

# SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

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## **Matthew 3:1–12**

### **“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand”**

**Preaching Date: March 22, 2026**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Ask God to give us honest hearts under His Word. Ask Him to expose every false refuge, grant true repentance, strengthen weak believers, and fix our eyes on Christ, who saves His people and judges the unrepentant.

#### **Recap**

In Matthew 3:1–12, John the Baptist comes as the King’s herald, calling sinners to repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The crowds confess their sins and are baptized, but John sharply confronts those who rest in outward privilege and empty religion. He insists that true repentance bears visible fruit and warns that judgment is near. Above all, he points beyond himself to Jesus Christ, the mightier One, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, gathers His wheat into the barn, and burns the chaff with unquenchable fire. Because the King has drawn near, every hearer must repent, renounce false confidence, and flee to Christ.

#### **Understanding the Text**

1. Why does Matthew place John the Baptist in the wilderness, and how does that setting prepare us for his message?
2. What does John mean when he says, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”?
3. How does Isaiah 40:3 help us understand John’s role and Jesus’ identity?
4. Why are confession of sin and baptism linked together in verses 5–6?
5. What false confidence is John exposing in the Pharisees and Sadducees?
6. What does it mean to “bear fruit in keeping with repentance”?
7. How do verses 11–12 present Christ as both Savior and Judge?

## **Personal Reflection & Application**

1. Where are you most tempted to resist repentance by excusing sin, delaying obedience, or protecting your image?
2. What false refuge are you most tempted to trust: family background, church involvement, doctrinal knowledge, moral respectability, or a past profession?
3. What visible fruit of repentance should appear more clearly in your life right now?
4. How does this passage both warn the unconverted and comfort weak believers?
5. How can our church more faithfully be a repentant, truthful, and holy people?

## **God Has More to Say**

### **The King's herald and the nearness of the kingdom**

Isaiah 40:3–11  
Malachi 3:1  
Malachi 4:5–6  
Matthew 4:17  
Mark 1:14–15

### **True repentance, confession, and fruit**

Psalms 51:1–17  
Isaiah 55:6–7  
Ezekiel 18:30–32  
Luke 3:7–14  
2 Corinthians 7:9–10

### **No confidence in flesh or outward religion**

John 1:11–13  
Romans 2:28–29  
Romans 9:6–8  
Philippians 3:3–9  
Hebrews 8:8–12

### **Christ the mighty Savior and righteous Judge**

Isaiah 53:4–6  
Matthew 11:28–30  
John 5:22–29  
Acts 17:30–31  
2 Thessalonians 1:7–10

### **The church as a repentant and confessing people**

Matthew 18:15–17  
Acts 2:37–42  
Romans 12:1–2  
Galatians 6:1–2  
Revelation 3:19–20