

Jesus is Baptized

Matthew 3

Unit 20, Session 1

Introduction

Last week we completed a 5-lesson unit study that detailed the life of Jesus Christ before the start of his public ministry.

Today we start a new 5-lesson unit study that features the life of Jesus Christ' as he launches his public ministry.

Unit 20: Jesus Begins His Public Ministry

Today's Lesson - Session 1: Jesus is Baptized. Jesus was baptized by John, not as a sign of repentance like the people but to fulfill all righteousness and show that he fully obeyed the Father. (Mt. 3:1-17)

4/12/20 - Easter Session: Alive with Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is good news that changes lives and is the source of our hope for eternal life. (1 Cor. 15:1-22)

4/19/20 - Session 2: Jesus is Tempted. The devil tempted Jesus three times, but Jesus overcame each temptation by the Word of God and succeeded where the first Adam had failed. (Lk. 4:1-13)

4/26/20 - Session 3: John Points to Jesus. John humbly pointed others to Jesus, the One who laid down His life to give life to those who believe. (Jn. 1:29-34; 3:25-36)

5/3/20 - Session 4: Jesus Calls His Disciples. When Jesus called His disciples, He called them to follow His example of intentionally seeking the lost. (Luke 5:3-11; 5:27-32)

Jesus is Baptized

Introduction

After years of wandering, conquests, repentance, returns, listening to prophets, and ignoring prophets, Malachi ushered in a period of silence following his proclamations. For four hundred years God's people lived without a prophetic voice. That is, until John the Baptist. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, God spoke and His message boomed loud and clear. He broke the silence with a powerful announcement and paved the way for the transforming work that was to come through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Just before God spoke to His people through Jesus, He used John the Baptist to prepare the way for Christ by calling people to true repentance.

Read - Group Time Introduction

Class Question

How does knowledge that a guest is coming to your house change things in your daily routine?

Point 1: The Son's herald calls for repentance and baptism.

Read – Matthew 3:1-6

Introduction: God's ways are not our ways.

- Mt. 3:1 'In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,'
- This area is about a 1-day trip east of Jerusalem in a sparsely inhabited area of the desert near where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea; not an ideal place to start a revival nor 'confront' the religious leaders of the day. But God's ways are not our ways – (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

John the Baptist' message contained two primary items:

1. A call to repentance.

Read 1st paragraph

To best understand what John the Baptists call to repentance means in this passage, let's take a look at the Greek word Matthew used to communicate John's message in his Gospel – *metanoeo*, "to repent." Literally, this Greek word means "to perceive afterwards"

- "meta", after, implying change,
- "noeo", to perceive;
- "nous", the mind, the seat of moral reflection

The word '*metanoeo*' carries a central idea of changing our mind, but it also entails changing the way we live. John was issuing a central idea of changing our mind, but that also entails changing the way we live. John was issuing a call for his hearers to change the way they saw things and consequently change their behavior as well.

John MacArthur writes in his commentary on Matthew 3:2, "John the Baptist speaks of repentance as a radical turning from sin that inevitably became manifest in the fruit of righteousness (Mat 3:8)".

Fill in the Blanks: page 54

Repentance is a **response** to God's gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine **sorrow** for one's sin, a turning away from one's sin toward **Christ**, and a life that reflects lasting **change** and transformation. It is the human counterpart to God's work of regeneration; in other words, the human side of our conversation.

Read 2nd paragraph

Class Question:

Why is confession of sin a vital step on the path to changed behavior?

Or, what prevents us from confessing our sin to someone else?

Possible Answers:

- * Without confession of sin we will keep and try to hide the sin that plagues us.
- * To forgo confession is to be trapped in pride, which gives strength to our sin.
- * Confession brings others in the loop for encouragement and accountability.
- * Confession brings us humbly to the Holy Spirit for help.

2. When John the Baptist said, **'for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'**,
- a. What did he mean by it?
 - b. How would this statement effect the Jewish listeners?
 - c. **Without correctly understanding this phrase and the background of its contents, you can not properly understand this passage without it.**
 - d. Turn to Daniel 2. This passage details the prophetic dream or vision given to Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon by God.
 - i. V.28 Daniel points out that there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries and he has revealed a mystery to him.
 - ii. God has made known to the King 'what will be in the latter days'. V.28
 - iii. Daniel answers the question why the dream and its interpretation was made known to him.
 1. V.30 'in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king,'
 2. 'you may know the thoughts of your mind'.
 - iv. Daniel 3:31-43 – Daniel reveals the dream of the great image and its interpretation – compares it to 5 Kingdoms or Empires that would rule over Israel.

