

Adult John

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Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] We're going to be going through the book of Luke. And we've been tracing our steps through the book of Luke, being investigators to see what the Holy Spirit is doing. Luke is an interesting one, a physician.

His gospel has things that the other three don't really have. And we've been going through going, oh, interesting. Why does he put that in there? And last week we went through the boy Jesus in the temple.

We asked, why did Luke put that in? Maybe he's showing us something about time. Maybe he's showing us something about growth that we should all have. How we use our time that will allow us to grow.

And now we move into another part where actually John the Baptist and Jesus have now grown up. He fast forwards again from chapter 2 to chapter 3. They go from tweens to now adults.

And we see John, of course, growing in strength. And he moves into the wilderness. So they actually have very different upbringings because John goes into the wilderness and even his fashion sense reflects that.

[0:54] And then Jesus grows up actually in Nazareth as a carpenter's son. And he grows in wisdom and in stature and in favor with man and with God. So these two people grow up both filled with the Spirit and they grow.

And last week I asked us the question, how are we using our time? Are we committed to growth? And now we move into chapter 3. As a movie, it kind of changes the scene. And suddenly these guys are old.

And we see this scene with John the Baptist in all his craziness have this interesting conversation with a group of people that go out into the wilderness to find him.

So we're going to be reading, if you've got your Bibles, it's Luke chapter 3, verse 15 to 22. 15 to 22. Luke chapter 3, verse 15 to 22.

I'll give you a moment to find it. And I'm actually going to put her on the spot.

[1:53] I'm going to ask my dear friend Jess. Jess, would you mind coming up to read us the Word of God? You can come up and join me here. Luke chapter 3, verse 15 to 22.

Can I invite you to stand for the Word of the Lord? Thank you. As the people were in expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all saying, I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the shaft he will burn with unquenchable fire.

22. So with many other exaltations, he preached good news to the people. But Herod the Tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

Now, when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from heaven, You are my beloved Son.

[3:16] With you I am well pleased. Thank you. This is the Word of the Lord. Please take a seat. So actually, we're just going to do something very, very standard today.

We're just going to go through what Jess just read, just verse by verse, and we can see a story unwinding here that is actually really, really interesting. So just bear with me and let me set the scene here, which is John the Baptist is in the wilderness, and he's gaining hype.

So people are going out to him, are hearing about this crazy guy who's a prophet, and they're wondering. And verse 15, so you can just follow me as we go here. Verse 15 says this, As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts, so they weren't sure. They were just asking this question of themselves, concerning John, whether he might be the Christ. Can you imagine that? Just go, oh, this guy's different. This guy is built different. Could this be him?

We've waited 400 years. We've been under Roman impression for 400 years. Could this finally be the one that Isaiah 9-2 talks about? We've been walking in the darkness.

[4:19] Maybe this is the great light that has shined. Maybe this is the Prince of Peace. Maybe this is mighty God. Maybe this is wonderful counselor. And they go, is it him? Or actually, is today the day?

And they said, as the prophet Joel said, that the day of the Lord will come, and he will pour out his spirit onto all people. Is, are we finally here? Are we going to be able to see freedom?

Freedom in our generation? And maybe the passage that I want to highlight today, where it's just to dip our feet into the Old Testament, we're going to, I'm going to take you to the book of Malachi. Turn with me. If you've got that, turn to Malachi. If you want to hit, it's actually just the last, the last book in the Old Testament. So that's fairly easy to find. Malachi is this, the final book in the Old Testament.

So this is kind of the final word that we hear from God before. He goes kind of quiet, radio silent for 400 years. And so you can imagine these last words are pretty strong, and they're hanging off it.

[5:20] And in Malachi chapter 3, it says this. Again, he's prophesying about the messenger of the Lord. Malachi chapter 3, So you can imagine those words are ringing through the community.

Okay. There's a messenger coming. In fact, there's two messengers. Which one is this crazy guy out in the wilderness? Is he the one? Is he him? Or is he the messenger who is preparing the way?

