

Today we continue our series on the life and teachings of Jesus, last week we heard an outstanding message on Jesus childhood and youth. For me this was a standout message that we have heard as a church and I really want to encourage you to listen to it if you were away last week, you can download the mp3 and notes from our website. So that was last week, today we move on to the next part of Jesus life, his baptism. What did Jesus do between the age of 12 and 30? We don't know. Most likely is that Jesus worked with his father Joseph until he died than took over running the carpentry business. But as the bible is silent it is probably not that vital. Jesus baptism is hugely important for us as his followers and particularly for those who do not yet follow him.

This morning we are going to look at four aspects surrounding Jesus baptism, and how we can respond to each one.

1. John's ministry.
2. Johns Baptism.
3. Why Jesus was Baptised.
4. Jesus Anointing.

Let Pray and get to work.

Matthew 3

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

¹In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea ²and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." ³This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 40:3-5 NIV

³ A voice of one calling:

"In the desert prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken

⁴John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The axe is already

at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented. ¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

1. John's ministry.

We can see that John was to be a voice in the desert preparing the way for the LORD.

Isaiah 40 ³ A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken

John was the one prophesied in Isaiah who would make straight a highway for the Lord. To do this every valley shall be raised up, and every mountain and hill flattened so that the ground can be level and straight.

John spoke preparing people for the coming messiah. *But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry.* He caused valleys to be raised by speaking against people negative attitudes "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. He caused mountains and hills to be flattened by calling people to overcome the obstacles that they faced. Luke 3 ¹⁰"What should we do then?" the crowd asked. ¹¹John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same." ¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" ¹³"Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. ¹⁴Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

He spoke against sin, as it is the crooked attitudes that cause people to sin and mean the path is not straight. ⁶Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

All the things John did and taught only prepared the way for one greater than he was. He prepared people by getting them to a place where they recognised the sin in their own life, they realised they had to remove the negative attitudes in their lives and flatten the obstacles that were in the way. He brought them to a place of repentance from sin. But John himself couldn't do the forgiving.... More on that later.

So how do we respond to this?

Well we are to be like John with those around us, we are to help them realise that they have fallen short of God's standards and are sinners, we are to help them to remove negative attitudes towards God, to remove any obstacles that they might have like intellect etc. and finally to help them come to a place where they can repent of their rebellion against God.

We can do that, and it is our responsibility to do that!

2. John's Baptism.

We know that John baptised in water, in the river Jordan near Bethany. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance from sin. "I baptize you with water for repentance" As we have just seen he brought his followers to a place of repentance and the baptism was the outworking of where they had come to. John was calling his followers to live a righteous life.

Water Baptism is the way that we show that we want to get rid of our sins and that Jesus has cleansed us or washed us from this.

[Acts 22:16](#)

[And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'](#)

Baptism is the way we bury our old life.

[Romans 6 1-4](#) says:

[1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.](#)

By being baptised we are spiritually burying our old way of life, it is our spiritual funeral for our old life without God. But the amazing thing is we don't stay under the water buried, we are brought up out and this signifies being raised from the dead to live a new life!

So how do respond to this?

Well friends we are to call people to repent and be baptised. As we have helped them realise that they need to repent of their sin and pursue righteousness, we must help them make the next step in their walk with God to get baptised in water. It would be a bit like Zachary taking his first step and the next stage I encourage him is to run a marathon. We do things in a particular order. Once people believe in Jesus, they need to be baptised!!

What John said wasn't always popular, what we have to say won't be popular, but that doesn't mean we don't say it!

3. Why Jesus was baptised?

Now let's look at Jesus actual baptism. We have seen that water baptism was primarily for the cleansing of sins, now the bible tells us that Jesus was without sin, so why did he need to be baptised.

Well Baptism shows commitment to following God.

For Jesus baptism was a commitment to do everything his father had called him to do in his life, to carry out God's purposes for him. God has got a purpose for each of our lives, and we commit ourselves to letting God make that happen when we are baptised. For Jesus it was that he would die on a cross, be buried and that God would raise him from the dead three days later.

So when we get baptised we commit ourselves to following Jesus and doing all he has commanded us to do.

I found this amazing quote from the famous preacher Charles Spurgeon in response to common discussion on this subject that to those who question baptism being essential. This will make our response very clear!!

“What do you mean by ‘nonessential’? ‘I mean that I can be saved without being baptized.’ Will you dare to say that wicked sentence over again? ‘I mean that I can be saved without being baptized.’ You mean creature! So you will do nothing that Christ commands, if you can be saved without doing it? You are hardly worth saving at all! A man who always wants to be paid for what he does, whose one idea of religion is that he will do what is essential to his own salvation, only cares to save his own skin, and Christ may go where he likes. Clearly, you are no servant of his; you need to be saved from such a disreputable, miserable state of mind; and may the Lord save you! Oftentimes, I do believe that this little matter of believers’ baptism is the test of the sincerity of our profession of love to him.”

As well as Jesus getting Baptised to commit himself to his fathers plan, he was also baptised so that he could be anointed for what he was going to do.

4. Jesus Anointing.

The account finishes with Jesus anointing, as he comes out of the water the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove and God the father speaks: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

We see the trinity in action again. Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit. The power that would enable him to complete the life he was called to live. The same power that would raise him from the dead some 3 years later.

This is the Baptism that John says that Jesus would bring. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is not something that happens when you become a follower of Jesus, it is a separate Baptism to water.

Ideally we have revelation of our sinfulness, we repent of our sins, we accept that Jesus died for us to pay the price for our sins, we get baptised in water to commit our lives to Jesus, to show the washing away of our sins and to start our new life in Christ. We are then baptised in the Holy Spirit. I believe this should be the normal way we start our lives following Jesus.

We need the power of the Holy Spirit to live lives worthy of Christ and to enable us to live holy lives.

Maybe: Jesus Anointing Order of Melchizedek?? Only High Priest could forgive sin. Jesus 30 cleansed water anointed with spirit.

We are baptised into Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus made righteousness possible for everyone else.

"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness."

So, from Jesus baptism there is a few ways in which we can respond.

1. Prepare the way to Jesus for those who don't know him
2. Call people to repent and be baptised
3. We are to commit ourselves for following Jesus and his plan for our lives
4. We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and go on being filled with the HS