

Repentance and Self-Reflection: Mark 1:14-15

Context

- Repentance is a theme found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the word for repentance means “to turn around.” The New Testament word for repentance means “to rethink, change the mind.” Combining these two definitions gives the full meaning of repentance—a change in our mind and a change in our actions. A reversal of both our thoughts and our actions are necessary to return to God. God’s grace and forgiveness are free and unearned but the Spirit invites to embrace a lifestyle of repentance.

Hearing: (*Read “Context” and then Mark 1:14-15. Then pray for God’s grace to understand.*)

- Before we dive in, what comes to mind when you think about repentance? What is repentance in Scripture? What are some things that you heard in the sermon on Sunday?
- In v 15, Mark tells us that Jesus told the people to “repent and believe in the gospel.” Can you recall any stories from the Bible about those who repented or called for repentance? Why did they repent? What seems to be the purpose of repentance? (See notes for suggestions)
- Read Isaiah 55:6-8. Note how seeking God is paralleled by a forsaking of wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts. What does it look like for us to practically move away from our sinful actions and thoughts? How does God’s gracious promise of pardon influence how we do that?
- Self-examination and repentance go together. Spend some time reflecting as a group on the need for self-examination. How can praying the Examen, for example, help us identify things in our life for which we should repent?

Obeying (application):

- Following on from the final question, spend some time this week in self-examination. As you pray, keep in mind what you should repent for. Consider trying out a daily prayer of Examen. On Sunday, reflect on the pattern of self-examination, repentance, and forgiveness in our liturgy.