



## Elements: Repentance- A Response to Love

Week of July 24, 2022

### Connect Group Discussion Guide

Elements is about taking the foundational doctrines of the church, making them personal, and understanding how they enhance our relationship with God.

- Circle Time: Think about when you first became a Christian... How has your understanding of what it means to be Christian developed or shifted from then until now? “Back then I thought this, but now I know this...”
  - Why did it change? Was there someone who showed you? Personal experience?
- What is the Definition of Repentance?
  - The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, which means “to change” or a “180 degree turn”.
- Read Luke 19:1-9. What are some characteristics of religion as Zacchaeus understood them before his encounter with Christ?
  - Works based; Legalistic; Hopeless (Can’t do enough good works); Judgmental people; Personal lack of worth;
  - Why do you think he believed these things about religion? List some ways the people treat him that keep his beliefs this way? List some of Zacchaeus’ own decisions that keep him stuck in his way of thinking.
- What is it about Jesus’ interaction with Zacchaeus that causes him to radically change his life?
  - When Jesus paused and looked and called Zacchaeus by name it exemplified his compassion toward sinners.
  - Why did the crowd react so negatively?
  - Think about this statement: “Many times in scripture this irony is displayed: The “sinners” are actually the righteous and the “righteous” are actually the sinners.”
  - How do you see this irony at play in the story of Zacchaeus? Do you see this irony anywhere in our society? How about in our churches?
- What proof is there of Zacchaeus’ repentance? Without this encounter with Jesus do you think Zacchaeus would have ever repented? Why or why not? Would anyone even care to help him with that?
- Like Jesus, his church must be willing to travel outside the traditional boundaries of acceptance. As uncomfortable as it makes us, Jesus calls us to reach out to all sinners. We must not exclude those who do not meet our “standards.” Jesus considered Zacchaeus a son of Abraham, worth his time. The church can be an open community only as we embrace Jesus’ radical ethic of love.
  - Who are the people that are most accepted by the church? Who are the people that you think are the most marginalized by the church? What does Jesus tell us to do with this?
- Personal Reflection: Where does repentance need to happen in you?