



**Mustard Seed Children's Summary for December 28, 2008**  
**Released on Wednesday, December 24, 2008**

**"Real Faith Means Doing Good"**

**Devotional Reading: Psalm 51:10–19.**

**Background Scripture: Luke 3:1–20.**

**Lesson Text: Luke 3:7–18.**

**Memory Verse:** "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8).

**Luke 3:7–18**

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

**TEACHER'S NOTES**

People who have come to Jesus to have their sins taken away are not quite the same people they were before. Jesus not only forgives; He also changes. He creates in them a new desire to do what is right because that is what pleases Him. As a result, not only our spiritual condition changes, but Jesus expects our everyday behavior to change too.

That is the message this week's lesson will bring to our primaries.

The man we call John the Baptist was doing the work God had assigned him even before his birth, preparing Israel for her Messiah's coming. God in some way had let John know Jesus would appear on the scene soon.

As he walked along the Jordan River, John preached. And the sermon he kept repeating was always some version of "God's kingdom is about to come. Get ready." He called for "repentance" from his listeners, a change of mind concerning sin. They needed to recognize sin, be forgiven for it, and stop it.

To indicate they were sincerely doing those things, people submitted to being baptized by John in the river. Baptism was a familiar temple rite to the Jewish population. Those coming to John would understand that being baptized by him indicated they believed—were identifying with—what he was preaching.

Not all who came were sincere, however. John knew that many still thought they had no sin problem. They were children of Abraham. Did that not guarantee that all was well?

John said no. His message required turning to God for forgiveness. Let the detractors show they had done that by forsaking sinful behavior and doing what was right before seeking baptism.

People from various life situations were in John's audience, and he gave some practical suggestions as to what

fitting behavior was. Helpfulness toward the needy was appropriate, as were honesty and mercy and self-restraint. In other words, do the things that go with being a forgiven child of God.

When teaching this lesson, let us make sure the children do not conclude that good behavior is what earns God's forgiveness. Forgiveness is God's gift when they believe His Son Jesus died for them and rose again. On the other hand, let us also make sure they understand it is right that their behavior should now show they belong to Jesus.

### **THE OBJECT IN VIEW:**

To teach that when we trust Jesus as our Saviour, our behavior changes; we do what is right because now our goal is to please Him.

### **TRUTHS TO STRESS:**

1. If we let Jesus be our Saviour, we will show that by the good things we do.
2. When we ask Jesus to be our Saviour, He gives us new life so that we want to please Him.

### **PLANNING VISUAL AIDS**

For Telling the Lesson, find or make pictures of a baby, John preaching, John baptizing, and a cross.

For Helping to Remember, provide for each child crayons, a 5-by-4-inch piece of tagboard, and a 12-inch length of yarn. You will need a paper punch as well.

### **BEGINNING THE LESSON**

Ben was telling his mother about something that happened at school that day.

"Sam jabbed me on the arm with his pencil," Ben said, "but he said he was sorry."

Ben's mother knew there had to be more to the story than that because Ben was not at all happy. "So what happened after that?" she asked.

"Well, after a while he jabbed me two more times," Ben complained. "I think he was not really sorry the first time. If he had meant it, he would not have kept on doing the same thing. Would he? He was just pretending."

His mother nodded. "I see, and I wonder if that reminds you of some-thing important from yesterday's Sunday school lesson. Do you remember what God's man John said about some men who tried to show they were sorry for their sins but who actually showed that they were not?"

Ben did remember, and now we are going to find out what important thing it was that God's man John said. Our lesson will tell us what Ben heard from the Bible.

### **TELLING THE LESSON**

Most fathers and mothers do not know what work their babies will do when they are grown up (show baby), but Zacharias and Elisabeth knew. God's angel had said their baby would get people ready for Jesus.

When John had grown to be a man, God let him know it was time, and John started his work. He walked here and there all along the river, preaching everywhere he went. (Show John preaching.) Many people heard about his preaching, and they came down to the river to listen to what he said.

Now remember, John was to get people ready for Jesus. He kept telling the people everywhere that it was time to change their minds about something because God's kingdom was about to come.

"You are thinking God is pleased with you," John said. "You are thinking you are His people and so everything is all right. You must change that kind of thinking. Not everything is all right. You have sin that must be taken away. Start by telling God you need Him to forgive you, and ask Him to do it. God's kingdom will come soon. Get ready to be in His kingdom."

Well, many people wanted to be ready for God's kingdom. They did know they had sins that needed to be taken away, and they said so. They knew they needed God to forgive them, and they asked Him to do that.

The people who asked for God's forgiveness let John do an interesting thing. They let him baptize them in the river. That meant he would dip them under the water and up again. (Show John baptizing.) That was their way of saying they believed what John was saying was right. Yes, they did need their sins taken away, and yes, they were asking God to do it.

On the other hand, there were many people who came to be baptized who still thought they really were all right. They did not think *they* had any sins to worry about. They thought being baptized might be a good thing to do, but they did not change at all. They just kept on doing all the wrong things they had been doing before.