Of course, then John actually completely just eases them and goes, Hey, guys, chill. I'm not him.

I'm not that guy. He says, I am the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness.

Prepare the way for the Lord. I am not the groom. I am simply the best man. I'm here to tell you that he's coming. And I'm here to get you ready. And so he tells them that.

And he says, Hey, I am nothing. Nothing compared to him. And he says later, we're going back to Luke now. Chapter 3. He says, John answered them. I baptize you with water.

[6:34] But he who is mightier than I is coming. The strapper whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. I can't even touch his shoes. I can't even get anywhere near him. I am nowhere close. In the book of John, we see John the Baptist saying, Hey, he is the one who's going to become greater.

I will become less. He must increase. I must decrease. I'm actually just the best man just standing on the side. Just so happy. My joy will be complete when the groom comes. So it's not about me.

You've all come out to me, but it's not about me. There is someone who is greater. And then that's what he gets. He then moves into the sentence. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Whereas I baptize you with water. And I wanted to kind of focus on this a little bit today. The difference between what John was doing and the difference between what Jesus came to do.

John says, I'm here to baptize you with water. But here, there's a guy coming who's going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Now, if you've grown up in the church, you'll have heard that before.

[7:33] But I wonder how much you've actually really spent time processing that and asking, okay, what does that actually mean? What does that actually mean to you? How do we differentiate between the two? Okay. If this guy is down here and he's only baptizing people with water and this guy is up here, he's the goat.

He's the OG and he's baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire. What does that actually mean?

And I'm going to try and see if today we can unpack that and actually come out here thinking, okay, what is the difference between John and Jesus?

What did they both do that was different? And how does that apply to me today? Okay. So, again, I said last week, we're going to try and do a little bit of interaction here. So, can we actually turn to the person next to us and go, well, actually, what do you think is the difference?

Have a guess. There is, well, I was just about to say there is no wrong answer, but I guess there is.

But in this context here, let's just have a go. Have a go. Because I think we will remember what the right answer is if we've had a go at kind of processing and asking ourselves, well, what do we

actually think we are reading as we're reading that bit?

Okay. What's the difference between being baptized with water and being baptized with the Holy Spirit? Two minutes. The people next to you, go. And I will ask some questions afterwards. Go, go, go. Oh, it is.

[8:41] Interesting. All right, all right. Okay. Introverts, I'm here to save you. All right. Sonny? Oh.

