

# Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



## ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Have you ever had a season in your life when you felt lonely or isolated? What were the circumstances, how did you handle it, and what did you learn from that experience?

## INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

What most stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Zechariah and Elizabeth play a prominent role in the story of John the Baptist. What are some qualities or characteristics that you admire in them, or perhaps, in someone you know who is similarly committed to their faith?

## INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

**Read Isaiah 40:3-5 and Psalm 139:13-16.** What can we learn about God's sovereignty and his greatness by these passages? John the Baptist's birth was prophesied long before he was born. How does knowing that God had a plan for John's life before he was even born encourage you in your own journey of faith?

**HOST Guidance:** God knew exactly the purpose to which he had called John the Baptist. In his power and sovereignty, he brought it to pass. God knows all things, even the number of our days and what each day will hold. Because God is good and trustworthy, we have great confidence in our journey of faith and life. He is with us. We shall not fear.

**Read James 1:22-24 and 1 John 1:6-9** How should these passages reflect our attitude toward confession and repentance? What does confession and repentance do for the life and the heart of the believer?

**HOST Guidance:** Confession and repentance keep our heart from turning cold, as a byproduct of sin and living in a sinful world. Confession and repentance keep us moving in the right direction: toward righteousness and holiness. Our heart is made tender toward God and toward other people as we acknowledge our own sin and practice confession and repentance.

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**Read Luke 3:3-9.** Try to dissect all the different nuances of John's message. What is he really saying to people, particularly in v.7-9?

**HOST Guidance:** He references the judgment that is coming upon the world, the need for evidence of a changed life, i.e. fruit of repentance, and the uselessness of pride and self-confidence.

## APPLICATION (10 MINUTES)

John's message was one of repentance and turning from sin to God. How can we practice daily repentance and confession of our sins, and why is it important for our relationship with God? What does the practice of repentance look like in your life?

Share a personal experience when repentance and turning to Jesus brought about a significant change in your life. How did it impact you and your relationship with God?

Pastor Paul closed the message with outcomes from John's story that are "within our reach." Which of those four stand out to you the most, and why?

1. Being godly, praying, hopeful people like Zechariah and Elizabeth.
2. Being crystal clear and singularly devoted to our calling and identity as Christ-followers.
3. Practicing repentance every day of our life: turning from sin, turning toward Jesus.
4. Willingly allowing God to teach us our lessons in the schools of life.

Is there a circumstance or situation you are facing today where you particularly need one of the above four outcomes to become real?

Is there one area of your life where you would like to be more bold toward your identity as a Christian? At school, among friends, at the office, in the neighborhood? Share that with the group and use the prayer time to pray specifically about your situation.

## PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the story of John the Baptist. He was an amazing man who made a difference in the world that continues to be spoken of today. May his resolve, his courage, his devotion and his obedience inspire us to the same. Please work in our hearts to transform us by your Holy Spirit to be the people you have called us to be. In Jesus name. Amen.*