Now, John knew these people were not sorry about their sins, even though they came to be baptized. He said to them, "What are *you* doing here? You say you have done wrong and are sorry. Then you should be *showing you* have changed by doing what is right."

Some people in the crowd began asking, "What kind of right things do you mean?"

John said, "Things like not being selfish. When you have more than you need, then share."

To other people he said, "Be honest. Tell the truth. Do not take what belongs to somebody else. Do not hurt someone else."

After listening to John for a while, everybody began saying, "Maybe John is the great one God promised He would send us some day."

John said, "No, no! I am just the one God sent to make things ready for Him." Then he told them, "Someone is coming who is much greater, much more important, than I am. (Display cross.) I am not even good enough to be His servant." Of course, he was talking about Jesus.

So did John do God's will? Yes, he did. He got people ready to listen to Jesus when He came. His preaching reminded people that they had sins that had to be taken away—and Jesus was coming to do that! (Point to cross.)

But John reminded the people of something else that is important too. Did you hear that part? When people truly come to God to have their sins taken away, those people will start to do things differently.

You see, Jesus changes them so that they *want* to do what is right. Being good does not take away sins. Only Jesus can do that. But when He does, He changes us so that we *want* to please Him.

### **TELLING HOW TO LIVE**

That is something you and I must remember too. If we have asked Jesus to take away our sins, He did, but He also made us changed people inside. It is right to do the kinds of things that please Him, and now we want to.

So when you wonder whether you should do something or not, it is good to stop and think, *Is this something Jesus would want me to do?* That will help you know.

### **HELPING TO REMEMBER**

Say, Today we shall make something that you can hang on the doorknob of your room. It is something that will remind you to think of that question "Is this something Jesus would want me to do?" Have each child draw a tall question mark on his tagboard and then "fatten" it by drawing another inside the first and filling in the space with colorful designs. (Show your completed sample.) Punch a hole so that each can insert his yarn hanger. Give help, as necessary, to tie together the yarn ends.

### **EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE**

#### **"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8).**

This was one of the things John told people as he was getting them ready for Jesus. It was his way of saying, "You say you know you have done wrong and have come to God asking Him to forgive you. Then you should be showing you are truly sorry by doing what is right."

John's words tell us that the things people do are like fruit growing in a garden. Our "fruit" should be the kinds of things that fit with being forgiven people. They are good things, such as being kind and sharing and not hurting others.

### **LESSON SUMMARIZED BY:**

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### **WORKS CITED**

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The Pulpit Commentary, Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Hrsg.), Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary, by Nelson Books.

**"Real Faith Means Doing Good" Puzzle  
(Luke 3:7-18)**

Q F F F L P T K B S N G V N T  
 E I P I M I R L Y O T I J H R  
 L R K Z U U T E I G P R O H N  
 P E N R E P T T A E Y L A Q B  
 O A F H N A A W R C Y W F E J  
 E S X O O T T S I R H C G A H  
 P R N Q C J K K D P K E W B O  
 G Y W E B A P T I Z E D D R T  
 Z A P I W U N D F F V D I A A  
 Y X J B X W D O O G Q W E H V  
 E C A J M R A G U P O P U A U  
 P Q O E U L F T D H X G C M Q  
 S P Y L H A K J E A O Y I L N  
 P Y B L O F G L F R L E W L O  
 N Z D N G H O S T T F Y Y I I

ABRAHAM  
 EXPECTATION  
 GHOST  
 HEARTS  
 PEOPLE  
 WATER

BAPTIZED  
 FIRE  
 GOD  
 HOLY  
 PREACHED

CHRIST  
 FRUIT  
 GOOD  
 JOHN  
 VIPERS

*16 of 16 words were placed into the puzzle.*

**"Real Faith Means Doing Good" Solution  
(Luke 3:7-18)**

+ F + + + P T + + S N + V + +  
E I + + + I R + + O T I + H +  
L R + + U + + E I + P R O + +  
P E N R + + + T A E + L A + +  
O + F H + + A + R C Y + + E +  
E + + + O T T S I R H C + A H  
P + + + C J + + + + + E + B +  
+ + + E B A P T I Z E D D R +  
+ + P + + + + D + + + + + A +  
+ X + + + W D O O G + + + H +  
E + + + + + A G + + + + + A +  
+ + + + + + + T + + + + + M +  
+ + + + + + + + E + + + + + +  
+ + + + + + + + + R + + + + +  
+ + + + G H O S T + + + + + +

(Over, Down, Direction)

ABRAHAM(14, 6, S)  
BAPTIZED(5, 8, E)  
CHRIST(12, 6, W)  
EXPECTATION(1, 11, NE)  
FIRE(2, 1, S)  
FRUIT(3, 5, NE)  
GHOST(5, 15, E)  
GOD(8, 11, N)  
GOOD(10, 10, W)  
HEARTS(15, 6, NW)  
HOLY(14, 2, SW)  
JOHN(6, 7, NW)  
PEOPLE(1, 7, N)  
PREACHED(6, 1, SE)  
VIPERS(13, 1, SW)  
WATER(6, 10, SE)

**Have a blessed Christmas Day!**