

Matthew 3:1-17

The Fulfilment of Righteousness

Image Church // Perfect Hope Week 3

Introduction

Good morning Image Family, and **Merry Christmas!** It's that time!! Some of y'all are on it, others of you are not, there's no judgment here...

Hey real quick before we jump in: Abide and Abound Initiative...

Cards in the Lobby take a second to fill them out and then drop it in the box right there next to it...

Alright well, we've been in a series called **Perfect Hope** where we're diving into the first **4 chapters** of the book of **Matthew** and looking at how Jesus is the **perfect hope**...

There's so much goodness that Matthew gives us in these first **4 chapters** that's going to help us see the uniqueness surrounding Jesus as our perfect hope...

I know this time of year can be chaotic, but I want to encourage you to journey with us as we unpack some incredibly lifegiving realities that I believe will have a profound impact on you...

We're going to pick up in **Chapter 3** if you have your bibles go ahead and turn there...

Something that's fascinating to me is the **Instagram filter**...

- No knock if you use one...
- Can't a one of them make an ugly mug like mine look better...
- The whole point is to make you look better...
- I feel like it is indicative of our lives...

- We see the gaps, we see the imperfections and we do our best to cover them up, hide them, distract from them...

Here's what God wants you to know- your filters don't work- He sees right through them... He knows you got in an argument on the way here- stop fronting... You got kids you argued this morning...

God sees right through your filters... But here the thing, and this is where it gets crazy... Jesus looks at us and He says give me all your imperfections...

- Give me all of your mess ups, give me all of you baggage- stop hiding, come here I have something for you...

What I have for you is not a 5-step process to becoming better, what I have for you is a new life...

- And this new life that I give doesn't cover up your sin and imperfections, it does away with them...

This is the essence of what we're going to see this morning in **Matthew chapter 3**...

Let's pick up in **verse 1**...

Matthew 3:1-17

1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea **2** and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!"

3 For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said: **A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight!**

So in this intro to what's happening here Matthew quite Isaiah (40:3) so that we will see that John the Baptist is a messaged appointed by God and foretold about by Isaiah hundreds of years earlier (40:3)...

- **IOW** John the Baptist was to be an indicator, a signifier that the messiah had arrived!

Verse 4 Now John had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

John the Baptist was a unique bird... think, like a *Mideastern Tom Hanks* toward the end of the movie *Castaway* but with no Wilson, *with a little more Bear Grylls swag from the get-go...*

- *My guy's harvesting honey from legit beehives...*

Showers were probably not a thing for him, and he probably had remnants of **honey in his beard** and his **breath** would have smelled like locust... Not sure what that smells like so I will leave that to your imagination...

But the guy was gaining traction...

Verse 5 Then people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were going out to him, **6** and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

So, it seems that word has spread about this John guy and his proclamation of the Kingdom of God drawing near... Which, to be fair, is a bold statement... So, people come from all over the region of Judea...

And when they get there, they hear this dude who seems a little different saying *the Kingdom of God has come near...* **REPENT:** Turn from your sin back to God...

And so, people are coming up to him and they're like ok... And they're acknowledging and confessing their sin, and then John is slamming them down in the water (*my words- what I picture happening from this burly dude*)...

Now this idea of **repentance** is not new- this is the consistent call through the OT from God to the people of Israel... They sin and He tells them to turn back to Him...

God set things up so that this would be central in the Old Testament through the law and the sacrificial system... So, this call to turn back to God was not a new call, but it was especially timely one in light of who has come and what he's going to do...

So, these baptisms that John the Baptist was doing were public declarations pointing to **the recognition of sin**, and it served as a picture of the cleansing forgiveness that the one who John was proclaiming would bring... (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, Matt. 26:28, Acts 19:4).

So, this is a pretty powerful scene that's taking place, but then would you look what the cat drug in... *Behold- the peanut gallery...*

Verse 7 When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance. **9** And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. **10** The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

What does all of this mean?

It means that there's no salvation and no security in your relationship to Abraham...

He says boys listen God miraculously raised up Abraham and He *allowed* you to be raised up to be his descendants, God can raise up others- y'all are not that big of a deal...

God's not about you holding onto your heritage, He's about you turning to Him and living in light of who He is...

You don't produce **God-like fruit** it doesn't matter who your daddy is you will be cut down...

This is not works based framework...

- **V. 8:** Fruit consistent with repentance...

Repentance ends with your eyes on God and so this is not manufacturing fruit for God so that He will be happy, or so that you will not cut down, this is fruit that is produced as a result of the grace and mercy of God that He hasn't cut you down when you deserved it...

Fruit consistent with repentance is fruit that's produced as a result of your eyes being fixed on the grace and mercy of God...

These Pharisees lacked that- they didn't have their eyes on God they had their eyes on themselves...

- They had fruit but it was motivated by the wrong thing...
- God was not the motivator...

Warning against affiliation based salvation...

Let's keep reading...

Verse 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove his sandals. He himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Notice again, that John didn't see his baptisms as definitive, but as a preparation or who was coming...¹

One who will give the Holy Spirit...