okay well i think water is more of a symbol and when you get baptized by the holy spirit is where actual change happens where he actually purifies you water is like telling people oh i'm being baptized right now but you should be already baptized by the holy spirit or while you're doing it i guess there we go good good job good job study which is the same as actually what hither said over here water is actually just a is a symbolization of actually what we're going to be undergoing so uh john the baptist is saying i'm preparing the way for you i'm actually just getting your heart ready i'm getting your heart ready and we're going to do something symbolic so that when the holy spirit comes that's when you'll actually be cleansed it is just it is just water ocean sea water salty water that we're going in here right here but when the holy spirit comes it's going to be different what else is there is was there was there any of the differentiation uh jaywon kim fresh off a new haircut uh yeah yeah yeah the holy spirit fire is something that happens to you to kind of sanctify you to refine you whereas again the um the water is just a symbol symbol of what might i ask symbol of cleansing i like it uh whilst i whilst whilst i'm on talking to jaywon uh just as a very very brief sidetrack uh jaywon asked a very very important question this week uh and thankfully the answer is yes uh can we just can we just have you have you stand so they can see who you are just to embarrass you a little bit jaywon kim and emily so so proud of him uh ask him how he did it and ask him about the weak knees that he had the water is a symbol of repentance is when you say okay i'm a sinner and what does the word repent actually even mean darren what does the word repent actually mean to you decide not to do something that is i think i heard it the word come here to turn to turn around when you know that you are heading in the wrong direction and you want to kind of address it the thing you have to do is really you have to turn around uh maybe we hear about the stereotype here especially with gentlemen who are driving uh looking for a place uh maybe this was before the invention of google maps and we insist we know where it is and so we drive and then our lovely uh loving gracious spouse will ask do you know where do you know where you're going yeah yeah absolutely i know where i'm going you you just sit tight uh we're gonna get there and then you just keep going repenting is going okay okay this is a dead end we have to turn around and we have to go 180 it is turning it's stopped doing it's stopped going in one direction stop and turn on 180 and when you when you say you want to be baptized by water you're saying hey i've been heading in the wrong direction and i need to stop i need to do a 180 and i need to turn around and john the baptist is calling people to repentance saying hey it's okay to be heading in the wrong direction earlier in chapter three he says he is proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins he's saying hey it's okay to be admitting that you are heading in the wrong direction stop turn around and you'll be forgiven and you'll be okay and you will find your way that's okay and so that's really what that is talking about and he's preparing for you he's saying i'm only getting ready i'm getting you ready for that guy if you think i'm scary then you should see what's coming next i'm here just to get you ready to get your heart ready because when the holy spirit comes it will be a very very different thing the holy spirit of course is the actual salvation of the soul it's the actual cleansing of the soul it's being refined it's being and i think i used that word just as i was talking to jay there but what's that word that theologians or christians use there's long and begins with s where it talks about the whole process of uh refinement sanctification when you're being sanctified uh what's actually happening kelly what's happening when you're being sanctified long lasting change what are you changing into the whole process of sanctification is that you're being refined and changed so you will look more like jesus and the baptism of the holy spirit when he comes is going to be the one that starts that journey off for you now when i last sunday night when i looked at this passage and i was like okay i'm going to be talking about the baptism of the holy spirit i was like oh boy oh boy it's going to be one of those topics because actually this has been debated for centuries about what the baptism of the holy spirit is and how many baptisms you get of the holy spirit and i was like oh no we're going to have to talk about this we're going to have to talk about tongues and gifts and all these kinds of things and then actually i realized that's not what john is trying to say here that's not what he's actually highlighting it but maybe i will say one thing just as a short one which is i believe that when you are baptized with the holy spirit which only

