LAMB** in Revelation John declares:

*“Worthy are You to take the scroll and open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.”* (Revelation 5:9)

Although plentiful and powerful enough to save the world, not all the world will be saved because not every man will choose the only way of salvation. Blinded by sin and hindered by pride, most men fail to look to Jesus and believe on Him as the saving **LAMB OF GOD**. Preferring the ways of the world, men turn their backs on the all sufficient, only worthy sacrifice Who alone has the power to save them. Scripture declares: *“for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). *“Whosoever”* includes everyone in the world. There is no race, no nationality, no ethnicity and no socio-economic status excluded. Jesus, **THE LAMB OF GOD**, shows no favoritism. He **chooses** everyone. He wants none to be eternally separated from the Father. That’s why He came. Jesus paid it all on the cross so we can have fellowship with God. With His blood He bought our pardon and secured for us eternity with Him in heaven. All that is required of us is to **choose** to put our faith and trust in Him. As Paul proclaims, *“believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”* (Acts 16:31).

The evidence is undeniable. As the simple **LAMB OF GOD**, Jesus humbly bowed His head and was slain. In meekness, He willingly gave up His rights, His reputation and the honor due Him as

the Son of God. *“Like a **LAMB** that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth”* (Isaiah 53:7). Innocent though He was, when accused by sinful men, *“He gave no answer”* (Matthew 27:12). Instead, in obedience to His Father and out of love for us, **THE LAMB OF GOD**, quietly walked up the hill of Calvary and let evil men have their way. *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:7). As **THE LAMB’S** precious blood ran down the Cross of Calvary the wrath of God was completely and forever satisfied and both the way back to God and our salvation were opened to the whole world.

Have you ever been to the foot of the Cross and truly gazed upon the Lord? Have you seen Him as the innocent **LAMB OF GOD** and believed He bled and died for you? Have you humbly bowed, confessed your sin and been washed in His cleansing blood? Do you go there often to worship at His feet and to thank Him for removing your sin completely and forever so that now there is no barrier between you and God’s love and eternal blessings?

Beloved, GO! Go to the foot of the cross where the fountain is flowing to cleanse your unclean soul. Let the precious blood of the LAMB wash away your sins and purify you thoroughly that you might be made innocent, holy and acceptable to God. Don’t delay! NOW is the time to **“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD.”** NOW is the time to worship at His feet and receive the blessings of peace with God, restoration of your soul and life everlasting.

Oh, precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow,  
No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

***“And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”***  
***1 John 1:7***

***“Behold, the LAMB of God  
who takes away the sin of the world!”***  
***John 1:29***

# THE DOCTRINE

## REPENTANCE

### I. A Few Examples of the FRUIT OF REPENTANCE

A young apprentice was converted in a New England church and later indicated that he felt called into the ministry. As was the custom of that day, the pastor decided to check with others to determine the genuineness of the young man's **REPENTANCE** and subsequent conversion. He went to the boy's employer first to talk with him about it. The employer pointed to a chain hanging on the wall and asked,

*“Do you see that chain? That chain was forged especially for him. I was obliged to chain him to that bench to keep him at work. He was the worst boy I had in my entire establishment. I could not trust him to be out of my sight for one moment, but now he is completely changed! He is one of my very best apprentices. I would trust him with all my gold!”*

The experience the Bible describes as **REPENTANCE** results in a radical and noticeable change in the one who has turned away from the life he once lived. As a young woman was attempting to join Charles Spurgeon's church in London one day, she was asked,

*“What makes you think you have become a Christian?”*

Not really understanding the great Bible doctrines of salvation, justification, and regeneration, she simply replied,

*“I know I am a genuine Christian because now when I clean at my houses, I include sweeping under the doormat!”*

Witnesses tell the story of the great Welsh Revival among the coal miners of that land testifying of the radical change in the lives of those who were touched by God during that time. The change in the men was so dramatic, the animals in the mines were confused by their transformed behavior and refused to obey them. The miners had formerly cursed and abused the animals to force them to work, and the animals were simply not trained to respond to kindness and mercy. Just as a caterpillar emerges from a cocoon as a beautiful butterfly, so it is that the person who experiences genuine **REPENTANCE** and conversion emerges a “*new creature*” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## II. The Meaning of GENUINE REPENTANCE

It is vitally important to understand exactly what genuine **REPENTANCE** is. The preceding statement indicates that there is a type of REPENTANCE that is not genuine, and we must understand the difference. True **REPENTANCE** is not an emotion. It is an act of the will. It is a decision that springs forth from the will. In other words, the will must be “*turned*” or “*changed*.” Unfortunately churches are filled with professing Christians who have been deeply moved by emotion, but there has never been a decision of the will to turn or change that reaches deeply into the soul. So often in such a case, so called “**REPENTANCE**” is just a moment in time when emotional sorrow for sin overtakes the person with no permanent change resulting.

