

January 3, 2021

## John Calls for Repentance

**Luke 3:1-18**

We made it! We may be battle-scarred and weary, but we made it to 2021. If you're like me, you've been looking forward to the new year for about nine months. Right now, 2021 is so full of promise. Will a vaccine be available soon? Will I get to see my family in person again, see my friends' smiles? Will I be able to sit down in a restaurant and enjoy a meal without smelling like hand sanitizer? The world is hopeful and full of anticipation. Just as it was in the time of John the Baptist.

There are many parallels between this week's Scripture in Luke 3:1-18 and what's happening in our world today. Then as now, we're looking for answers. We're looking for someone or something to save us. The answer for today might just be the same as it was for the people of John's time. "The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. John replied to them all, 'I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I'm not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'" (Luke 3:15-16).

A vaccine might keep us from contracting the coronavirus, but it won't save our souls. Stimulus checks from the government might pay our mortgages, but it won't put peace in our hearts. Earthly solutions will fix earthly problems, but only one thing will lead to our salvation. The student book author writes, "Jesus identified with and surpassed all human expectations, bringing hope to the world through his extreme example of selfless, sacrificial love. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are loved by God and given a hope in eternal life that John the Baptist never envisioned."<sup>1</sup>

Happy New Year! I pray it is a wonderful one for us all.

1. What do you hope for most in the coming year?
2. How do you see your spiritual journey changing this year?
3. Does God's promise of eternal life help you in these uncertain times? Why or why not?

Rachel Mullen is the features and acquisitions editor for *Christian Living in the Mature Years Magazine*.

<sup>1</sup>From *Adult Bible Studies*, Winter 2020-21, by Taylor Mills (Cokesbury, 2020); page 53.