

SUNDAY STUDY | church on the drive

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-17



Socially distant, spiritually connected - During this time when we have to keep a safe distance from each other, we want to be socially distant, but spiritually connected. In order to do that, we as a body of believers are all studying the same thing today! You are invited to take out a journal and record your thoughts through this bible study and share them with members of your community group and/or family, whether via telephone or in person. (Our kids are studying this same portion of scripture, too!)

1. Prayer

- a. Thank God for today and all that you get to enjoy as part of it
- b. Pray for people you love
- c. Pray for people you have trouble loving
- d. Ask God's help during this COVID-19 pandemic - for you, for our city, for our world
- e. Pray for our leaders - government and church
- f. Ask God to help you minister to those around you in the best possible way

2. Watch this video online to get context for today's study: youtu.be/XIb_dClxsr0

- a. John the Baptist was Jesus's elder cousin by six months. The first time we hear about him in Luke's gospel he is born to older parents, harkening back to Abraham and Sarah in the Old Testament. Some scholars believe that John's parents died earlier in his life and that he eventually found his way to life among the Essenes, a separatist monastic community in the Judean wilderness.
- b. John was well known and highly regarded by the people. He was so highly regarded that even though he said inflammatory things about the powerful local king, Herod, he was not put in prison for a long time for fear that the people might riot.
- c. John became the first prophetic voice for the people of Israel in 400 years. This voice cut through the silence between God and God's people and set the stage for Jesus's ministry.

3. Read Matthew 3:1-6

- a. **How do you define repentance? How does a person repent?**
- b. John was calling people to truly see God and themselves. He wanted people to repent and understand exactly who God was and how far they were from God, even with all their meaningless rituals.
- c. **Why is confession of sin important?**

4. Read Matthew 3:7-12

- a. Repentance allows us to see God, sin, and ourselves rightly. When we really repent, there should be signs or examples of life change stemming from that repentance. This is the fruit that John is referring to.
 - i. **What are some examples of “fruit in keeping with repentance” (v 8)?**
- b. John lets it be known early on that he is *not* the Messiah, even if some want him to be. He also makes it clear that he is not leading an exclusive baptism club so someone can raise their social profile. He is baptizing and calling to repentance to point to the real Messiah when they come.
- c. John also makes it clear that neither our heritage nor the faithfulness of our parents and ancestors make us right with God. All that matters is repentance and heart open to God.
- d. **Why is baptism important? Why do we do it?**

5. **Read Matthew 3:13-17**

- a. Jesus ultimately would perform many miracles, cast out many demons, and deliver many incredible teaching moments during his ministry. Every one of those feats were founded on his identity as the Son of God. It is this identity that is celebrated at his baptism.
- b. Most people struggle with the concept of the Trinity from time to time. It can be difficult to understand how God might be three persons yet still be one. Through the years, some have tried to explain the members of the Trinity as “modes” of God’s interactions with us. However, Jesus’s baptism is a great example of how God truly is the Father, Son, and Spirit all at the same time.
- c. Here at Jesus’s baptism, we see an affirmation of his messianic identity. The first prophet in 400 years (who was also prophesied about), foretells of him as the coming messiah and admits his need for the messiah by asking to be baptized by Jesus. Then the Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove and the Father proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God audibly for all to hear.
- d. **If someone asked you why you thought Jesus was the Son of God, what would you tell them?**

6. **This week:** Ask God to help you remember your need for Jesus. Repent over the things that have pulled you away from God and begin sharing the good news with others.