

PM Matthew 3:1-17 The Transfiguration: what it meant for the disciples

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[0 : 0 0] chapter 3, and we'll read the whole of this chapter. Matthew chapter 3, reading from verse 1. In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 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 path straight. Now John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 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? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, We of Abraham as our father. For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

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. 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. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, and gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

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 open 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. May God bless to us this reading. Now we're going to read other passages in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16, and from verse 13 to verse 23, and then also in chapter 17. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16, from verse 13, a section entitled, Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ. Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist.

Others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood does not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

[3 : 5 1] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

Then we'll go on to chapter 17 and verse 1, and read eight verses here. Chapter 17 at verse 1. And after six days Jesus took with them Peter and James and John, his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them. And his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with them. And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And a voice from the cloud said, This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him. When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, Rise and have no fear. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. May God bless us. And we'll again join together in prayer. Our gracious God, we look around us and we see many problems in the life of our nation. And these things cause us real concern and distress.

And we commit them into your good hands. We think of the moral state of our nation and the laws that are in process of being enacted that undermine the truth of your word and distort the meaning of life itself and everything you have taught about it. And we ask, Lord, that you would be at work to undermine the plans of evil people and to grant that we may have freedom to speak the truth about moral matters without fear of fines or imprisonment. And we ask that we may continue to use, to enjoy and to use this freedom to speak freely about the gospel. We pray that wisdom might be given to those in authority over us in regard to the best way of solving these problems that they have in mind.

[7 : 31] And we pray that they may be guided to a right way of looking at things and to a reasonable way of looking at things. And that they may especially see this importance of family life and of building it up and promoting it so far as it is in their power to do so. We pray that whatever plans are afoot to bring in legislation in regard to moral matters, that you would be stimulating your people to speak out while they can do so and to bring their influence to bear if that is at all possible.

And although indeed we may not be heard, we pray that at least we may be stirred up to take our responsibility of speaking on these matters so far as we may have opportunity of doing so.

And we pray, Lord, for those who are suffering from economic problems because we recognise the difficulties in that area of national life as well. And we ask once again for wisdom for those who are over us. We pray for those who are in the midst of economic problems, those who are worried about the future, those who do not know what the future might hold for them in regard to financial matters.

And we ask that once again you would be at work to bring about wise procedures that might enable us to live in a measure of comfort and to enjoy the good gifts that you have made available to us.

We think of the situation of immigrants and of asylum seekers and refugees. And we recognise the problems that they have in getting into the country because they come, many of them, from areas where they cannot possibly find a legitimate way of doing so.

[9 : 29] And yet they are so desperate that they come to try and find some illegal way of doing so. And we ask, Lord, that there might be a sense of understanding for these people.

And although what to do indeed is a really difficult thing, we pray that nonetheless there might be a spirit of compassion and understanding so that those in authority and those administering the laws might understand their situation and have some degree of sympathy with it.

And we ask that there might be a spirit of compassion and care for those who are in desperate need and have no security in their own lands, no prospects of a good future at all, and who are seeking something better elsewhere.

And we pray that you would overthrow laws that are contrary to the spirits of common justice, of common sense, and that you would grant that justice may be done to the poor and needy seeking help from us.

And we pray for all agencies, evangelical agencies that work in this field, that they may be richly blessed in all that they seek to do to help those that are in this sort of difficulty.

[10 : 44] We pray for King Charles. And we remember the coronation yesterday and the place that was given to Scripture and to him making promises before you.

And we thank you that he promised to do everything looking to you for grace. We pray that these may not have been empty words, but that they may come back to him, especially in times of difficulty, and that he may experience the reality of them in due course in his own life, if he hasn't experienced it up till now.

We pray that he may understand what grace is, and that he may know you as a gracious God and learn to rest upon you. We pray for the reading of the word that there was yesterday and ask that all those that have heard might be blessed by it.

We think of people that don't go near a church building normally. We think of those of other faiths who have read the word or heard it at least. And we pray for them especially that something may stick in their minds.

And we ask that you would be at work to impress it upon their conscience until they take a genuine interest in the Scriptures. We pray for King Charles in his reign, that he may be given wisdom and tact and understanding and be able to be a role model for many and exercise a useful influence upon the nation as a whole.

[12 : 08] We pray for the trouble spots of the world and recognise the difficulties that exist in the Ukraine, in the Middle East, in North Africa, many countries indeed, where there have been natural disasters, where there is hostility between one community and another, and where there is open warfare.

And again we commit these matters that are beyond human solution into your care, believing that you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that you will do your will amongst us.

We pray that you would be at work to solve the difficulties that exist, to reconcile warring factions, to bring wisdom to the leaders of the world, that they may act wisely and sensitively and with compassion and understanding for the viewpoints of others as well.

And grant that there might increasingly be peace and stability, freedom to develop one's own life, and that there might be freedom especially for your own people to work and witness according to the teachings of the Scriptures.

Now Lord, we ask you to hear these, our prayers that we have offered on behalf of others, and we ask that you would continue with us as we further look to you in singing and then in studying the Word.

[13 : 25] We ask that you would speak to us and that we may be willing to listen. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Our next psalm is Psalm 32, verses 7 to 11, and that is on page 38.

Psalm 32 on page 38. At verse 7. Is it? 7. You are my hiding place, O Lord, my true security.

You keep me safe in troubled days. You circle me with joyful praise when you have set me free. Verses 7 to 11, Psalm 32, standing to sing if we're able.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[14 : 33] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Dieu, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.