

“The King’s Forerunner”

Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist was the messenger who proclaimed Christ and His coming kingdom. As John announced the King he confronted the religious establishment, and he also holds a mirror to us. Join us as we consider some of the issues of religion and the solution in Christ.

Discussion Qs

1. How can materialism and pride be difficult to perceive and obstacles?
2. What helps a church community to be authentic?
3. What are some characteristics of a transformed life that reflect repentance?
4. What obstacles do you need to remove to allow the King to rule?

Pastor Justin Bell
Mobil Ave. campus

Intro: Adventures with kids + cooking shows

Subject: John the Baptist’s Ministry

Object: Bear Fruit Worthy of Repentance

Context: All 4 gospels preface Jesus’ ministry with John.

I. John’s Message (v.1-3)

• A. The Messenger: John (v.1)

• i. John was a prophet from God

- Jesus said there was no greater prophet [Mt. 11:11] [Cf. No miracles]
- The people recognized John as a prophet [Mt. 21:26].
- 400 years of prophetic silence from Malachi to John. 28-29 years since Matt. 2.
- **John was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother’s womb [Lu. 1:15]**
- never too early to start praying for your children
- Eden book of Revelation
- wilderness of Judea: rugged, dessert [Moses, Jesus, Paul]

• B. The Message (v.2-3)

• i. Repent (v.2)

- [repent 3x 2,8,11]
- Change your thinking re God and your sin, and turn to God
- Same 1st message of Jesus [4:17], Peter [Ac. 2:38], disciples [10:7]
- **“Repentance is that the sinner forsakes his sin, puts it out of his thoughts, and fully resolves in his mind that he will never do it again. “ - Maimonides (Medieval Jewish scholar) (My-mon-idies)**

- kingdom of heaven is at hand (used 32 times in Matthew): kingdom is near because the king is near. Invitation to change allegiance to new king and kingdom.
- Repentance is an every day decision - independence, love of money, coveting, selfishness, pride, hard heartedness, fear of man instead of fear of God, gossip, judgmental heart
- **b. Prepare the way of the Lord (v.3)**
- 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. [Is.40:3]
- Hx context re making path smooth by removing obstacles to the approaching king
- Mal. 4:5-6 prophecy of forerunner (Elijah) preceding Messiah, fulfilled in John [Mt.17:11-13]
- God, what is in my life that is obstructing the work of Jesus in and through me?

II. John's Mission: (v.4-12)

• 5 Areas Where John Confronts and Challenges Us

- Think of these like 5 obstacles, large rocks that are blocking the path of Jesus moving in and through you
- **A. The Problem of Distractions (v.4)**
- organic, wild caught, free range locusts + gluten free, vegan, fair trade wild honey
- Be content Camel's hair was a rough skin and a leather belt [4] as a protest against the opulence of Greek influence in Jerusalem. Locusts and wild honey were food for sustenance not luxury or comfort
- Not a call to poverty, but to simplicity and repentance of materialism and busyness
- I let entertainment, social media and even ministry block my view of Jesus (morning routine) - What distractions are in your life?
- **B. The Problem of Pride (v.5-6)**
- i. Be humble: Jews came from all over southern region to be baptized by John at the Jordan. Jews were not generally baptized by another, but would self-immense for ritual cleansing in the presence of others. Cf. Gentiles were baptized when they converted to Judaism. For a Jew to be baptized by another speaks of humility. Confession of sin was evidence of humility and repentance.
- v.11 John's humility in declaring he was unworthy to carry his sandals
- **"He must increase and I must decrease" - John 3:30**
- **C. The Problem of Hypocrisy (v.7)**
- Be authentic: Confronts the religious leaders and called them snakes [not seeker sensitive]. Pharisees (separated ones) sought to separate from sinners, strictly maintain ritual law, but were self-righteous legalists. Sadducees were priestly aristocracy who tended to be materialistic.
- Jesus' scathing rebuke of the religious leaders hypocrisy [Matt. 23]
- We need to confess our hypocrisy to Jesus
- **D. The Problem of Complacency (v.8-10)**
- Be transformed and bear fruit worthy of repentance [8]
- **"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." - James 2:17**
- Jews presumed salvation based on being descendants of Abraham (Jews) [9] - God has no grandkids
- Story of Kyle - half baptist half catholic
- Abraham's salvation was by faith [Rom. 3:21-22] and his faith was seen by works

- Those that do not bear fruit of a transformed life may not be saved [10]
- **E. The Problem of Coming Judgment (v.11-12)**
- Be submitted to Jesus (make Jesus king in every realm of life)
- Jesus is the only one who can baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire [salvation]
- Need to be born of the Spirit and controlled by the Spirit. Fire is re purity.
- Only true believers will experience eternity with Christ, those who reject Christ's salvation experience eternal punishment.

