

# REPENTANCE

## THE LESSON: MATTHEW 21

*To give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances;  
and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy Word,  
We beseech thee, good Lord.*

St. John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus by calling the people of Israel to repentance. This was his message: “*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). That word “repent” comes from the Latin translation of the Greek word “*metanoia*”, and when St. John the Baptist used it, he was not just calling the people to confess their sin and say “sorry”. *Metanoia* means a change of heart and mind that results in a changed life.

We spend a lot of time talking about repentance because it’s so easy for us to be hypocritical about it: saying one thing with our mouth, and not really meaning it in our hearts. This is why we ask God in the Litany to “give us *true* repentance” – the sort that results in amending our lives according to his word.

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During Jesus’ ministry he had many encounters with groups of hypocritical religious leaders. Pretending to be sincere and respectful, they would approach him asking questions, all the while trying to trick him. But Jesus knew what was in their hearts, just as he knows what is in ours.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time praying again with the phrase “*Give us today our daily bread*”. Ask God to examine your heart, to help you to know what you should repent of, and then to repent of it in a spirit of sincerity. Read 1 John 1:9: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*”. Conclude with a time of thanksgiving.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer.

*Almighty God, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of repentance: Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching, and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth’s sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(COLLECT FOR THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, BCP PAGE 278)

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## MATTHEW 21: **CHANGE YOUR MINDS**

<sup>23</sup>And when Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” <sup>24</sup>Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ <sup>26</sup>But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

<sup>28</sup>“What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup>And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him.