

013 Trees Without Fruit

by David Servant

David Servant's sermon emphasizes the urgent call to repentance and the necessity of bearing fruit as evidence of genuine faith.

Duration: 7:41

Scripture: Matthew 3:8

Topics: "Repentance And Judgment", "Holy Spirit Baptism"

Description

This sermon delves into the impactful ministry of John the Baptist, emphasizing his urgent message of repentance and the impending judgment for those who do not bear good fruit. It highlights the importance of genuine repentance and the correlation between faith, deeds, and salvation, as well as the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. The sermon draws attention to the often overlooked aspects of the gospel that focus on repentance, judgment, and the necessity of producing fruit in alignment with one's faith.

Transcript

Well, thank you so much for joining me as we continue once again our chronological study with the entire New Testament, and we're looking right now, of course, at the life of Christ. We're in Matthew chapter three. If you've got your Bible, could you open it to Matthew chapter three? You can read right along with me.

We're looking at the amazing ministry, the exemplary ministry, I would add, of John the Baptist. He was a person whom Jesus highly esteemed, one time saying, among those born of women, as far as I know, most people are born of women, among those born of women, there's no one greater than John the Baptist. So when you John the Baptist, you're criticizing somebody whom Jesus esteemed very highly.

The reason I say that is because the message of John the Baptist, if John the Baptist appeared on the scene today, I'm afraid that many preachers would immediately label him and castigate him as a gloom and doom or fire and brimstone. Oh, God forbid, a fire and brimstone preacher because he loves the people he's preaching to so much that he's trying to bring to them the reality of the truth, that if they don't repent, if they're not ready when the kingdom of heaven comes, they're going to be cast into hell. That becomes very clear in his message.

And as I mentioned previously, a lot of these things, if not all of these crucial elements of the message of John the Baptist have just simply been removed from the modern gospel. They're not spoken of anymore.

Why? Because sure, they're not popular.

Well, Jesus told us what to do when they don't receive us. Okay. So we're starting today now in verse number 10 of Matthew chapter three, and they were breaking into the middle of one of John's sermons, as it were.

And again, Matthew just has so many verses, a very limited amount of time. This guy preached for days and days and days and weeks and weeks and weeks probably. So he uses a wonderful metaphor here in Matthew three, verse number 10.

He says, the ax is already laid at the root of the tree. Okay. Stop right there.

What is he trying to convey? The ax is already laid at the root of the tree. Well, obviously the visual picture that is being created is that there's an ax by a tree and it's been laid there. That is, there are people getting ready to cut down the tree.

They've brought what it takes, and it's just a very short time until they start cutting that tree down. So there's an urgency. And also there's an implication there of judgment to come, right? Ax going to cut down a tree.

The tree is going to fall. The ax is already laid at the root of the Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you've got many trees here that represent every single person.

And what is the guy with the ax looking for? He's looking for trees without fruit. And when he sees them, he's going to cut them down. That's why John had said in a previous verse, when he was speaking to the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were just going along with the crowds coming out there to watch or to be baptized or whatever they were doing without any sincerity, he said, bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance.

God is looking for fruit. That's why scripture makes it so plain that when we stand before Jesus, when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, we're going to be judged according to our deeds. A lot of folks think, well, you know, if we prayed that prayer, the sinner's prayer, that's sufficient because it's all by grace.

Certainly it's not by works, is it? Well, it's not by works. Your works can't save you. Are you kidding me? You're a rotten, filthy sinner before you repent.

And so it's too late for your works to save you if your works are going to save you. Only grace can save you. And grace is received by faith.

And faith, however, always results in deeds of obedience. And so we can judge the validity of your faith by your actions. James said, show me your faith without your works, which of course is impossible.

You can't show anyone your faith without works. And he said that I'll show you my faith by my works. So God's going to look at works to determine who has faith and that determines who's saved.

And so it couldn't be clear, could it? And so again, this is so foundational. We said this repeatedly, so foundational to the gospel. We just wonder, whatever happened to this? Why aren't we hearing this? Why isn't every preacher on TV, every evangelist, every pastor who's trying to win souls following the example of John the Baptist that's recorded for us in the Bible? And Jesus had the exact same message, by the

way, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Now, keep reading verse number 11. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance. It's like, I'm going to get that word repentance in there any way I can.

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I. I'm not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. So I'm a baptizer who foreshadows a much greater baptizer.

I'm baptizing you in water. He's going to baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, John didn't say with the Holy Spirit or fire.

He did say with the Holy Spirit and fire. And so there is some debate as to specifically what he meant. The most logical, sensible way to interpret scripture or interpret anything for that matter, any written or spoken communication is to always look at the contents.

If you just pull one sentence out of anybody's conversation, you might misunderstand them. You have a better chance of understanding if you listen to everything they said and interpret that one sentence in light of everything they said before and after. In the very next verse, John mentions fire again.

He's mentioned fire right before. In verse number 10, the trees that don't bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Then he talks about this baptizing in the Holy Spirit and fire.

And then in verse number 12, he talks about fire again. And it's clearly in both verses 12 and 10, the fire is the fire of hell. And so it's logical to conclude that the fire in verse number 11 is the fire of hell.

All right, we'll talk about this more. We'll see you next time.

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