



THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW WEEK 1: MATTHEW 3:1-12

Community Group Study Guide - Week of December 27

One of the great challenges that the church faces is that many people approach Christianity with the wrong motives. What motives do they bring? Christianity is viewed as just something that one takes up like any other religion, study or hobby, something to continue as part of one's family heritage, or among many other views, something that could help meet one's personal needs.

Confronting these motives is not just a challenge of the modern church, but has been an issue for the church since before the beginning of Christ's ministry. Matthew 3:1-12 shows us that many people approached the ministry of John the Baptist, the final prophet before Christ's ministry was initiated on earth, with similar motives. While these motives seem fairly innocent, Matthew's depiction of John's ministry reveals the rebellion and ignorance toward the King that is inherent in them. John the Baptist welcomingly received and baptized Jews who came to him confessing their sins and committing to lives marked by repentance in acknowledgement of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, but when Pharisees and Sadducees came out to him with the motives listed above, he viciously warned them of the power with which the new King, Jesus Christ, will rule.

How can we describe the power of this King? Verses 10-12 talk about it as power that is destructive; it will chop down and eternally burn up any opposition that hinders the spread of His kingdom. This King's power won't just be known by his opposition, but even his true followers will know it personally as recipients of the Holy Spirit and His refining fire. Matthew takes time to elaborate on the power of the King, as a means to get his readers, and us, to think seriously about the way they approach the rule of Jesus Christ over our lives and all of Heaven and earth. When believers properly acknowledge the authority and power of their King, as well as the humility he has shown in coming as their Savior, they should gratefully lead lives of repentance while trying to bring glory to His name.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand the source of the power of God and how it works in the lives of opponents of Christianity and believers.

Heart

To trust that by believing the message of the Gospel, Christians receive the transforming power of God in their lives.

Hands

To march into the New Year knowing that we will not confront its challenges on our own power if we are in Jesus Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In-Person Worship Services

THIS Sunday, January 3 at
9:30AM and 11:30AM.

Please go to <https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve> **to sign up to serve on the Mini Mo or Usher Team.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Matthew 3:1-12

1. What stood out to you about the text or sermon this week? Did you find anything particularly challenging, encouraging, convicting, or compelling?
2. What does John the Baptist's exchange with the Sadducees and Pharisees show about their motives for coming to him? How would you respond to somebody who came to church expressing similar motives?
3. What was the source of power behind John's message? What is the connection between the power of God and the gospel? How does one receive the transforming power of the gospel into their life?
4. Read verses 10-12, what do these verses teach about the power of God? How does this power work differently in the lives of non-believers and believers?
5. What does John tell the Sadducees and Pharisees that they must do if they want to be baptized? What role should repentance play in the life of a true believer? How is repentance and extension of a Christian's faith?
6. To what end does God's power primarily work toward in the life of a believer? To what end does God's power work primarily in the a local church?
7. Why do you think Matthew included this section about the ministry of John the Baptist early in his gospel?
8. How did this sermon help you think about your approach to the New Year?