

Matthew 3:1-12

Make Sure Your Path is Straight

How would you feel if you discovered that what you had been believing your entire life was wrong? A recent survey of the graduates of Harvard University were asked why it gets colder in the Winter and warmer in the Summer. They answered, because the earth is closest to the sun in the Summer and furthest in the Winter. All of these distinguished Ivy League graduates who answered this way were absolutely **WRONG**. Believe it or not, Earth is farthest away from the Sun in July and closest in January. The difference in temperature has nothing to do with distance and everything to do with the tilt of the earth's axis.

I am confident that some here thought the same. Now, you probably didn't build your life on this belief that the reason for our Winter and Summers but just imagine if we were dealing with something a little more serious, say what you are hanging your eternal destiny on. Let me assure you, everyone here today is basing their entire eternity on something. I want to help you today make sure you are on the right path.

READ TEXT

Here John is telling people they are on the wrong path and what makes it so intense is they are convinced that they are on the right path. God has been speaking a message since the beginning a message of love but how shall they hear unless someone preaches and how shall they preach unless they are sent? God has not left us without the hope of knowing Him and here is a highlight of his speaking - while the Son is Incarnate God has been speaking by the prophets - John. The message that he speaks is the subject of our sermon today. He speaks to people to encourage them to know they are on the right path.

How to know if you are on the right path

1. Make Sure Your Path Has A Clear View of Right and Wrong (wilderness)

The whole narrative of the Eternal Son becoming flesh is strange. Not only are the birth narratives strange but suddenly we have a wild man in the dessert proclaiming a message of repentance.

But notice where he is proclaiming his message - the Wilderness, and not just the wilderness but in the Jordan. Why? Jesus is fulfilling the hope of the OT, not simply leading his people into a promised land but leading them into the very presence of God

2. Make Sure Your Path Conforms To What is Right (OT)

3. Make Sure Your Path Has A Clear View of Justice (Repentance/Wrath)

Since there is a right and wrong, wrong must be dealt with. There are two ways to deal with wrong - Repent or face the consequences. The Bible says that there is coming a day when every wrong will be made right. The gospel says that the way to avoid the day when God makes

all wrongs right is to take the path away from the consequences and the way to flee is faith in the Son. This one who is coming is coming to take away the sin of the world by subjecting himself to the penalty of our sin - death - and then raising life back from the dead.

4. Make Sure Your Path is Greater Than You (Cant rest on their pedigree - must have faith in the Son)

The same is true for you and me - we cannot rest on our works but must trust him who has come. We are not worthy of untying his sandals yet he has stooped down to us to raise us up to himself.

5. Make Sure Your Path Leads to Hope - lasts (stones - Upon this rock I will build my church)

Notice the language of gather. This is a rich OT allusion as well. The people who had been scattered as a consequence of their own sinfulness would soon be gathered, gathered so that God can be their God.

Are you on the right path? There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end thereof it leads to death. How can you know? It is real simple - Know Him!

If you are not on the right path whatever it is keeping you from the right path get there. Listen, when you first look at the message of the Bible you may see something wild, a little odd like the picture of John. But keep looking and you will see a longing, a longing that finds its fulfillment in Jesus - the one who takes away the sin of the world. Run into the safe tower of his refuge.