

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Sunday, October 29, 2023



הקהילה מתקדמת
CHURCH

10:30am Sunday 13095 Publishers Drive, Fishers

Today's Message: **"Us" against "Them": Responding Biblically to Current World Issues**

Matthew 3, John 3, Selected Scriptures

Matthew A. Vander Wiele, Ed. D.

The culture of the day: Rejection of God and the Gospel of God... Again.

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20)

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18-19)

In those days, there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything. – G.K. Chesterton

Historic Christianity was not a blind faith that one could not "see" and only some experience but was real and tangible for all to "see" and "experience" if they chose to obey and believe.

In Corinth, when Paul was asked whether Jesus was raised from the dead, he gave a completely non-religious answer. In the 20th century sense, He said: "There are almost 500 living witnesses, go and ask them..." This is the faith that involves the whole man, including his reason – it does not ask for a belief into the void – as the 20th century mentality would understand the concept of religion. The Bible is a non-religious book – Francis Schaeffer "The God Who is There".

Intro: Perspective. The Mission of God cannot be thwarted; we are called to participate in missions. When the Mission and Gospel of Jesus is rejected and our work in missions is affected – it is not primarily personal to us nor is a primarily personal attack on us. To believe that the cultural events of this time first and foremost are an attack on the created is arrogance. It is not only arrogance, but ignorance, in that we have lost focus of the bigger picture and what is really at stake.

Questions to Consider Today: What is our place in all of this? How do we practically take part in these last days where NOW.re actively maintaining the unity of the Spirit, taking the proper stand for truth while we do so in love, while not forfeiting the life abundant NOW?

The fight is not primarily against us or even about our beliefs or theology, it is a direct attack against God Himself and His Word.

David sums this argument up best –

Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. (1 Samuel 17:8) – GOLIATH

For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"...Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. (1 Samuel 17:26, 45-46) - David

"US" Against "THEM" – The background and context of the Baptism of Jesus – Maybe not what you would expect....

Part 1: The Antagonist will be Judged by Christ not "US"

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."^[a] ³For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare^[b] the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" ⁴Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. (Matthew 3: 1-4)

Crash course in baptism – 3 types of baptism observed in Scripture (two physical/ one spiritual) The key is to understand baptism observed in Scripture is only ever practiced and experienced as a **result of repentance of sin.** Nowhere in Scripture do any of any of the baptisms EVER precede repentance for sin OR are required for one's salvation. The exception is the "spiritual baptism of the Holy Spirit" is indeed required for salvation – but is based on

one's repentance through faith. Second, baptism is always associated in Scripture with **Immersion**. The word *baptizo* means "to dip" not to sprinkle or pour.

1. John's baptism unto repentance – **PHYSICAL** –
2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit – **Spiritual** – Acts 2 – The giving of the Spirit for the first time – to indwell all believers. One confesses sin today and repents, and the Spirit of God indwells the person immediately. –
3. Believer's Baptism – Physical – This baptism represents believers' identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12)

⁷ **But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"** ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, **God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.** ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ **"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** ¹² **His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing plentiful floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."**(Matthew 3:1-12)

The Context of the baptism of Jesus is judgment for rejecting God and His Word. The issue in today's culture is not a rejection of ideals or theology. The problem is not how we handled COVID or how we better provide a more enjoyable church service for a generation that has no attention span. The church is not called to create unity here on earth. We are called to MAINTAIN the unity that is already been created by the Spirit.

Perspective: The time and opportunity for repentance is becoming less and less – for both Jew and Gentile!

Consider Paul: *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,* ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

HOW:

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ *by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,* ¹⁶ *and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility* (Ephesians 2:14-16)

Part 2: The Protagonist Hero Wins in the End for "US"

*"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "**Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:13-17)

Why does Jesus come to John the Baptist to be baptized?

- Jesus tells us why he wanted to be baptized by John: "For us to fulfill all righteousness."(vs. 15)

How does Jesus' baptism by John fulfill all righteousness?

1. Jesus associates with the very people to whom he will minister – Sinners!

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:13-14)

- A. Jesus' baptism is a symbol to fulfill all righteousness because he came to associate with men and to associate with men means to associate with sinners. He could not purchase righteousness for mankind if he did not associate with mankind's sin.¹

¹ Ibid. 78.

"Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh". (Romans 8:3)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

- B. Jesus' baptism was a symbol of his death and resurrection, and therefore prefigures Christian baptism. Jesus references personal baptism only twice and both times are in relation to his death.

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!" (Luke 12:50)

Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (Mark 10:38)

2. Jesus submits to and participates in the already existing local ministry and biblical message of God. JTB

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" (Matthew 3: 1-2)

"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)

Christ demonstrates obedience, humility and dedication to the Message of God! Ironically and mysteriously He IS God – yet still submits to the bigger picture of His Father's Will! At this point John is the main preacher and evangelist of God's message.

Part 3: The Best Man Knows His Skill Set and Reminds "US" of our Part in the Wedding!

Context and Background – John has achieved much popularity as he nears the end of his life. "Multitudes" came to hear John teach and baptize (Luke and Matthew) John has become popular with Herod – but ultimately dies by being beheaded at a party.

