

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITH SAINT LUKE



“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS...”

Read Luke 3:1-20

We refer to **Saint John** as both the **Forerunner** and the **Baptist** because he both *prepared the way of the Lord* and *preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*.

1

GOALS

What is repentance?
What is threshing & winnowing in relation to the parables?

2

AT CHURCH

Sacrament of Confession

3

AT HOME

How do we prepare for Confession?
Asking for forgiveness from one another



Threshing:

The process of removing the grain (wheat) from the straw



Winnowing:

Using wind or a special basket to separate the grain (wheat) from the chaff (inedible hull)



Repentance:

a change of heart with great effort to return to God

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Confession

Saint John was baptizing people, who wanted to repent, in the Jordan River. He did this to prepare the people before Jesus began his ministry. Have you ever disobeyed when your parents asked you to do something? How did you feel afterwards? Hopefully, you wanted to say sorry and fix the situation with them?

Saint John was telling everyone that they needed to be sincerely sorry for their sins and have a deep desire to fix the situation and return to God.

THE AX & THE TREE

Notice the ax leaning against the tree in the icon of Theophany - “And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Luke 3:9)

What does it mean to “bear good fruit?”

This means that we need to try with all our might to live our life always for God. How do we do this? There are many ways we can do this, but some of them are:

- Getting up and getting ready for church on Sunday morning without being told
- Always saying a prayer before eating to thank God for our food
- Listening to our parents and following their directions



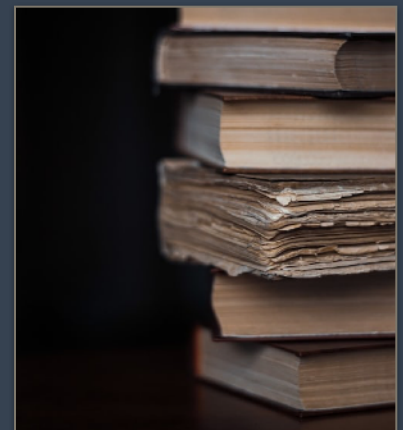
EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pages 79 - 94

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke by Blessed Theophylact, pages 40 - 46

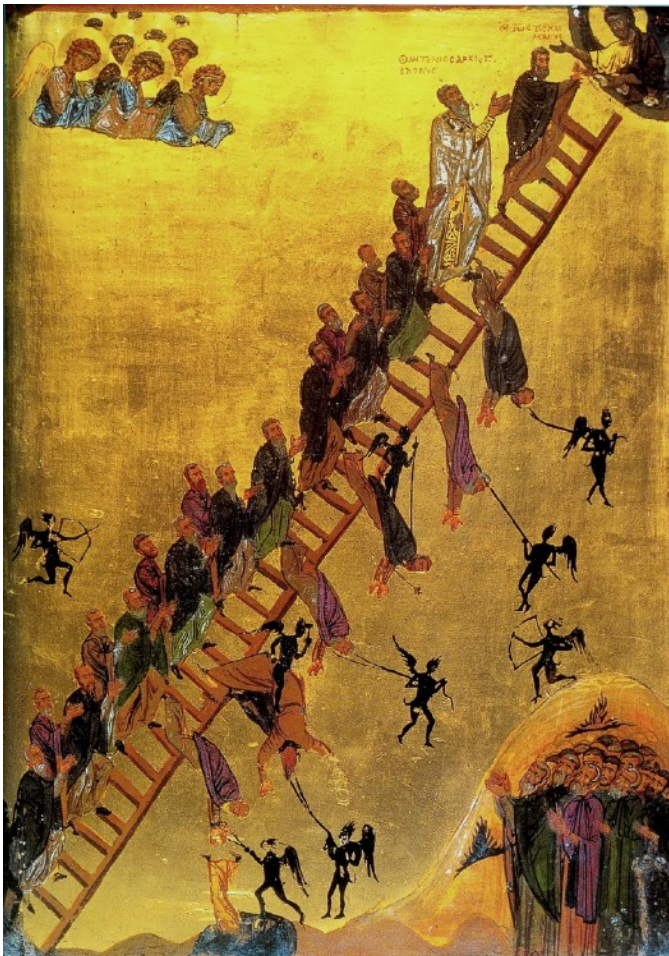
[Search the Scriptures Live Podcast: “Brood of Vipers”](#)
by Dr. Jeannie Constantinou

[Separating the Wheat from the Chaff](#)



Just like we want to have a close and loving relationship with our parents, even more so, we want to have a close and loving relationship with God as well. We can work towards this every single day by trying to acquire virtues. This is when we purposely make the choice to do things like use self control by fasting, which teaches us we can't have everything we want whenever we want it.

Look at the icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent. Our goal is to be united with God. If a tall ladder was in front of you, could you jump to the very top in one leap? Of course not. You would have to climb each of the steps on the ladder in order to get to the top. We need to make small, daily goals to live our lives for God, and with each day, we will get a little closer to Him. If we find ourselves making other stuff more important than God, then we can talk to our priest about what we can do to



place God as our priority again. One of the ways we do this is by going to Confession when we have sinned. After going to Confession, our sins are forgiven, and it's as if we had never done them! God loves us so much and forgives us when we go to Confession.