Description: Great Image	Kingdom Empires
Head of fine Gold	Babylon
Chest and arms of Silver	Medo-Persian
Torso & thigh of bronze	Greece
Legs of Iron	Roman
Feet of iron & clay	10 Kingdom Confederacy that rules with antichrist in end times

- e. Daniel reveals 4 promises God makes to the Jews in Daniel 2:44.
 - i. 'the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed'.
 1. Finally the Jews would be on their own and not oppressed.

- ii. 'nor shall the kingdom be left to another people',
 - 1. The Jews will rule themselves
 - iii. 'It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end,'
 - 1. References to God ruling either in the millennial reign or the end of times.
 - iv. 'it shall stand forever'.
 - 1. There will be no end to this kingdom that will be established by the Lord.
 - f. Who were the Jews expecting to deliver this message in the Day of the Lord?
 - i. Elijah – Malachi 4:5 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.' But it was John the Baptist.
 - ii. Eliljah & John the Baptist even dressed alike. 2 Kings 1:8 & Matthew 3:4
- 3. John the Baptists actions in the desert attracted people in the city. (3:5,6)
 - a. His sole emphasis was to get the people to repent and confess their sins.
 - b. Jerusalem
 - c. All Judea
 - d. All the region around Jordan
 - e. They came to repent, confess and be baptized by John.
 - f. A true revival had broke out – and they didn't even use social media to advertise it!
 - g. Lives were being changed for the glory of the Lord!
 - h. But the ruling spiritual establishment didn't like it and were beginning to lose their influence and grip on the people.
 - i. It was a true transregional spiritual movement that changed lives.

Point 2: The Son's herald calls for the fruit of repentance

Read – Matthew 3:7-12

- 1. The ruling spiritual establishment was rocked!
 - a. For generations, the ruling spiritual establishment (Pharisees & Sadducees) had built a system of spiritual dependence (religious laws, rules and customs) to train the people to come to them. This system was built on performing functions and actions in a certain way, at a certain time, through a certain method that they established.
 - b. Now as John's message had gained followers, more and more individuals chose to turn to John's message rather than return to the spiritual enslavement they had known for generations. John's message was built on repentance, confession and a change of heart.

- c. Let's not for the Pharisees & Sadducees were not friends.

Opposing Beliefs Unite Against Christ	
Pharisees	Sadducees
6,000 members	< 6,000 members
Pharisee name means, 'separated ones'	
Ritualists	Rationalists - rejected human tradition
Separatists	Compromisers & Political opportunists
Elevated human tradition above the authority of scripture (Mt. 15:3-9)	Denied the supernatural including the resurrection of the dead (Mt. 22:23)
	Denied the existence of angels (Acts 23:8)
	Only accepted the Pentateuch (Gen.-Deut.) as authoritative
Tended to be from middle class, non-Levitical tribe	Tended to be wealthy and aristocratic from tribe of Levi

Class Question:

How do most people react post enslavement to anything?

Possible Answers:

A former drunk or drug addict will tell you the date they last had a drink or how many days they've been sober.

People are usually happy with their new path in life and are fearful of returning to their old ways knowing it's a weakness for them.

2. The ruling spiritual establishment must act!
 - a. They had to go down and straighten out this mess that John the Baptist was creating. They needed things to go back to normal – the people being dependent on them and their system!
 - b.

Read 1st paragraph

Class Question:

What are some examples of “fruit in keeping with repentance”?

Possible Answers:

Good works for God's glory, not our own.

Faithfully taking opportunities to share the gospel.

Humble worship.

Efforts toward restitution for sins.

Read 2nd paragraph

Fill in the Blanks:

Baptism: Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of **obedience** symbolizing the believer's **faith** in a crucified, buried, and risen **Savior**, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

Point 3: The Son's herald baptizes Jesus.

Read – Matthew 3:13-17

Read 1st paragraph

Class Question:

What are some ways one's identity as a believer in Jesus should impact thoughts, actions, and life choices?

- Believers should try to take every thought captive so they don't dwell on unholy things and feed temptation and sin.
- Believers should act in such a way that Jesus gets the glory as our Savior and Lord.
- Believers should strive to follow God's wisdom and will for their lives, knowing that the road may be long and rough but it will be good and best.

Read 2nd paragraph

Our Mission:

Because we have died with Christ and have been raised to new life through Him, we call on others to repent of their sin, trust in Christ, and be baptized.

- How will we respond to the call to repent and the call to join God's family by faith in Christ?
- What are some ways we can encourage one another to live out the identity gifted to us in Christ by faith?
- How will we use the call to repentance, faith, and baptism to share the gospel with others?