



June 29

Passage: Matthew 3

We have been working through a series called ELEVATE. In the series we take an overlook of books of the Bible. In the devos for the summer we are diving deeper hitting pieces of the story!

We start the Gospel of Matthew today! This gospel account was written by... you guessed it, Matthew! It is his eyewitness account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist, or JTB as we'll call him, was Jesus's cousin. He is regarded as the last of the prophets, kind of like what we would find in the Old Testament. We find him preaching in the wilderness and then Jesus appears on the scene and is baptized.

So, as we begin, pray. Pray the Lord would grow you through the Gospel of Matthew this week.

READ & DIG. Read Matthew 3 (underline anything that sticks out to you)

In this chapter, the story of Matthew shifts from the birth and early life of Jesus to his public ministry. However, the setting is probably not what you would expect. We find JTB preaching in the wilderness of Judea. He is preaching what repentance and conversion looks like.

FRUIT

Take a look at the example he gives in Verses 7-10. He says that if the tree, or the individual, does not bear fruit, then they are "cut down and thrown into the fire." What in the world?! This sounds like crazy talk. Pay attention to who has come to watch/listen in this instance, it was the religious leaders of the day. For the religious leaders to be present and preach repentance and the need to see fruit in their lives was radical and risky for JTB. That only makes the message even more clear. Fruit always follows repentance and conversion. Never get that out of order. In your own life, you don't clean yourself up and come to God. No, instead, God in his unending grace has come to you and me through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His substitution in our place beckons our repentance and belief in him. I bet you can guess what comes next.... fruit. Fruit will follow repentance and conversion. Are you bearing fruit? If so, what kind of fruit are you bearing? (I like Papayas!)

BAPTISM

Next, we see Jesus coming to John to be baptized. This feels really odd! Only those who needed to repent and place their faith in the Lord, need to be baptized. Jesus was sinless. He had no need to be baptized. Now, let's address something really quick. Baptism is not what saves you. Faith in Christ alone does that. Baptism is an outward sign of what Christ has done in your life. It is a sign that you identify with the kingdom of God. He has redeemed you and you are one of his. John realized this. In verse 14, John realized he needed to be baptized by Jesus. Jesus's baptism put on full display the need for everyone else to submit to baptism and identifying with God's kingdom.

Apply & GO

- Examine your life and see if your life bears fruit. Take the words of John seriously. Fruit will always follow true faith in Jesus Christ.
- Baptism is important. It is an outward sign that you are a part of God's kingdom. If you are a believer and you haven't been baptized, talk with Chris or Andrew. It's an important part of showing the watching world that you are the Lords.