happens once that is when you are able to confess that jesus is lord 1 corinthians 12:3 says you can't even say jesus is lord without the holy spirit the fact that you can even acknowledge who jesus is and say that he is lord that means you already have the holy spirit and you have been baptized by the holy spirit now the subsequent ones that other people may call being baptized by the holy spirit i would call actually just being filled with the holy spirit being filled with the gifts being empowered by the holy spirit to do certain things and we can unpack that a whole nother day maybe in a much smaller context but in the context of his of this um i'm gonna say the moment you are baptized with the holy spirit is the moment you confess that jesus is lord you can't even you don't even know who jesus is you don't even know that he is your king unless the holy spirit is working inside you so if you're wondering have i been baptized by the holy spirit the fact that if you can confess that jesus is your lord and savior then the holy spirit is already within you okay and so that we'll just move on from there and then now why do i think he's not talking about the gifts and the tongues is because straight after he taught he says this um you can follow me here verse 16 he will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire his winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire that sounds fun doesn't it so straight away he talks about something and what he talks about is judgment he talks about salvation he's going actually there's going to come a time when you're we will know whether you're baptized by the holy spirit or not we'll know whether it was whether you confess that jesus is or not and he uses this kind of uh harvesting farming example who's held a winnowing fork before i suspect no one in the city of hong kong uh has held it's kind of like just a giant fork i guess you and what they would do is to separate the wheat from the chaff is actually it's all a pile on the floor during harvest and they would use this winnowing fork to lift it all up into the air and the light bits the chaff would then be blown away by the wind and what would fall to the ground would be the heavy wheat which they can then actually use so that's the kind of idea what he's talking about is this this basically this filtering this this discerning between actually who is saved and who is not in in this regard he's talking about judgment and so i have to be very careful here because we had a lovely wedding yesterday so i had two talks to to prepare and one was about love and one was about judgment and in my head in the morning before the wedding i was like don't mix the two messages up do not so i'm going to follow my notes a little bit more because i only wrote this last night just to make sure that i didn't overlap and tell the uh the wedding bride and groom that they were going to be judged um why do i also know that it's about judgment the context of the conversation here we only started from verse 15 but if i just ask you just to have a little glance up to uh the conversation just before that it's one of my i think it's a humorous passage here uh chapter 3 verse 8 he's talking to these people who have gone out a lot of them are pharisees a lot of them people who are religious type they're like i hear about the hype of this guy i want to go find out what he's all about i'm going to go test his theology i'm going to go see what he's actually talking about and then he calls and then john uh true to form calls of a brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath of to come and verse that he says is bear fruits in keeping with repentance bear fruits in keeping with repentance if you truly have turned around and repented then it should look different your life should look different to before you repented is what he's saying and then he says this and do not begin to say to yourselves we have abraham as our father he's talking to these jews who think they are saved regardless why because they're jews that's what they think and everyone else is inferior and everyone else won't be saved but we will be saved and he's saying hey don't rely on just because you're a jew and then have nothing to show for it bear fruits in keeping with repentance and he says for i tell you god is able from these stones to raise up children for abraham just because you're a jew just because your family is christian just because you've been attending church all your life if your life hasn't changed at all it doesn't really mean much behold god can make new children for him from these stones it's not a direct translation i have a little chuckle to myself because i just imagine it in the chinese version would be something like it's just you're used like you're no use to anyone you're no use to anyone if you haven't changed your life and so bear fruits in keeping with repentance it doesn't matter if your dad is abraham it doesn't matter any of these things because actually there is an axe that is ready to cut down every tree that doesn't bear good fruit again so he's talking about judgment he's talking about is your life different at all and then he gives some examples and so the crowd asked him okay then what does that actually mean and then he says what shall we do and verse 11 he says whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none and whoever has food is to do likewise the first thing is if you've repented you should suddenly have a generous heart that you should be marked by generosity we

as a people should be marked by generosity when we look at someone who is in need our first thought must be how can i share what i have with you and if you're not generous then maybe that's the first sign of hey have you truly repented and then he carries on and then he says tax collectors also came and they were asking what should we do and he said to them collect no more than you are authorized to do bear in mind this was politically sensitive area here these tax collectors come and go oh well what should we do do you want us to give up our jobs so we don't work for this evil empire he doesn't say any of that john the baptist doesn't jesus jesus doesn't he kind of just says hey whatever job hey ej whatever job you've been assigned just do it properly be generous live with generosity and live with honesty live with honesty and then he says hey what about the soldiers and the soldiers also came and asked him hey we what shall we do and he asked and he said to them do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation and be content with your wages don't abuse your power live with integrity isn't it interesting soldiers tax collectors uh everyone's just asking what should we do we repent we want to we we know this road that we're heading down is a dead end how do we turn around that's what he's saying repent and live with generosity live with honesty and live with integrity why because judgment is coming that winnowing fork is coming and soon you'll be separated

