

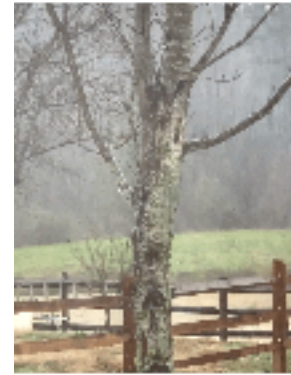
REPENT

JANUARY 12,

2020

Having been an educator for many years, I am accustomed to two weeks off for Christmas and New Years, but this break was particularly nice. I caught up on my sleep. I even had dreams that I could remember after awakening, which is really rare for me! Although I enjoy my job, it has real stressors - delicate topics, a never-ending to-do list, and problems that desperately need solutions. I thought about all of those things over the break, but I was not concentrated on them. I was able to think about my life - where I have been, where I am now, and God's promises for the future.

It drizzled and rained several times during the break, and since it's winter, the scene outdoors was dismal. Bare trees, shades of brown and black, and few sounds satisfied my need for nature's joys. I began to long for spring, my favorite season of the year. Green, to me, is the color of life. The source of our fresh air, home to chirping, pecking, and singing animals - green leaves are what I long for.



Matthew 3 begins, *In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."*

The winter trees, to me, are like the wilderness. They are dormant, they don't appear to be alive as they are not actively producing fruit. For this reason, we would be unsure of their type - are they maples or oaks, aspens or elms? Sometimes people, when their faith has become dormant, can also appear to be dead. They don't produce fruit, and their friends and family may be unsure of their beliefs - they may appear to be in the world and of the world, except that they attend church (sometimes).

~Romans 2:1
You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

John the Baptist's advice to the people in the wilderness, was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." John advised that the people repent so that they could receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and be saved from the eternal penalty of sin. To repent means three things must happen.

- 1) We must admit/confess our sin.
- 2) We must seek God through prayer and the study of His Word
- 3) We must stop committing the sin(s) we confessed.

Quite often, we only want to do Part 2 - we seek God, we pray and ask Him to fix the other person. This method is ineffective because we remain in our sin. Psalm 5:4 tells us, "For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness; with you, evil people are not welcome." We

cannot turn away from sin that we don't admit exists. We cannot seek God until we admit our unforgiving heart; admit we are holding a grudge, admit we are maintaining a lie; admit that our heart has hardened; admit that we have a problem with pride. Until we do these things, the kingdom of God is here, but is not available. After we admit our sin, and only after, we can effectively seek God. We then pray and study our Bible. He will help us to turn completely away from the sin(s) we admitted, so we can live the life He has planned for us. Yes, it is possible to seek God, without admitting our sin, people attempt it all the time, but it does not work. We remain the in the cold, rainy days of winter and never emerge as the new creation of spring. I visualize this life, the life He has planned for me, as one that looks like the green trees. Tall and fruitful, in relationship with others, spreading joy, peace and love. AMEN!

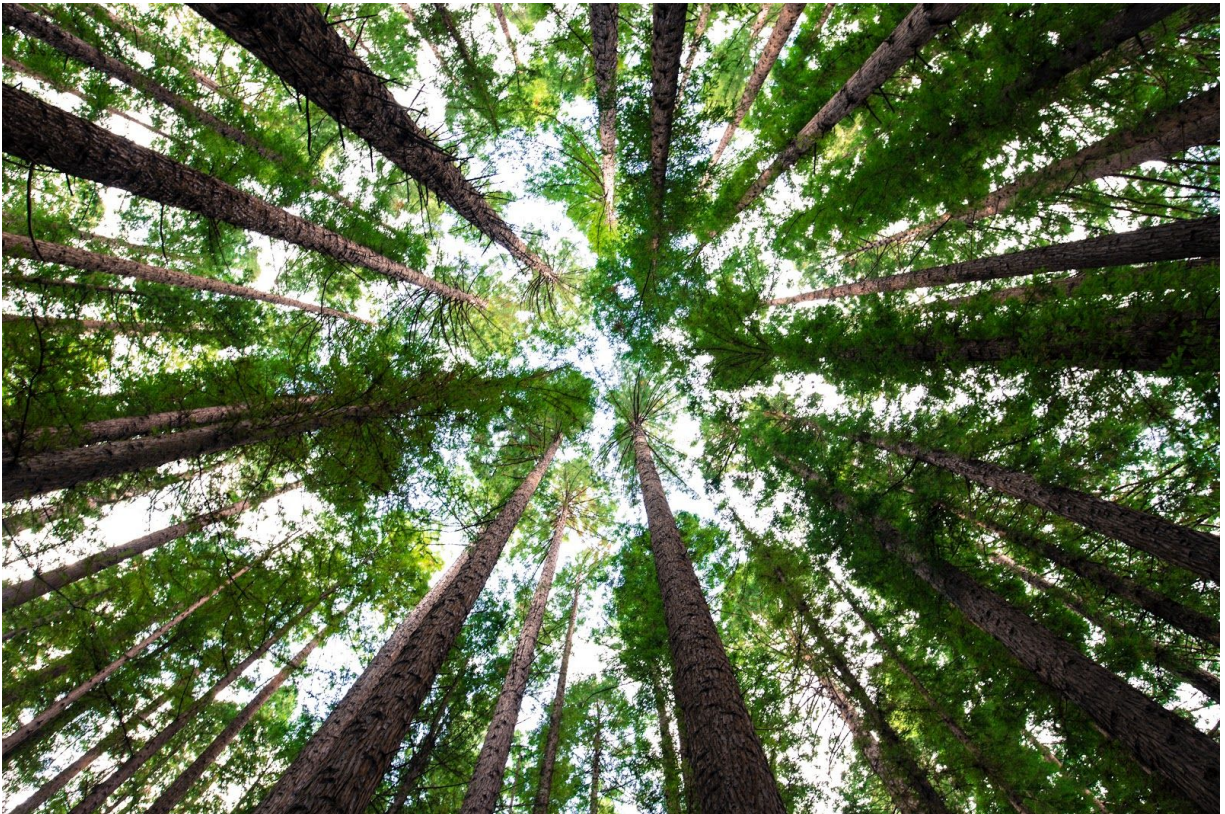


Photo by [Arnaud Mesureur](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Let's make repentance a part of our 2020 Vision.
Have an awesome week!
Kim

