



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Baptism!

Matthew 3:1-17

Message #4 of 80 – S1034

Sermon given on February 5, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Baptism!

Matthew 3:1-17

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 3**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The King and His Kingdom**
- One of the things every believer must decide for themselves at some point in their faith-walk is how real is God and His Word going to be in their life.
- It is one thing to say, ‘Jesus loves me!’
- Or to say, ‘The Bible is God’s Word – it is true!’
- Or to confess, ‘Jesus died for my sins!’
- At some point, we must decide that those are more than Christian slogans, they are more than words we say to comfort ourselves.
- At some point they must be what we truly believe to be true.
- And not only do we believe it, we live those beliefs out.
- How real is God? How real is He in your life? How true is His Word?
- These are not just esoteric questions to mull over as you watch the sunset or sip on a cup of tea in the morning.
- The answers to these questions will determine the path of your life and might change your eternity or the eternity of those around you.
- Some of you might have been hoping for something light and easy this morning.
- When you teach straight through a book of the Bible, you don’t get to pick the topics.
- Today’s topic is often misunderstood, and sadly, undertaught in many churches.
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make us willing to listen - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Baptism!**
- Last time we looked at the visit of the mysterious wise men from the East.

- Joseph is warned in a dream that Herod wants to kill Jesus and so he takes his family down to Egypt.
- After Herod dies, the Lord tells Joseph to bring his family out of Egypt and they end up in Nazareth.
- More than 25 years passes between chapters 2 and 3
- **Matthew 3:1-2**
- John is the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- Elizabeth is related to Mary, Jesus' mother.
- Jesus and John are cousins.
- John was born about six months before Jesus.
- He had a simple but strong message – Repent!
- Repentance is something everyone needs but few people like to talk about.
- Some churches even avoid it all together because it makes people uncomfortable.
- It should make us uncomfortable, but it is a good discomfort!
- **Repent: to have a change of self (heart and mind) that abandons former dispositions and results in a new self, new behavior, and regret over former behavior and dispositions.**
- To repent, someone must first understand and agree that they need to change.
- It carries the idea of turning away from one thing and toward something else.
- For people who are sensitive to God that means turning away from self and sin and toward God and His grace.
- We might be tempted to think this is a message for lost people.
- Most of the people John was preaching to were Jews, people who believed in God.
- Repentance is not just for people who are far from God, but also for people who should be closer to God.
- In five of the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, they were called to repent.
- When we understand better what repentance is and what it is for, we will be less uncomfortable with it.
- I have always been a mediocre golfer.

- When I play, I almost always play with someone better than I am, sometimes much better.
- When one of those ‘much better’ players suggest how I can improve, I have two choices – change and get better or stay as the mediocre player I am.
- I must repent of my old, wrong way, and change the way I think, feel, and act according to the new, right way.
- In golf, my goal is to hit the ball farther and with greater accuracy – to finish the game with the lowest score possible.
- As a Christian, my goal is to be like Christ in every area of my life.
- That means I need to find the areas where I am not like Him and repent and change.
- The benefit to me is a greater experience with God’s grace.
- Yes, the lost need the message of repentance, but the church might need it more because if the church is not repenting and growing to be more like Christ, the lost may never hear the message that will save them.
- Matthew says the reason for his message is that the kingdom of God is at hand.
- By that he means it is coming soon – in fact, it was there – in Jesus!
- John fulfilled the prophecy spoken of him 700 years earlier.
- **Matthew 3:3**
- That is a quote from Isaiah 40:3
- John was a bit of an odd duck.
- **Matthew 3:4**
- There is a lot of similarity in appearance and message between John the Baptist and Elisha the Old Testament prophet.
- There was a common belief that Elisha would come prior to the arrival of the Messiah.
- Jesus confirmed that belief **Mark 9:11-13**.
And they asked Him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” 12 Then He answered and told them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13 But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.”

- And then He pointed to John the Baptist as the fulfillment of that belief **Matthew 11:13-14**.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

- John's simple but strong message was reaching people.
- **Matthew 3:5-6**
- The Jordan River is not a beautiful stream of crystal-clear water.
- It is a muddy river. It is amazing that people came to the wilderness, to a muddy river, to man dressed in camel hair to be told they needed to repent, and they did it.
- When God's Spirit is working, you don't need big buildings, popular music, or charismatic speakers – just people who need God.
- Confession is a necessary component of repentance.
- True confession is specific and personal.
- When we confess, God forgives **1 John 1:9**.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- As successful as John's ministry was, he could tell some were not sincere.
- **Matthew 3:7-12**
- Whatever reason the Pharisees and Sadducees were there it wasn't to repent and get right with God.
- They presumed that Abraham's favor with God carried over to them regardless of how they lived or what they believed.
- Christians can make a similar mistake.
- By presuming that having once confessed, they no longer need to concern themselves with sin or holiness, they presume upon the sacrifice of Christ.
- 'bear fruits worthy of repentance' - Instead of acting religious, do those things someone who had sincerely repented would do.
- If we have truly repented and the Holy Spirit is dwelling within us, good spiritual fruit should be present in our lives **Galatians 5:22-23a**.
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.
- John was having radical success in his ministry, but he knew someone 'mightier' than him was coming.

- When He comes He will begin to separate His people from those who are not.
 - And the consequence of not repenting and being one of His people is ‘unquenchable fire’ = hell – eternal separation from God.
 - And then something interesting happens.
 - **Matthew 3:13-15**
 - Jesus shows up to be baptized, and John says, ‘No way! I need to be baptized by You!’
 - As holy as John was, he knew Jesus was infinitely holier.
 - Everyone there was coming for a baptism of repentance.
 - Jesus didn’t need to repent – He had never sinned!
 - Jesus was there for a baptism of righteousness.
 - Everyone who came to John before Jesus was coming to be cleansed of their sin and to be made right with God.
 - Jesus came without sin and was always right with God.
 - His baptism was not to cleanse Him of His sin but to prepare Him to take on our sins.
 - Then something radical happens.
 - **Matthew 3:16-17**
 - This one of several times God speaks audibly from heaven.
 - It validates that what Jesus did, being baptized, was well-pleasing.
 - Everything Jesus did was well-pleasing to God the Father.
 - As much as you might not like to hear this, you can’t say that.
 - But, if you are here or watching online, you, at some level, what to be well-pleasing to God.
 - As our faith grows, so does our desire to please God.
 - We do that because that is the right thing to do, but there is also something in it for us **Hebrews 11:6**
- But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**
- The reward is more of God and His grace in all areas of our life, marriage, family, work, church, the world.
 - To get more of God and His grace we have to turn away from our selfish desires and sin and turn toward God and His will – we call that repenting.

- One of the keys to becoming more like Christ is to love repentance.
- It still makes me uncomfortable, but I know if I yield myself to what God wants to do, something good will come out of it.
- When I swing the golf club and the ball goes somewhere other than where I wanted it to go, I know something is not right – something needs to change.
- That’s what repentance is – knowing that your life is not going where God wants it to go and confessing that you need to change.
- The message of repentance is for everyone because no one is as holy as Christ.
- Accept that and learn to love repentance and your life will begin to change for the better.
- Jesus came and died so that we could repent and be forgiven of our sins and experience more of God’s grace.
- Love Jesus by turning away from self and sin and toward God and His grace – Repent!
- **Pray**