i'm baptizing you with water which is just a symbol but the holy spirit is going to come and baptize you with fire what does that mean it's not going to be about outward behavior the christian life repentance isn't about behavior modification necessarily it's about a posture of the heart he's going to see beyond how you act just because you're sat here today doesn't mean you're going to get a free pass if jesus was to show up he's going to look into your heart and he's going to see do you truly believe that he is lord and savior do you truly repent and do you truly recognize and confess that you were heading the wrong way uh jesus talks a lot about the holy spirit towards the end john chapter 14 to 16 he talks a lot about it and 16 8 he says and he will he will be the helper and he said jesus says it is better for me to leave and for this guy to come and what will he do he will convict the world of sin and righteousness he will decide what is right and what is wrong that should scare you a little bit i'm not going to lie that should scare us a little bit because that means the judge the judgment the measuring stick isn't just a tick box of the things that we've done it isn't how much time we spent doing this that or the other if the holy spirit comes this is out of this world this is in the spiritual realm that isn't just anything of the flesh this is he's going to look into the depths of our hearts and souls and there is a judgment that is coming it should scare you it should scare me a little bit because jesus also talks about this in matthew 15 he says there are people here who are honoring me with their lips but their hearts are far from me so we're singing songs worthy is your name be exalted but your heart is not even there you're you're thinking about what episode of the tv show that you're actually going to be watching tonight you're thinking about what you have your heart's just not there well there's others of you who make sure that your outside of your life looks nice and holy and righteous and clean but inside it is so messed up and you're just pretending now just a disclaimer that it's not saying that it's a problem that there's we're messed up inside because we are we have to acknowledge that we are all messed up romans 3 we all fall short of the glory of god but it's the pretending it's the pretending it's a saying oh but i am clean on the outside and so john the baptist is saying hey be careful you think i'm serious i'm only baptizing you with your seawater there's a guy who's coming with the holy spirit with fire and he's going to see right into the depths of your soul and the holy spirit is going to come and refine you but here's the thing verse 18 says this so just when you're about to go oh my goodness unquenchable fire i don't want to know what that means that doesn't sound good i don't really want it uh verse 18 says this so with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people kind of assuming okay well that was good news hey there's going to be a judge who's going to come and see the very depths of your heart and soul and it's good news now if you're sat here just like i was i'll be like oh i don't know someone comes and sees the depths of my soul i don't know if it's going to be good news for me so why is it good news why is it what does the word exhorting mean juju what does the word exhorting mean love it strongly encourage them moving your heart honestly i can say that's what i'm trying to do with you right here as i open up the word of god i'm like lord would you would you use whatever i'm about to say to exhort these people to strongly move their heart to encourage them so that they would receive this good news because it is good news we talk about judgment in a bad way often hey judgment is coming but i think months ago i told you if wicked the word wicked really comes from hey something has been crooked has been twisted the word judgment seems it actually means to make right

