

“Getting Muddy Water on You”

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17

Graphic: muddy water, baptism,

Key Verses: 3:15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.”

Theme: Getting the muddy water of Jesus’ baptism on you is dangerous if it’s an outward sign to the world and to Satan that you have been washed clean of your sin, are led by the Holy Spirit, and are willing to follow Christ in life and death. If your mud has dried, faded, or washed off, renew it today.

1) Introduction

- a) Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 3...
- b) Let me encourage you again to bring your Bibles to church with you each Sunday. Every week, we WILL open it...we WILL use it...we WILL read it...and we WILL lift it up as the authority in our lives... Besides, someone probably gave it to you as a gift (maybe this Christmas), or you paid good money for it, so why not use it as much as you can...
- c) Matthew Chapter 3... before we get to our text today about the baptism of Jesus, it’s important to set the stage a little...
- d) What led up to Jesus getting in the water...?
- e) Before we do that, let’s pray...
- f) Matthew Chapter 3, verse 1...
- g) **READ VERSES 1-12, with emphasis on verses 5-6, and verses 11-12...**

2) Scripture

a) Read Matthew 3:13

- i) Jordan River, right? Clean, fresh, peacefully-flowing stream in the middle of a lush green oasis in the desert, right?
- ii) Couldn’t be farther from the truth!
- iii) Here is a picture of the current-day Jordan River. A muddy, bacteria-infested, sinking, cesspool! The Israeli government has **OUTLAWED** people from entering the Jordan River...it’s not safe! It’s dangerous.
- iv) In fact...environmentalist Gidon Bromberg of the Friends of the Earth Middle East explains that, “If you drink the water, you’re likely to get

- diarrhea or stomach problems, and if you have a cut, you will probably get a rash. And that's if you're lucky. It could be a lot worse.”
- v) Sounds like just the place to take a family vacation!
 - vi) The Jordan River is filled with dangerous, muddy water. May have been a little less dangerous from a bacteria standpoint when Jesus went it, but it was still muddy.
 - vii) I brought a big bowl of clean water from the kitchen in here today...
 - viii) This is the type of water we would use today to baptize someone. Clean, room temperature...inviting and cleansing.
 - ix) (DUMP IN THE MUD) THIS is the water in which Jesus was most likely baptized. Muddy water with particles floating in it and fish parts and human waste. Not your typical picture of Jesus' baptism.
 - x) Jesus came from Galilee, where he was living, to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized.
 - xi) But John, seeing Jesus, tried to stop him...look at verse 14-15...

b) Read verses 14-15

- i) John had a sense in his spirit that it just didn't feel right to be baptizing Jesus.
- ii) It's not clear from the gospels whether John was convinced yet that Jesus was the Messiah - in fact, later on we read that John had to clarify who Jesus really was...
- iii) But the Holy Spirit was clearly saying to John – this Jesus has superiority...he is important...he is unlike anyone that has come before.
- iv) Look, from the earliest days of his life, John KNEW that Jesus was special...
- v) And so now here comes Jesus to be baptized by John...
- vi) And John tries to stop him.
- vii) And for good reason! Look back a verses 5-6... People were coming to John at the Jordan to be baptized, CONFESSING THEIR SIN.

- viii) The main purpose of baptism in the Jewish culture, the whole basis for baptism, is repentance and forgiveness of sins...
- ix) If we understand that Jesus is sinless, what purpose does his baptism have? If he's got nothing to repent of, then why come to the river...?
- x) John gets that...but Jesus has another path to follow.
- xi) Jesus is not coming to the Jordan to repent and be washed clean...he already is! Jesus is coming because it's God's plan for him to be **obedient**. And, that obedience takes the form of humbling himself under John's authority as this moment...
- xii) Jesus said, "Let it be so NOW; for it is proper for US in THIS way to fulfill all righteousness."
- xiii) It is proper for US – you and me, John, to do this. Matthew tells us that Jesus pulls John into this plan of obedience to God. And John consents to do this...
- xiv) The Holy Spirit, again, working in John's life to understand this plan that Jesus fulfills...
- xv) Curious phase here, "...fulfill all righteousness." Underline that in your Bible and in the margin write – "doing the revealed will of God."
- xvi) Fulfilling all righteousness is doing the revealed will of God in our lives.
- xvii) For John and Jesus, the revealed will of God was for John to baptize Jesus and for this to occur at this moment in history, for the purpose of beginning Jesus' public ministry.
- xviii) And when we think about our own lives...when we consider God's revealed will for our lives, are we as faithful as Jesus and John? Or are we hesitant to do what God is asking? Are we afraid of the consequences? Are we stalling in some way because we are too busy or too distracted?
- xix) Our examples are John and Jesus...not to baptism, specifically, but to obedience to the revealed will of God...
- xx) And that obedience comes with reward...look at verses 16-17...