There are two main languages of the Bible – the Greek language of the New Testament and the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. Each language has a specific word for **REPENTANCE**, but only as we put the meaning of the two words together do we get the full picture of what it actually means to repent. The Greek word is always translated “*to change one’s mind – to change the way one thinks.*” **REPENTANCE** therefore is to change your mind about the way you’ve been living. It means to change your mind about how you have been living for yourself and to turn in the opposite direction to live your life for God. It is a decision that is marked by the fruit of a life that brings glory to God – a life that issues forth in the fulfillment of His purposes and plans. It is not an emotional response. **REPENTANCE** can take place without any obvious emotion, but one cannot truly repent without a change of the will. The Hebrew word “**REPENT**” means to turn around. Picture it this way. You are facing the wrong way with your back to God, and you deliberately turn 180 degrees to face God as you now move toward Him and with Him. Putting both the Greek and the Hebrew words together therefore, we get a true picture of **REPENTANCE**. Genuine faith comes only after **REPENTANCE**. The entire message of the Bible follows this order: Repent and Believe. John said it, Jesus said it, and the disciples all said it in this order. Many believe they are struggling to find faith, but the truth is that they have never met the true condition of faith, which is **REPENTANCE**. **REPENTANCE** is first, then comes faith. If we do not secure this first building block, the foundation of our life will always be wobbly. Many of the problems that face Christians today come from the fact that they have never truly repented – never really changed their mind about the direction they are headed – never fully surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus. True **REPENTANCE** will always ask the question – “*Does what I am doing glorify Jesus?*” If we have never truly experienced biblical **REPENTANCE**, we will find ourselves to be double-minded and unstable in all our ways. James 1:8: “*A doubles minded man is unstable in all his ways.*” Without the foundational building block of **REPENTANCE**, there can be no solid foundation for the Christian life – no stable structure.

*Reflect upon this vitally important doctrine right now:*

*Have you truly repented? Or are you living your life as a double –minded man or woman? God is waiting for you to humble yourself and turn to Him for healing.*

*Oh, God, show me more of Your holiness. Show me more of my sinfulness. Help me to hate sin and to love righteousness as You do. Grant me a deeper conviction of sin and a more thorough spirit of REPENTANCE. Make me holy as You are holy. Amen.*

### **III. The Nature of GENUINE REPENTANCE**

The Parable of the Prodigal son in Luke 15 tells the story of the second son of a wealthy family who demanded his inheritance from his father. Arrogantly, the son took his inheritance and went off to the far country to live his life apart from his father and in the way he had always imagined his life could be. In only a short time he spent his entire inheritance. A famine came, and with all his money gone, he resorted to feeding pigs – the lowest and most despicable thing a Jew could ever do. He quickly hit rock bottom, but as Luke 15:17 reports: *“When he came to himself!!!”* (What a profound statement!)

In telling this story, Jesus emphasizes the importance of that moment – the *“place”* of making a decision to change - to turn back from the path he was traveling. This is the point to which we all must come – a moment of decision – a moment of truth – a moment when we *“come to ourselves.”* Ultimately we must see the truth about ourselves. We must see ourselves as God sees us. Therefore, when the son *“came to himself”* he said,

*“How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and even to spare, yet I am perishing with hunger. I will arise and go to my Father and I will say to him – ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me one of your hired servants.’”*

And he arose and came to his father. He made a decision to change his direction by turning around. This is genuine **REPENTANCE**. Making a decision and going back to the Father you have offended – to the Father who loves you, admitting that you made a mess of your life. It is acknowledging our need of God and the undeserved grace He provides in welcoming us back home. Essentially the son addressed his Father to say, *“I need you. Will you take me back?”* The beauty of this exchange is that the son had planned this moment in advance of the meeting. He knew exactly what he was going to ask his Father. He intended to ask the Father to make him one of the hired servants, however as he started his prepared speech – his Father was already watching out for him. This is exactly how God is with his wayward children. When we begin to make the turn, God is always waiting -- always watching for us. *“And the father saw him a long way off and RAN TO MEET HIM!”* That’s how God is! That’s how He meets us. And the Father kissed the son, and the son never even had the opportunity to ask the Father to make him

one of his hired servants. Instead, the Father said, *“Bring out the best robe, put a ring on his finger, and sandals on his feet, and bring out the fatted calf.”* This is the result of genuine **REPENTANCE**, and it is worth everything to be welcomed back into the open arms of the Father in such a way. The pivotal moment was when the son *“came to himself.”* He realized he had made a mess of his life. He finally saw what his father knew all along. He had wasted everything the Father had given him, but now he was making a change to turn around and go back to his Father. This is **REPENTANCE** in action.

**REPENTANCE** however is different from remorse. Perhaps Judas is the best example of the difference in the two. Matthew 27:3 states that Judas was remorseful over his betrayal of Jesus. *“I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”* He then threw the 30 pieces of silver on the floor of the temple and went away to hang himself. He had deep remorse but never true **REPENTANCE**. Judas is an example of one who can pass the point where **REPENTANCE** is no longer possible. God freely offers us His grace, but if we despise it, He will allow us to have our way.