[25:00] to straighten out we have this idea that judgment is a bad thing it is a punitive thing if you get a speeding ticket you will be judged and you will be punished if you run a red light you will be punished but that's not the judgment we're actually talking about here because scripture also says he did not send his son to come to condemn the world but to save the world the judgment isn't punitive it is restorative he's come to judge to make things right to straighten us out in a way so it will be good that's why it's good news but more importantly it's not just because of what we can do later on we'll see a little bit more about what that actually means verse 18 so it is good news he is here to transform you what he's really saying to all the people to the tax collectors to the soldiers to the pharisees to the jews he's saying no one is safe but all can be saved that's the message of the bible that no one is safe everyone falls short of the glory of god but all can be saved that is the good because there would have been some people sat here sat upright and gone john the baptist what do you know do you have an mdiv do you have you studied like i were you the top of the class like i was i know what the prophet joel and malachi says off the top of my heart it's off of my head how what do you know and so can you see how outrageous it was when he was telling them this he's like none of you are safe none of you tax collectors soldiers pharisees none of you are safe but all of you will be saved can be saved it is good news and it won't be because of you religion won't save you the only thing that will save you is a person now interestingly i'm not going to spend too much time on this verse 19 to 20 as you're tracking we're nearly done but the herod um wasn't happy about this and so they have him locked up which tells me one thing the message of christianity is actually really offensive it's saying you're a sinner you can't save yourself that's what it's saying people won't like that especially in this day and age because everything is hey you you do you you are whatever you think you are you will you can feel whatever you feel you are as long as you feel good and you're okay you're good keep going you're not lost keep heading in that direction it's completely fine oh it's a dead end it's okay it's where you're supposed to be just just celebrate enjoy be okay i affirm you the message of christianity is not that it is you are a sinner that you can't save yourself and you see here john the baptist keeps saying it and then sadly it leads to him being in prison and now when all the people were baptized so they do repent um something fascinating happens and you can see why jesus has arrived and tim keller says this the gospel really is actually you are far worse than you ever imagined but you are far more loved than you ever dare dream that's it you're a sinner you're a sinner you can't save yourself you are far and you are you may think you're a bad person but you are far worse than you imagined like far worse and i affirm that but you are far more loved than you ever dare dream that's the message of the gospel no one is safe but all of you can be saved and you all of you will be saved and so they repent and so they get baptized and then jesus walks in and in another account john just looks at him and goes behold the lamb who takes away the sin of the world that sin that i was just telling you about about you how you are not safe how you are a sinner behold here comes the guy who has no debt who's going to come and clear your debt for you behold the lamb who takes away the sin of the world and he gets jesus gets baptized and people then ask well why did jesus get baptized because he didn't have to repent because he was sinless well this was his act again we see here luke is trying to show us the divinity and the humanity of jesus as a boy jesus growing up and asking questions still growing identifying with mankind and this baptism again is a symbol just i'm going to identify with mankind it's what paul says later he made him to be sin who knew no sin in this baptism jesus saying i am with you i am with you i am the word that became flesh eugene peterson says god moving into the neighborhood i'm here to be with you and i'm back being i'm being baptized to identify with your sin and actually only luke says this so verse 21 jesus also had been baptized and was praying and the heavens opened only luke says that he was praying and so you can just imagine this scene where jesus comes he's like it begins i've waited 30 years patiently helping my dad in the workshop finally mom calls me out at the wedding and we need more wine i guess it's time to go and then he gets baptized and he's praying i don't know what he's praying but it's as he's praying the heavens open i don't want to shortchange how that must feel to be able to see the heavens open and to hear the father's voice booming down terrifies a lot of people maybe whatever your perception of god is growing up you can imagine that's not a that's a scary thing that's thunder that darkness that's lightning but then the words he says will shock you when that heaven opens it will tell you that judgment is not punitive but it is restorative because he says this you are my beloved son with you i am well pleased god we don't really hear god opening up the heavens to speak that much but most of the time it's just with that message of love of affirmation and you see