We should also ask each other for forgiveness too when we have been mean to someone in any way. It's important to ask the person, "Will you please forgive me?" Hopefully, they will respond back to you, "I forgive you."

PARABLES

In the Bible, we hear special stories called parables. These stories use an example from everyday life to teach us an important lesson about God.

At the time of these parables, the people had a good understanding of farming - growing food and raising animals. Today, many of us are not as familiar with farming practices. We are going to have a fun activity today to help us learn more about how wheat was processed, in order to better understand the parables about wheat in the Bible.

VOCABULARY: SEPARATING WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF

"His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor; and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:17)

Wheat is what we use to make bread and it grows as a tall grass. When the wheat is harvested, there is much work still to be done before you have the wheat kernels or berries that you will use to grind to make flour.

What is threshing? Threshing is the process of removing the seeds from the stem or stalk of the plant. Oftentimes, many people would gather together to thresh the wheat together. They would take big bundles of wheat and hit the bundles against a hard surface, dislodging the grain.



Threshing grains
Photo credit: [Jayaseerlourdharaj](#)

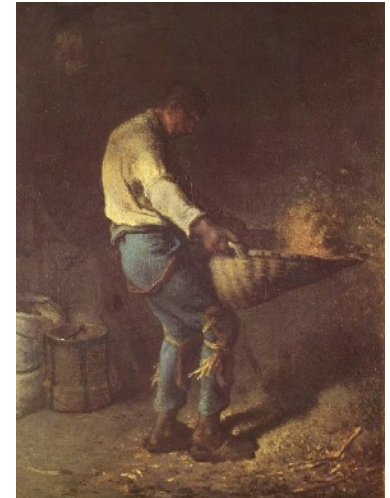
A **threshing floor** is the area where the threshing takes place. Oftentimes, this was a circular area outside, cleared of any debris that might make it difficult to find the wheat kernels when they were done.



Threshing floor in Naxos, Greece
Photo credit: [Zde](#)

What is winnowing? Winnowing is the process of separating the wheat from the chaff. Sometimes

this was done by using a special basket that allowed you to easily shake and drop the wheat kernels to the ground as the wind blew away the chaff. Other times, they would use a winnowing fork and toss the wheat into the air, and again, allow the chaff to blow away as the wheat dropped to the ground.



How can I tell the difference between the wheat and the chaff? The wheat is the small seed that grows at the tip of the wheat grass plant. This seed will provide new life to another wheat plant. The chaff is the outer, inedible hull of the wheat kernel. The chaff is papery-thin and will easily blow away.



(Left) Chaff; (Right) Wheat
Photo credit: [Archibale Isolation](#)

In our current age, we have special machinery that will thresh and winnow the wheat for the farmers, but we are going to learn for ourselves how to first

thresh the wheat at our station outside and then winnow the rest to find all the wheat kernels.

MEANING: SEPARATING WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF

“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” (Luke 3:17)

“His” is referring to Christ. When we see “His” and “He” capitalized in the Bible, this is always in reference to Jesus.

We are the field of the Lord. The wheat are those of us who have firmly loved God. The chaff are those of us who have been easily blown away from God by distractions.

The wheat and chaff are still mixed together and will be separated (winnowed) by the angels at the time of judgement.

The wheat is gathered into the barn (heaven) and the chaff is burned (hell).

We learn that it is so critically important to repent with sincere sorrow for our sins and a deep desire to be reunited with God.

How do we repent? By going to Confession when we have “missed the mark” and seeking to be reunited with God.

Father Vasile has times listed in the weekly bulletin when he is at the church and available for Confessions. Ask your parents when would be a good time for you to go. Confession is also available when we have our Saturday Nativity Retreat just before Christmas and also when we have our Saturday of Lazarus Retreat during Great Lent.



Icon: Parable of the Wheat and Tares ~Matthew 14:24-30
Photo credit: [Fikos](#)

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AT HOME

FOR PARENTS

The image of true repentance is found in the Gospel, in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

The Prodigal Son remembered all that he had in his father's home, and how much he lost, and then he wanted with all his being to return.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Liturgy and Life: Christian Development
Through Liturgical Experience

Available in our church bookstore:

“Repentance and Confession, Return to God and His Church” by St. Nikodemos Publications

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We teach our children both directly through the instructions we provide them and also indirectly through our daily, lived example.

Our children notice our priorities and the choices we make. Let them hear us seek forgiveness from one another and see us going to Confession.

In this way, we help to lay the foundation of the importance of repentance in our healing process.

HOME ACTIVITY #7

Discuss and prepare to go to Confession:

- [Preparation for Holy Confession](#) - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
- Ask your family to forgive you when you have done something to hurt them.