²² After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. ²³ John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was there, and people were coming and being baptized ²⁴ (for John had not yet been put in prison). ²⁵ Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. ²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." ²⁷ John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' ²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. **Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.** ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."^[1]

- What are the theological truths communicated by John that allow us to begin to put together a plan for how we participate in being a part of the "US" that is fitting to fulfill all righteousness?
1. The Sovereignty of God - John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven (John 3: 27) – Do you really believe that God is in control? Are you trying to STOP the inevitable in our culture? Seek justice primarily? OR seek the mind of God and continue to trust his plan?"
 2. Self – Awareness - We are not the "Christ" – We are not the ultimate solution. Vs. 28
 3. We are called to bring Him glory and represent Him the best we can – Vs. 29
 4. John was fixed on Christ - We are the "bride of Christ" – but in this context we also function as the "Best Man" at a wedding. Vs. 29
 5. Humility Trumps proving one wrong - There is a recognition that the "church" is the bride of Jesus. And Whoever has the bride is the Bridegroom. Vs. 29 – Don't get distracted by trying to always prove truth – Truth doesn't need proving -
 6. Personally Know Jesus - The best man is best friends with the groom! (you must know the Groom personally) vs 29.
 7. Get busy Serving Jesus - The groomsman comes before the Groom and does the work until the actual wedding.

² James Montgomery Boice – John 1-4, page 254-255

8. The Best man's job is to make the Groom look good, The Groom must increase and I must decrease, The Best man submits to the Groom vs. 30
9. Ultimately, the groomsman takes his place behind the Groom – Don't stand in front of the Groom!
10. The Best man's joy is complete when he hears the VOICE of the Groom. In other words, the joy of the best man is experienced when the Groom is being celebrated – Groom primary, Bride secondary.... This is about the Groom vs 29 The groomsman has the bigger picture of the Bride and Groom's future in mind.
11. It is fitting for "US" to fulfill all rightness – We participate in this fulfillment! Vs 30

Transition in John's Message – Moves from the wedding party to the FATHER of the Groom and the work of the Spirit.... All the Trinity participated in Jesus' baptism and in JTB's speech here! One of three instances in Scripture where multiple Persons of God are on the scene – and the ONLY instance where all three Persons of God are acknowledged as being present.

³¹ *He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.* ³² *He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.* ³³ *Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that **God is true.*** ³⁴ ***For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.*** ³⁵ *The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.* ³⁶ ***Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*** (John 3: 22-36)

The family of the GROOM knows the Groom the best!

12. The Trinity is ultimately running the show. This is God's stage... His story – His wedding – His bride...
13. Jesus is the ultimate witness to God – not us! God demonstrates that God is TRUE – *He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.* ³³ *Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that **God is true.*** ³ vs 32
14. A good witness must speak up, be willing to testify and be willing to speak up? But for what or rather for WHOM? Jesus possesses ACCURATE knowledge about God – Where do you get your knowledge from?
15. The Spirit is given to JESUS without measure.
16. The rejection of all of the above is judgment. Back to point 1!

William Barclay writes: "If we want information, we have to go to the person who possesses that information. If we want information about a family, we will only get it firsthand from a member of that family. If we want information about a town, we will only get it firsthand from someone who comes from that town. So, if we want information about God, we will get it only from the Son of God; and if we want information about heaven we will only get it from Him who comes from heaven... because Jesus alone knows God, he alone can give us the facts about God, and these facts are the Gospel."

How do we practically respond to the Issues of the World today? How can we be effective as a church?

1. Do you know Jesus? Do you know your place at the Wedding Ceremony? Yes, as the bride – but also as the best man – whose job is to make the Groom look good and bring him glory.
2. Are you participating in the ministry of your local church? If not why?
3. Are you willing to be a part of something that has already started (even if it is not going exactly how you want it to go)?
4. Do you continue the already established work of the Lord and his Kingdom or are you quick to jump to new ideas and philosophies and churches?
5. Are you willing to be boringly Bible? (attend a church gathering that focuses on the teaching of God's word)
6. Are you teaching your children to participate in the already existing ministries of YOUR local church? Or do you allow them to pick and choose where they go to church and serve?
7. Are you humble like Christ and no matter what your position of authority willing to submit and obey leaders in the church?
8. Would you consider yourself a "groomsman or bridesmaid" for Jesus and his bride – Or are you trying to steal the show?



ONWARD CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023

1. YOUTH GROUP TONIGHT 6-8PM—Dinner provided \$3 per student (\$2 for add'l. siblings)

2. NIGHT FOR ISRAEL—FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 @ 7PM—Celebrate Hanukkah with Dr. Moshe Loewenthal and his team from One Middle East Agency. This is also a Kabbalat Shabbat service in which we welcome in the Sabbath. Desserts provided.

3. MEN'S BIBLE STUDY FRIDAYS @ 7AM @ MCA—Study in the book of Romans. See Alex Abell for more info.

4. LADIES BIBLE STUDY (Two Options):

- **Wednesday Mornings @ 9:30am**—Each Wednesday morning at 9:30am at Kathy Stump's house (12928 Whitehaven Lane, Fishers, IN 46038). Studying the book of Ephesians. For more info email Kathy at kathystump77@gmail.com.
- **Thursday Evenings @ 7:00-8:30 pm**—Each Thursday evening at 7:00-8:30pm at Lynda North's house (9929 Brightwater Dr., Fishers, IN 46038). Studying the book of Ephesians. For more info email Lynda at LANorth7@gmail.com.

<u>ONWARD CHURCH GIVING</u>	<u>ONWARD PRAYER CARD ONLINE</u>	<u>ONE MIDDLE EAST AGENCY</u> Israel War Relief Effort
 Giving QR Code	 Prayer Card QR Code	 OMEA Donation QR Code

5. PAL ("PARENTS OF ADDICTED LOVED ONES") MEETING—This is for families of adult children dealing with substance addiction. Every Tuesday night, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Free weekly meetings. Dr. Nancy Smith, facilitator. For more information, contact nancy1108smith@gmail.com or 317-508-8149.

6. GIVE BIBLES IN HONOR OF OR IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE—The Gideons have provided a display on the counter in the foyer for you to give God's word in honor or in memory of a loved one.