



Week 2

PEACE

Prayer of the week:

Merciful God, who sent your messenger John the Baptist to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: give us grace to heed the warning and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, our God, now and forever.
Amen.

Daily Prayer:

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Today's reading is **Isaiah 11:1-10**

The picture here is the redemption of all creation. A beautiful image of peace restored and everything in alignment. What needs to be judged will be judged. The injustice endured by so many will be set right.

We will no longer devour each other or rape the earth and plunder it for selfish gain.

For there will be universal submission to THE LORD's sovereignty, just as the waters cover the sea.

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.



Day 2

Today's reading is **Romans 15:4-13**

It's amazing to think – when we read that passage in Isaiah yesterday, we were reading what people who love God have been reading for nearly 3000 years. Today, we read something written almost 2000 years ago, and they are reflecting on what we reflected on yesterday. 2000 years apart but reflecting on the same scriptures. Paul, the writer of Romans tells us why: *for our instruction, so that through endurance and encouragement of the scriptures, we may have hope.*

We have hope as we stay standing (though sometimes staying standing looks like being flat on our face, yet refusing to give up), and being encouraged as we stay in the Word.





The outworking means receiving each other, being united, even as we have been received and brought into unity with Christ.

We see from these 4 quotes in v 9,10,11,12 (found in Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:42, Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10) that this was always God's plan. This fills us with hope.

God, fill us with your peace, so that we may abound in hope by the power of Your Holy Spirit.



Day 3

Today's reading is **Psalm 72**

From the NET study notes: *The psalm depicts the king's universal rule of peace and prosperity. As such it is indirectly messianic, for the idea it expresses will only be fully realised during the Messiah's earthly reign.*

The Messiah is God's promised anointed one, who we know to be Jesus.

Go through the Psalm and note the attributes of Jesus' reigning over the earth. Just decisions, equality, deliverance from generational poverty, the crushing of the oppressor, His refreshing Presence, the needy rescued, abundance of provision.

At the time of writing this, in my prayer time, the phrase popped into my head "world weary". Just that lethargy of being human, day in and day out. This scripture ministered to me today. In our week of peace, may it minister to you.



