

Jesus the Baptist (Part 2)

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 to be produced in our own strength but rather in and through Christ and His Spirit.

(3) The Right Question (vv. 10-14)

Each group is tempted to use what they’ve been given by God—possessions and professions—for the benefit of themselves alone. And John answers their question by saying: “Do you want to bear fruits in keeping with repentance? Use what you’ve been given by God for the benefit of others.” The common denominator that runs underneath all of John’s responses here is the second great commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39).

But is John’s answer too *legalistic*? No! John’s emphasis on fruit here is not divorced from Christ but shown to be the effect of a vital union with Him. But by leading with fruit here he *is* highlighting the utter necessity of it. Those who truly come to know the Savior will begin to look more and more like Him. And if we are not looking more and more like Him, it’s quite possible we never knew Him. Knowing His love for us is what enables us to move out in love for others.

But is John’s answer too *ordinary*? No! Love in the mundane is the miraculous! Love in the ordinary is the extraordinary!

(4) The Mighty Christ (vv. 15-18)

Regarding the Christ’s baptism of “the Holy Spirit and fire”, some see John as referring to two separate baptisms—one of blessing and one of destruction. Some will get from the Messiah the Holy Spirit, and others will get fire.

But there is another interpretation of this that has, it seems to me, much more going for it. This interpretation sees only one baptism in view here and the Holy Spirit and fire are just different ways of coming at the same positive reality. The fires of destruction that consume those in vv. 9 and 17 become here in v. 16, for those who receive the Christ, fires of blessing.

And this, of course, is because of His baptism in fire on the cross (Luke 12:49-50). The fire that should have consumed us, consumed Him, so that now, when the fire comes to us through Him, we are not consumed, we are refined, even made fruitful!



Critical Action

Do you want to bear fruit for God? Come and by faith embrace the Christ!



Reflection Questions

- Does John seem too harsh to you? Is he too much of a legalist here? Would you ever evangelize this way? Why or why not?
- How do you relate the need to produce fruit with the call to have faith in Jesus? Aren’t the two contradictory? How do they hold together not just theologically but practically for you?
- “Everyone wants to change the world, but no one wants to do the dishes” (Michael Horton). How does this play out in your own life? How and why is it hard for you to share your toys? Have you experienced the miracle of love in the mundane? Explain.
- How has the Holy Spirit been a refining fire in your life, helping you to bear more fruit?