And then John gives one more warning...

Verse 12 His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

John's saying soon Jesus will be revealed and then Divine Judgement will come...

Good news if you're here and you're listening there is still time...

*And then we get to **verse 13**...*

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. **14** But John tried to stop him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?"

15 Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John allowed him to be baptized.

16 When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. **17** And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.

OK so let's talk about this last part, why did Jesus have to be baptized? And how was it the fulfilment of all righteousness?

Declaration

- Announces the anticipated arrival of the Jesus as the Messiah- Which Isaiah pointed to hundreds of years earlier...
- Serves as the official kick-off of Jesus' public ministry...
- As a part of this, there's a beautiful picture of the triune God ...
 - o Jesus (the Son), Spirit comes down like a dove, Father says I am well pleased...
- For one, what is happening here is obviously God's plan, and so Jesus' fulfilment God's sovereign plan is in an act of righteousness...

Deliverance

Baptism was a baptism for repentance- it was for sinners...

But Jesus was sinless right?? Why would he get baptized...

He says: this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Jesus was taking our place...

¹ Gerrit Scott Dawson, *Into the waters with us*.

He repented in solidarity with us, the sinners. He acted for us, not himself. Going as our representative into the waters of confession, he offered a perfect human response of submission and faith. We, in ourselves, cannot even get repentance right! Jesus entered baptism for us and as one of us. - Gerrit Scott Dawson

One of the things that people tend to understand is that **Jesus died for me, but what they miss is that He also lived for me...**

- Jesus perfect life in your place is central to His saving work...
- If He didn't live in your place, if He wasn't perfect in your place then He couldn't save you because He would be like you!

He was **perfect** in your place...

He was also **punished** in your place...

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He would take on the sin of the world, past, present, future, on himself and He would die a criminals death when He was perfect...

He was taking the punishment that was meant for you...

The Great Exchange... Jesus in my place...

And watch this... We also get an incredible picture of what Jesus in your place means for you...

The text says: The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. **17** And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."

Check this out, when Jesus would die on the cross, the veil in the temple that separated man from the presence of God would be torn...

And in the same way that the Spirit would come down on Jesus, the Spirit would come down in **Acts Chapter two** for those who were followers of Jesus...

And in the same way that God would look and say this is my Son with whom I am well- pleased... **Because of Jesus God can look at you and say this is my Son or daughter in whom I am well pleased!!**

Not because of your works but because of Jesus' work in your place!!

That's powerful...

OK so what does all of this mean for us? 3 things...

1. Jesus' righteousness saves you

Clear Gospel- You are not righteous... You are dead in your sin, child of wrath...

- You have rebelled against God, you have turned you back on Him you have done things your own way...
- And instead of God wiping you off the face of the earth, He came down to earth- the creator comes down to restore His creations that was rebellious and broken...
- *Continue to flesh out...*

2 types of people: people that assume their own righteousness saves and people that understand that only Christ's righteousness can save...

Are you focused more on your righteousness or Christ's?

What you should do for him- exhaustion and inconsistent... or what Christ has done for you and allow that to take root in you so that fruit will come out of you...

Jesus' righteousness completely covered the cost and counted for you, he didn't combo it with some of yours...

Example: playing golf with Trey

His righteousness was given to you- it was injected into you... Leads me to the 2nd thing...

2. Jesus' righteousness changes you

And it changes you in 2 primary ways...

A. Changes how you see yourself

You have a new Identity...

- No long what you've done...
- No longer sinner... You are now a son or a daughter

Worldly identity vs. God given Identity through Christ...

- Examples... Career, job, money, relationships, acceptance, appearance...
- If I don't have a firm identity then I will look to all of these places to define me, but it will never be enough...

B. Changes how you live

Changes your actions and perceptions...

When you understand the righteousness that you have received through Christ it changes everything...

Examples: forgiveness, love, serving, generosity...

If your life isn't radically impacted by the righteousness that you have received then you have to ask the question have you actually received it??

- Or do I really understand what it is I have received??

*Don't minimize the righteousness of Jesus down to just a one-way ticket to heaven when you die, the blood of Jesus rains down heaven on earth through people who have received Christ righteousness...*²

Woo! Is that true of us?? Is this evident in us??

For some of you, you need a starting line-

- **Big Appeal for baptism...**

Last thing here...

3. Jesus' righteousness sustains you

Christ's righteousness is not a one-time thing that you receive through a prayer that you prayed one time...

Christ righteousness is the thing that continues to save you...

This is what the gospel is not just the start of the Christian life but the essence of the Christian life...

This is why we have to consistently be in the Word of God to remind us of the work of God...

This is why we need time where we pray and sit still and remind ourselves of the righteousness of Christ...

This is why we must be in community to speak this over us...

For some of you... You wonder why there's not more change or emotion in your life and it's because you're more focused on you...

² Derwin Gray, *The Power Of the Cross*

Colossians 1:9-14

We are asking that **you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10** so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, **11** being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.

13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. **14** In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Conclusion [VAMP]

What area of your life has Christ's righteousness not penetrated...

What area are you not surrendered to the gospel??

Set up prayer time...