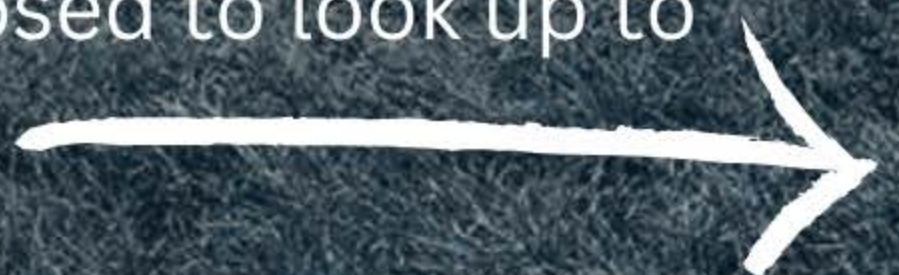
Day 4

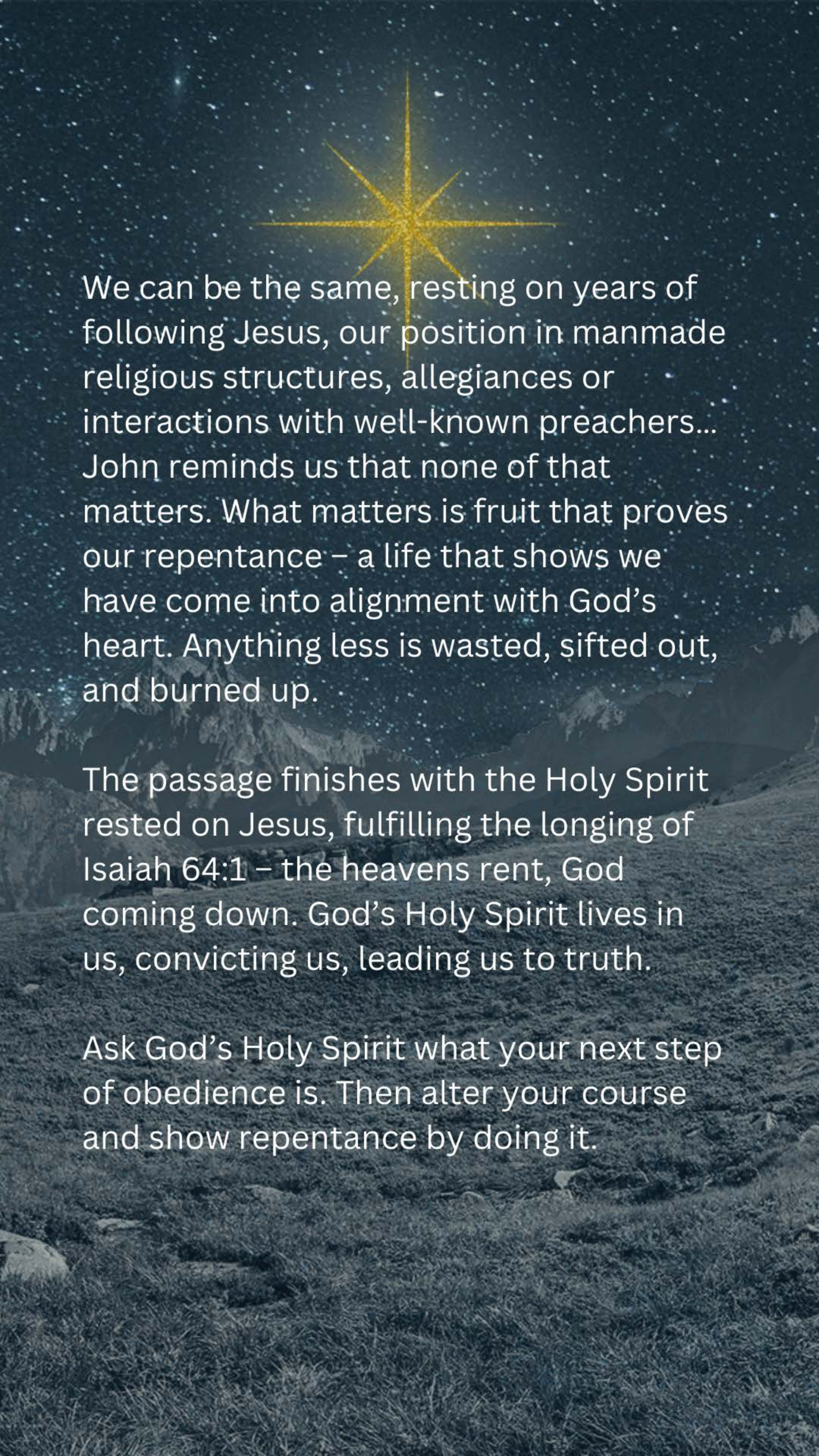
Today's reading is **Matthew 3**

Repenting is changing your mind to obedience. Repentance is not a onetime action; we go on repenting all our lives. Every time we discover something that God is saying, we should alter our current course to a direction that is in alignment with His.

This was John's mandate: Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near.

Repentance is harder the more entrenched in something we are. The Pharisees (the most influential religious and political group amongst the Jews at that time) and the Sadducees (the Jewish group made up of the more wealthy and/or aristocratic Jews) lived in luxury compared to John. They were the elite; for them to admit their need to repent would have felt like weakness in front of people who were supposed to look up to them.





We can be the same, resting on years of following Jesus, our position in manmade religious structures, allegiances or interactions with well-known preachers... John reminds us that none of that matters. What matters is fruit that proves our repentance – a life that shows we have come into alignment with God's heart. Anything less is wasted, sifted out, and burned up.

The passage finishes with the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus, fulfilling the longing of Isaiah 64:1 – the heavens rent, God coming down. God's Holy Spirit lives in us, convicting us, leading us to truth.

Ask God's Holy Spirit what your next step of obedience is. Then alter your course and show repentance by doing it.



Today's reading is **Luke 1:57-80**

Back story: When the angel came to Zechariah to say he and his wife Elizabeth would have a baby, and that he will go as a forerunner before THE LORD in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts...to make ready for THE LORD a people prepared for Him, Zechariah responded with facts rather than faith. Facts? He and his wife were old. Faith? God can do anything. Zechariah was left after the vision unable to speak.

It feels pretty drastic. You respond, not with derision, but just facts, but because there is no belief in the words, you get shut up!





Imagine if every time we were about to respond with something that is not faith, we shut our own mouths. As a dear sister from church reminds me, the facts are..., but the truth is...

Read Zechariah's prophecy over his son, vv76-79. It's not about him, it's about salvation, and the part he plays. If you were to prophesy over the next generation, what would you say? We can complain about the world going to hell in a handbasket (facts), but what if instead we responded in declaration (faith)? Declare some things now about the next generation and pray into that with great faith.