the holy spirit here here's he's the one we're trying to trace right verse 22 and the holy spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove maybe as a tribute to genesis 1 where the spirit hovers above the water ready to speak life into creation you now have the holy spirit coming again descending ready to bring life back to a people who have chosen the wrong way who have set their minds on the flesh and that has led to death and decay you now have the holy spirit come heaven invades earth one more time and as the spirit descends life is about to pass through the whole of mankind once again and it's a fascinating encounter because you see the trinity right here the father speaks the holy spirit descends and of course the son is the one being baptized and it's just a beautiful beautiful account of what god is actually trying to do here he's not trying to condemn he's trying to save mankind what does that mean for us that means actually romans 8 you see this when we have the holy spirit within us we get to become children of god we get to share in that message that god says to his son you are my beloved son with whom i am well pleased when the holy spirit comes into each one of us we are now children of god for all who are led by the spirit of god are sons of god and what can we cry out in romans 8 abba father which is would have been completely revolutionary and shocking again at that time because no religion would refer to god as abba which is daddy which is this intimate relationship no one would no one would no one would even say that god would say such loving things such as you are my beloved son but now as the holy spirit descends on us and fills us and we are baptized with the holy spirit we now get to say abba father thank you for loving me thank you for saving me thank you for turning me around from a life that will end up in death and leading me by your spirit to a place that is life and peace if you want to read and find out more about that romans 8 is where it's at and if you have extra time then memorize romans 8 because that is deep truth right there about how when you set your mind on the spirit that is that thing that will give you life and the very spirit that brought jesus back to life is the same spirit that gives you life and so you won't have the spirit of fear anymore but when the holy spirit comes inside you you are now adopted and now you are now children of god co-heirs with christ provided provided that you suffer with him which means what provided that you die to yourself provided that you acknowledge hey i'm a sinner i've been heading in the wrong direction in fact i don't even know where i'm going anymore that's the best moment that's exactly where you it's a great place to be because that's when you turn around and that's when the holy spirit comes and refines now i'm going to finish here on what j1 was talking to us about in terms of just being refined and what does that mean as the holy spirit and how does that change our lives and i'm going to take us back to malachi um remember that last chapter in the old testament that i began in the sermon today malachi chapter 3 says this behold i send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me and the lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple and the messenger of the covenant and whom you delight behold he is coming chapter 2 then says this for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller so verse 3 says this he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver this is exactly what jay was alluding to when the holy spirit comes inside you and this process of sanctification starts you you will start become you will start being molded refined just like that winnowing fork separates the chaff and the wheat actually a silversmith uh refining silver does essentially the same thing and i wanted to finish by reading you an account it's from a devotional that i had actually read years ago but i've always liked this story and this is where i want to finish um the story goes like this and i'm just going to read it so there's a lady who reads this verse from malachi chapter 3 verse 3 he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver a woman had read this verse and was puzzled by it so she decided to go and visit a silversmith to find out how he did his work as she watched the silversmith he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up he explained that in refining silver one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest that way it would burn out all the impurities she began to think about god often placing us in really hot spots then she thought again about the verse that he sits he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver so then she asked the silversmith if it was true that he actually had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined the silversmith said yes he'd not only had to sit there holding the silver but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire because if the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames it would be destroyed the woman was shocked and was silent for a moment thinking about how hot it would be to sit in that fire then she asked him how do you know when the silver is fully refined he said oh that's easy when i see my image in it when i see myself in the silver i will know that's when all the impurities are gone that this silver is what it's supposed to be brothers and sisters we sit the silver being refined by a savior who sits there with us in the fire

waiting till we become just like him waiting till he can see his image in us that's what the holy spirit does when he comes sets us off on this process of sanctification that makes us become more like him as you sit here confessing that jesus is lord i ask you does your life look any different from before you followed him just real talk just honestly other than how you spend your sunday morning or maybe your thursday night where you do your life group does your life look any different just like the soldiers and the tax collectors and the pharisees were asking well what does that do should we quit our job should we change no he said just do your job properly just do it with integrity just do it with honesty just do it with generosity because you're changed you're a changed woman you're a changed man and maybe in this new year this is a good time for us to go well what's changed about me what's different about me to the next guy honestly when someone watches when one of my colleagues watches how i deal with an unfair boss when my family look at how i'm dealing with a miscarriage when friends look at me dealing with failures do i look different do i accept them as a process of refinement do i accept them because i know that this isn't the end goal that the lord is taking me on a journey refining me so that one day he can look at me and see himself in me let us welcome that process we're going to move into time of um communion now which is the time where believers sit and really remember what the lord did for us and maybe there's no better time than this than for us to examine 1 corinthians 11 the apostle paul says sit and as we take this bread and drink this wine that we would examine our own hearts is there any part of us that still hasn't repented but actually we say that we are christians we we commit our sunday mornings to church but we are still actually trying to find our own way and we keep heading to the same dead end every time we just won't admit it well there is no chance better than this right now for us to sit and go lord there's this part of my life that is still heading in the wrong direction and i repent i stop i turn back and i trust in you the good news is that i won't be able to find my own way back the good news is that i'm a sheep that is lost but you've come to save me let's just spend a moment now in quiet as we reflect on any any areas in our lives that we still need to repent for again and again we thank you that you speak a message of love and affirmation to us that we are your children whom you love so we trust you continue to mold us refine us to be more like you that we trust you that let's not just hear a message be exhorted in the heart and not be led and spurred to action show us holy spirit show us what we need to do what we need to change give us the strength to obey to follow thank you