

Jesus the Baptist (Part 1)

Sermon Series: Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 3:7-18

→ “I baptize you with water, but He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (v. 16).



Big Idea

God’s judgment is coming, and good fruit is necessary to make it through. But this fruit is not produced in our own strength but rather in and through Christ and His Spirit.

(1) The Coming Wrath (v. 7)

The issue here is not that John doesn’t want these people to repent and be forgiven of their sin. The issue is that they are still snakes and yet they are coming to be baptized. They’re thinking that the religious act alone will somehow cover them. “Let’s run some water over our scales and we’ll be good.”

It’s as if they were coming to the waters saying: “I don’t want wrath, but I don’t want righteousness either. I want salvation, but I still want to be a snake!” But this water is for those who are coming to God and saying, “I’m sick of being a snake. I want You, if you’ll forgive me. I want to be your child. Forget looking like my Father the Devil, I want to start looking like my Father in heaven.”

(2) The Necessary Fruit (vv. 8-9)

If you want to know whether a tree is good or bad look to it’s fruits. We can talk a lot about repenting and believing, but do the fruits hanging from the branches of my life look like the Devil? Or do they look like the Lord? That is the reliable guide to the state of one’s soul.

John closes his exhortation here with an ominous threat: “Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (v. 9). But there is mercy here! This warning is actually a sign not only of God’s holiness and severity, but of His patience and kindness. John is not the one swinging the axe but the one warning about it. God doesn’t want to swing it. That’s the point!

The burning question then is: “Okay, if wrath is coming, and fruit is necessary, ‘What then shall we do?’” (v. 10). Certainly John is calling us to bear good fruits, but He is not calling us to such things through the law or through our own strength. He calls us to such things through the Person and work of the Messiah. By virtue of His death for our sin, resurrection for our justification, and ascension for our assurance, He was granted by His Father to pour out His Spirit upon His people. And in so doing He takes serpents and stones and makes of them sons and daughters for His Father! He changes the tree! Because He changes the heart. And we start loving others like we have been loved by Him.



Critical Action

Bearing fruit does not begin with the flexing of our muscles, it begins with the bending of our knees, coming to Jesus...not just on the day of our conversion, but every day thereafter! In this way, and in this way only, shall we bear fruits worthy of repentance.



Reflection Questions

- How does the reality of Hell affect you? Do you ignore, delete, or live in light of it? How should it influence our evangelism? How should it influence our obedience?
- Is your approach to the church consumeristic or covenantal? Explain. What do each of these terms mean to you?
- Describe the difference between bearing fruit by flexing the muscle and bearing fruit by bending the knee to Jesus. How does Jesus’ baptism of the Holy Spirit influence our fruitfulness? What has this looked like practically in your life?