c) Read verse 16-17

- i) The moment that John and Jesus chose to both be faithful together, and Jesus was baptized, UP OUT OF THE WATER JESUS CAME and God's love and grace and Spirit come down to Him.
- ii) God is pleased! God loves faithfulness and obedience!
- iii) This affirmation is for every one of us to hear...God is pleased with Jesus and John and the plan they have agreed to engage in today...
- iv) And Jesus, soaking wet, with muddy water, comes out of the river to begin a ministry of mercy, healing, teaching. But let's not EVER forget, that his ministry also included suffering and rejection, pain and dying...
- v) All of which was his obedient response to the remnant of the muddy water that was left on him, throughout his life, from his baptism in the Jordan that day.

3) Application

- i) I worked in the Hazardous Waste industry for ten years before I realized that God was calling me to the ministry. And I can tell you what dangerous stuff is out there that can hurt us. I've seen toxic waste in almost every state in America.
- ii) But I can also tell you this: the danger I felt when I was assessing the waste at 32 different Air Force bases around the world, is NOTHING compared to the fear that gripped me when I was deciding on becoming a pastor fulltime...
- iii) At the end of each day in the field as an engineer, I took time to remove all the stains and the filth that got on me during the day...
- iv) I would take off the TYVEC suit I was wearing, wash my clothes and all my equipment, take a shower, and clean every piece of my vehicle.
- v) The danger was gone, at least until I had to walk in the sludge again.
- vi) The muddy water of Jesus' baptism is not something we can ever fully wash away because (as we read in verse 11), Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Spirit and with fire! And the danger THAT type of mud presents is real...and will take us each outside our comfort zone.
- vii) We can try to remove it...we have!...each one of us at some point in our lives has tried to scrub the stain of our baptism off. We've denied

that we are Christians with our words and our actions. We've spent time putting a man-made robe of wealth and security over the muddy residue that was left behind when we were baptized. We ignore the Holy Spirit...we put wet blankets on our spiritual fire!

- viii) And it doesn't matter if you were baptized as an infant or youth or adult...when you go into the water, you come out with the same mud that Jesus had on him.
- ix) John said in Matthew 3: 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**"
- x) If you're a baptized Christian sitting here today, and you find yourself at a place where you aren't feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit, as Greg mentioned last week, or you aren't feeling any fire in your life for the will of God...the righteousness of God...then today is an opportunity to freshen up the muddy water...
- xi) Making that mud fresh means confessing your sin...
- xii) Making that mud fresh means being a visible representation of the righteousness of God...one who commits to giving up your life to follow Christ.
- xiii) Making that mud fresh today is dangerous because when you do, it is your commitment to serve God with a hopeful, servant's heart.
- xiv) We have a faithful and spiritual prayer team that will be inviting new people to join in weekly prayer for the church and its ministries.
- xv) We have an Evangelism and Outreach Team who is looking to add some charismatic people willing to reach out to our community.
- xvi) We have a Sunday School that is always looking for faithful and willing teachers to passionately teach the next generation of young people about Jesus.
- xvii) Which of these dangers is God calling you to face for Him?
- xviii) We have opportunities every day to serve God at work, in our families, and in our community, and when we miss those opportunities, we aren't allowing the Holy Spirit to carry us forward for the Kingdom.

xix) And even though there are more opportunities in here and out there than there are people in here, God has given us every spiritual gift we need to make a HUGE impact for the Kingdom of God...we have everything we need to bring people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ and equip us for service in every way!

xx) It just takes a little fresh mud, some passion fire, and the power of the Holy Spirit to continue to work in each of us and in the church...

4) Conclusion

- a) As we gather at this table for communion this morning, this is the place to come and make some fresh mud. This is the place we can come, led by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be filled with joy and hope about the danger ahead.
- b) Christ invites every one of us to His table... the only requirements are that you love Christ, repent of your sin, and seek to live in peace with one another.
- c) There's no room for sin or anxiety or fear in this journey, because Jesus has already paid the price for you to be free for servanthood and bold witness.
- d) But sometimes we forget that...sometimes we let our mud get dry and fade and even wash off us...and we get discouraged and lose our way...
- e) After you take communion, I've got some strips of white cloth... I would invite you to take a clean, white strip that represents your life.
- f) Christ has made you clean and white because he went to the cross and died for you.
- g) I invite you...I dare you, maybe...to take that piece of cloth that represents your life and dip it in the muddy water...
- h) As you take this home, let it awaken you to the presence of Christ in your life and the will of God that you are being called to fulfill. Let it encourage you to get involved in what God is doing in a deeper and more meaningful way.
- i) Let's pray...