Jesus is our King [Communion]

A. Personal realm and sanctification (being set-apart to God)

1. The need for repentance: determine at least one area of your life where you need to submit to Jesus

a. Take time to reflect, remember what Christ has done, and repent [do business with Jesus].

Allow Jesus to transform your life to bear fruit worthy of repentance.

Pastor Bruce Zachary Lewis Rd. campus

Intro.

Subject: John the Baptist's ministry

Object: Bear fruit worthy of repentance

Context: All 4 gospels preface Jesus' ministry with John. Threshold of Jesus min.

A. John's Message [1-3]

1. The messenger: John [1]

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

a. John was a prophet from God Jesus said there was no greater prophet [Mt. 11:11] [Cf. No miracles] The people recognized John as a prophet [Mt. 21:26].

i. 400 years of prophetic silence from Malachi to John. 28-29 years since Matt. 2.

b. John was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb [Lu. 1:15]

c. **wilderness of Judea:** rugged, dessert [Moses, Jesus, Paul]

2. The message:

a. Repent [2] “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” [repent 3x 2,8,11]

i. Change your thinking re God and your sin, and turn to God

ii. Same 1st message of Jesus [4:17], Peter [Ac. 2:38], disciples [10:7]

iii. Maimonedes (Medieval Jewish scholar) “Repentance is that the sinner forsakes his sin, puts it out of his thoughts, and fully resolves in his mind that he will never do it again.

iv. **kingdom of heaven is at hand**: kingdom is near because the king is near. Invitation to change allegiance to new king and kingdom.

b. Prepare the way of the Lord [3] For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. [Is.40:3]

i. Hx context re making path smooth by removing obstacles to the approaching king

ii. **Mal. 4:5-6** prophecy of forerunner (Elijah) preceding Messiah, fulfilled in John [**Mt.17:11-13**]

B. John’s Mission [4-12] 5 areas where John confronts & challenges us

1. Problem of coveting (materialism) [4]: Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

a. Be content Camel’s hair was a rough skin and a leather belt [4] as a protest against the opulence of Greek influence in Jerusalem. Locusts and wild honey were food for sustenance not luxury or comfort

2. Problem of pride [5-6] Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him ⁶ and were **baptized by him** in the Jordan, confessing their sins:

a. Be humble Jews came from all over southern region to be baptized by John at the Jordan. Jews were not generally baptized by another, but would self-immense for ritual cleansing in the presence of others. Cf. Gentiles were baptized when they converted to Judaism. For a Jew to be baptized by another speaks of humility. Confession of sin was evidence of humility and repentance.

v.11 John’s humility in declaring he was unworthy to carry his sandals

Jn. 3:30 He must increase and I must decrease

3. Problem of hypocrisy [7] But 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 wrath to come?**

a. Be authentic Confronts the religious leaders and called them snakes [not seeker sensitive]. **Pharisees** (separated ones) sought to separate from sinners, strictly maintain ritual law, but were self-righteous legalists. **Sadducees** were priestly aristocracy who tended to be materialistic.

i. Jesus’ scathing rebuke of the religious leaders hypocrisy [Matt. 23]

4. Problem of complacency [8-10]

a. Be transformed and bear fruit worthy of repentance [8]

Ja. 2:17 Faith without works is dead

i. Jews presumed salvation based on being descendants of Abraham (Jews) [9]

ii. Abraham’s salvation was by faith [**Rom. 3:21-22**] and his faith was seen by works

b. Those that do not bear fruit of a transformed life may not be saved [10]

5. Problem of coming judgment [11-12]

a. Be submitted to Jesus (make Jesus king in every realm of life)

¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

i. Jesus is the only one who can baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire [salvation]

i. Need to be born of the Spirit and controlled by the Spirit. Fire is re purity.

ii. Gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire

[12] Only true believers will experience eternity with Christ, those who reject Christ's salvation experience eternal punishment.

Jesus is our King [Communion]

A. Personal realm and sanctification (being set-apart to God)

1. The need for repentance: determine at least one area of your life where you need to submit to Jesus

a. Take time to reflect, remember what Christ has done, and repent [do business with Jesus]. Allow Jesus to transform your life to bear fruit worthy of repentance.