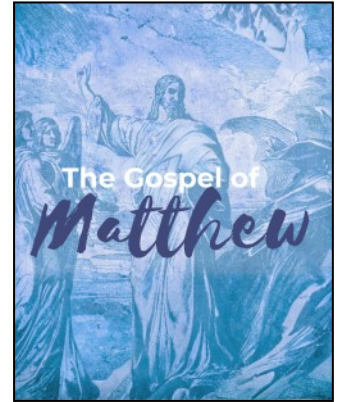


Pastor Jake Magee  
May 31, 2026



**Trash Day**  
**Matthew 3:1-17**

<sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,  
<sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

**Ways We Try to Save Ourselves from our Sin:**

- Deny It (Vss.1-8)
- Watch It (Vss.9&10)
- Manage It (Vss.11-17)

**Small Group Discussion Guide**  
**Trash Day**  
**Matthew 3:1-17**

**Getting Started (Read Matthew 3:1-17)**

What are some ways people try to deal with physical trash without actually getting rid of it?

**Digging Deeper**

1. Read Matthew 3:7–10. Why do you think John speaks so harshly to the Pharisees and Sadducees? What does he seem to think is spiritually dangerous about them? What does this reveal about the way God sometimes addresses us?
  
2. The Pharisees and Sadducees seem to think they bring very little “trash” with them to John. What details in the passage suggest this? If that is the case, how do you think they concluded that they had very little sin to confess?
  
3. The sermon described the human heart as a “rationalizing” or “self-justifying” factory. Spend some time discussing what self-justification is, what it looks like in everyday life, why it is offensive to God, and how it blinds us to our need for grace.
  
4. Read Proverbs 28:13. Find and discuss other passages that teach something similar. What do these passages reveal about confession, repentance, and forgiveness?
  
5. The sermon warned about “watching the trash man” without ever taking out the trash. What was the point of that illustration? How were the religious leaders making this mistake? In what ways do people still make it today?

6. The sermon explained that baptism at that time was commonly associated with Gentiles becoming part of the people of God. Why would John calling Jews to baptism have been so offensive?
  
7. John says, "I baptize you with water... but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." What is the difference between outward religious activity and the inner cleansing Jesus brings? Why is self-improvement ultimately powerless to remove guilt or change the heart?
  
8. Read Ezekiel 36:25–27 and Titus 3:3–7. What do these passages teach about the kind of transformation sinners truly need?
  
9. The sermon compared repentance to preparing trash for removal, not removing it yourself. How does that illustration help clarify the relationship between repentance and salvation? Read Philippians 3:4–9. What does Paul say about trusting in religious identity, personal performance, or spiritual heritage?
  
10. Read Matthew 3:13–17. Why is John reluctant to baptize Jesus?
  
11. The sermon described the Jordan River as symbolically filled with the sins of the people. What does it communicate that Jesus willingly steps into those waters?

### **Making It Real**

What are you most tempted to do in this season of life: deny your sin, merely observe truth, or try to manage yourself into righteousness? What would true repentance and deeper trust in Jesus look like in your life right now?

### **Resources:**

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

[www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)

[www.preceptaustin.org](http://www.preceptaustin.org)