

Matthew, Week 11

Chapter 3: The “John the Baptist Experience,” Part 6

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I. Discipleship Focus:

We’ve seen that the Law, conviction, and repentance have by no means been retired from God’s arsenal and methodology. The same goes for *the fear of God* and *restitution*.

Scripture readings: MATTHEW 3:5-13; LUKE 3:7-18

II. The Fear of God

A. *Before we are motivated solely by love for God, the fear of God—the “beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10)— helps to hedge in our way, like the Law.*

1. “By fear of the LORD men depart from evil” (Proverbs 16:6).
2. The fear of the LORD is “a fountain of life” (Proverbs 14:27), a place of “strong confidence and refuge (14:26).
3. As the Church of Acts was “going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase” (Acts 9:31).

B. *The “brood of vipers” and “the wrath to come”*

1. The people (in Luke)
2. The Pharisees and Sadducees (in Matthew)

C. *The “But I’m a Christian” Excuse*

D. *We must pass the “FRUIT TEST” ...or Else!*

1. Bring forth fruit...
2. The axe is ALREADY laid to the root of the trees.
3. EVERY tree that does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Lest we think Jesus somehow changed this judgment, consider what Jesus Himself says about fruit and fire in JOHN 15:1-11, especially verses 2a and 6.

III. Restitution: “What shall we do?!” (Luke 3:10ff)

- A. *Part and parcel of Old Covenant dealings with sin — property, Ex. 21:30–36; Lev. 24:18; for theft, Ex. 22:1–4; Prov. 6:30, 31; Ezek. 33:15; for dishonesty, Lev. 6:2–5; Num. 5:7; Job 20:18; example of Zacchaeus: Luke 19:8.*
- B. *Restitution as fruit.*
- C. *Restitution as an outworking of the “second great commandment.”*
- D. *Restitution as testimony.*
- E. *Restitution as psychological “therapy.”*
- F. *Restitution as reinforcement of the fear of God (or “I don’t want to go through that again!”).*
- G. *Note how in Luke’s account how much of restitution has to do with that “root of all evil” — money (and, more broadly, material possessions).*
 - 1. If you have more than the other fellow, give him what you have (Luke 3:11)
 - 2. (To publicans): Be fair, honest, and ungreedy (3:12).
 - 3. (To soldiers): Be content with your wages (3:14).

IV. Root Issues Behind, the Soul Looks Expectantly for the Christ

- A. *Baptism — immersion. In pre-NT Greek, baptize meant dip, plunge, sink or scuttle (a ship), overwhelm, flood, soak.*
- B. *Baptism in water for repentance—outwardly symbolic way of attesting to the inward change.*
- C. *Baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire.*
- D. *The Great Winnowing*
 - 1. The sledge.
 - 2. The winnowing fan.
 - 3. What is *CHAFF*?
- E. *“After me one cometh...”*