#### **IV. The Fruit of BIBLICAL REPENTANCE**

**REPENTANCE** involves a changed life – a recognition and renunciation of sin and the emergence of a life that comes from the righteous indwelling of the Spirit of Christ whose “residence” is now the believer’s heart. Therefore, a threefold progression issues forth if one is genuinely repentant: 1) There is an intellectual **awareness of the need** for moral and spiritual cleansing and change. 2) There is a **godly sorrow** that one’s sin is against God and grieves His heart. 3) There is a change toward **appropriate behavior and action** that always follows. All three are manifestations of the reality of a genuine encounter with God that leads to new birth and a godly lifestyle that reflects the change. **If REPENTANCE is genuine, it will result in a changed life that bears fruit.**

While on earth a Christian will continually struggle with the desires of his old nature for we live in bodies of flesh. But through genuine **REPENTANCE**, the believer receives fresh empowerment from God’s Spirit to overcome the sin and be restored to fellowship with God. It is the command of God that every born again believer of Jesus live in obedience to the Spirit’s power and habitually choose to allow the new nature to direct his life. To do this the Christian must *“control”* his old nature and allow the power of the new nature through the Spirit of God to overcome the old life. Thus, because we continue to struggle with this sin nature, there is the ongoing need for **REPENTANCE** from daily sin.

The journey to redemption begins with **REPENTANCE** of sin. Jesus made it clear in Matthew 9:13 stating:

*“For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to **REPENTANCE**.”*

We must come to a time in our lives where there is a turn – a change – a deep sorrow for sin. **REPENTANCE** means turning from trusting in something we do to simply believing and embracing what Jesus has already done – from being lost to being saved – from the worship of idols to the worship of the one true God.

## **CONCLUSION**

God is in the life - changing business. He takes the broken pieces of our lives and makes new vessels of us. Someone has said God takes the canvas of our lives when the colors are messy and blurred, then paints a masterpiece. As powerful as God is, he chooses to limit his power to what the seeker will allow him to do. He could save everyone, but he will not save anyone who will not allow him to do so. We need to repent and come to Him by faith allowing God to perform the work of cleansing and regeneration in us. We then need to continue cooperating with God as he perfects that change in us over a lifetime in the process we call sanctification. It all begins with **REPENTANCE** of sin.

God wants his people to acknowledge (**REPENT**) that their sin is as serious as He says it is. He wants to hear us admit that we are determined that sin will no longer reign in us. He wants to know that we understand the futility of being double minded. God wants to see us on our knees crying out to Him for cleansing and for a fresh new start. The ministries of both John and our Lord Jesus resonated with the word “**REPENT.**” There were too many who were just going through the motions of ritual and religion. You will know when the arrow of the truth of God has moved from your head to your heart. You will know it if **REPENTANCE** is bearing fruit in your life!

## Questions for Reflection

*Read Matthew 3:1-3; Mark 1:1-3; Luke 3:1-6; John 1:19-23*

1. Who was John the Baptist? (see also Luke 1:5-17)
2. Read Isaiah 40:3 which is quoted in all 4 gospel passages. According to this Old Testament prophecy what was John's calling and purpose? What was his message?
3. What did John tell the people they must do personally in order to "*make straight (prepare) the highway of the LORD?*" Explain the meaning of his directive (see Matthew 3:2 for help).
4. What are some things that need to be straightened out in your life to prepare the way for Christ? What difference will it make in your life personally? How might it impact your ministry?

*Read Matthew 3:4-10; Luke 3:7-14*

5. What extra details about John's message do you learn from the above passages?
6. How can ritual and religion blind us from an intimate and meaningful relationship with Jesus?
7. Describe John's character and ministry style. What lessons do you learn that you could apply to your own ministry and witness for Christ?

*Read Matthew 3:11-17, Mark 1:4-8; Luke 3:15-20; John 1:24-28*

8. How does John's baptism differ from the baptism Jesus brings?
  
9. Why is obedience in baptism important? What does this outward expression symbolize internally?
  
10. What difference does Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit make in a believer's life? (see Acts 1:8, John 7:37-39, Ezekiel 36:25-27 for help)

*Read John 1:29-37; Isaiah 53*

10. Which verses in Isaiah 53 suggest the reason John the Baptist is called Jesus, the **LAMB OF GOD**?
  
11. How was the **LAMB** already connected with sin in the Jewish ceremonies? (see Exodus 12:1-13; Leviticus 4:32-35 and 5:5-7)
  
12. What does the name **LAMB OF GOD** tell you about who Jesus is and why He came?

#### **A SALVATION CHALLENGE:**

**Do you believe that Jesus is the LAMB OF GOD who came to take away your sin and remove the wrath of God from your life? Have you fully repented of your sins, accepted Him as your Savior and received the life changing baptism that Christ alone can give.**