

GETTING READY TO MEET JESUS

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction: Back to basics

1. The One Who has come

Luke 3:1-2 – In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah...

Luke 3:4 – As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord...

Isaiah 40:3 – “... the way of the LORD.” (LORD = Yaweh, the personal name of the promise-making God of Israel)

“There is hardly a name in (vss. 1-2) ... not infamous for wickedness (they are)... men of whom we know little or nothing but evil. The earth seemed given into the hands of the wicked.”

– Bishop J.C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels

2. The place where anyone can meet Him

Luke 3:2 – ...the word of God came to John ...in the wilderness (=desert). (See Lev. 16:22, Ex. 3, Ex. 15-, Gen. 32:22ff, 1 Kings 19:3ff; Luke 4.)

Jeremiah 2:13 (NIV84) – “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

3. What’s required to know Him

Luke 3:3 – (John) went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 3:7-8 – (John) said ... “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin 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. (See Matt. 3:7.)

Luke 3:8 (NLT) – Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God. Don’t just say, ‘We’re safe – we’re the descendants of Abraham.’ That proves nothing. God can change these stones here into children of Abraham.

Luke 3:16 – (John) “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Luke 3:4-6 – (John’s message) “‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Purposeful reflecting...

- Ask the Lord to speak, then spend five minutes in silence. Don’t worry that your mind wanders, that’s what minds do! When you catch yourself mind-wandering, gently re-direct your attention to the presence of God, who promised never to leave or forsake us. Time in silence is about learning to pay attention to God. It’s a skill that has to be learned.

Experience

- Paying close attention to your emotions, reflect on your reaction to the message. Did you notice anything new, surprising or challenging? Did any of your reactions reinforce what you’ve sensed, read or heard elsewhere recently? Be specific.

- How do your reactions affect your picture or experience of God? In what way or ways do they affect what you expect from Him?

Transform

- Read Matthew 7:21-27. How does what Jesus says echo John’s message in Luke 3:1-8? Does the sermon (or the Matthew passage) have any implications for the way you approach your spiritual life and ministry? If so, what are the implications?

- What go-to broken cistern (leaky well) are you most tempted to dig for yourself? Is there anything related to this well that God would have you to take on or give up? Ask for God’s help with whatever that may be. (Hint: It’s wise to focus on one life-change at a time.)

Share

- Having an accountability partner helps whenever God invites us into transformation. Who is someone you could talk to about any changes (i.e., things to take on or give up) that God is inviting you into?

- If you were to tell someone the difference between religion (works-based) and Christianity (relationship-based), what would you say? From your own experience, is there anything valuable you’re learning about this difference you could tell some particular person in your life? Think about how you might share it. Ask the Lord for an opportunity to do so if He opens the door.