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**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.
* Today’s RBQ (Relationship Building Question): What’s something people always ask you for help with, even if you're not really the expert?

**INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever had someone assume you were something you weren’t? Maybe they thought you played a sport you’ve never tried or asked you for help with something just because you "look like you'd know." Sometimes people expect you to be the expert, even when you know you're not the right person for the job.

That’s a little like what we see in today’s story. John the Baptist had people’s attention, but he never tried to make it about himself. His whole purpose was to point people to Jesus. He told people to turn back to God, and he reminded them that someone greater was coming.

Then Jesus shows up and does something unexpected. He asks John to baptize Him. Jesus didn’t need to be baptized for the same reasons others did, but He stepped into that moment to show His full commitment to the mission He came for. His baptism wasn’t about repentance. It was about obedience.

Today we’re going to look at how both John and Jesus show us what it looks like to be faithful in the role God gives us. Whether it’s preparing the way, stepping into something uncomfortable, or just saying yes when it's time, obedience is part of how we respond to who Jesus really is.

***READ MATTHEW 3:1–6***

1. **John knew his role and stayed faithful to it. Why do you think it's sometimes hard to stay focused on what *you’re* called to do instead of comparing yourself to others?**
2. **John’s job was to prepare the way for Jesus. What does it look like for someone today to point others to Jesus instead of themselves?**

***READ MATTHEW 3:7–12***

1. **John calls out the religious leaders and warns them that repentance isn’t just about words or appearance. Why do you think people sometimes act religious but avoid real change?**
2. **John says someone greater is coming, someone who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. What do you think it means to live like Jesus is the one who truly brings power and transformation?**

***READ MATTHEW 3:13-17***

1. **Jesus didn’t need to repent, but He was still baptized. Why do you think He chose to do this, and what does that say about His mission?**
2. **When Jesus is baptized, the heavens open and God speaks. What does this moment tell you about who Jesus is, and how does that shape how we respond to Him?**

**WRAP UP**

If you believe Jesus is who He says He is, what does it look like to take your place in His story? What’s one way you can point people to Him this week simply by being faithful?

Ask for prayer requests and pray together.

**EXTENDED CUT**

Matthew 3 is a big turning point in the story of Jesus. After years of silence from God and no public ministry from Jesus, John the Baptist shows up with a bold message: turn back to God and get ready for the one who’s coming. John isn’t trying to be the center of attention. He knows his job is to prepare the way and point people to someone greater. John’s baptism was a clear call to repentance. What made it unique was that he was baptizing Jews, not just Gentile converts. He was saying that *everyone* needed to get their hearts right before God. But even John knew his baptism wasn’t the final answer. He said someone was coming who would bring a deeper kind of transformation, not just on the outside, but from the inside out.

Then Jesus shows up. He doesn’t need to repent, but He chooses to be baptized anyway. It’s His way of stepping fully into His mission. This moment marks the beginning of His public ministry. When the Spirit comes down and the Father speaks, it’s a clear confirmation of who Jesus is. He is God’s Son, sent to rescue and restore.

This passage serves as a reminder that your part in God’s story matters, even if it doesn’t look big or flashy. John prepared the way. Jesus obeyed the Father’s plan. Both were faithful in the role they were given. This isn’t a story about who gets attention. It’s a story about humility, obedience, and being willing to say yes to what God asks of you.

**1. John knew his role and stayed faithful to it. Why do you think it's sometimes hard to stay focused on what *you’re* called to do instead of comparing yourself to others?**

It’s easy to look at what other people are doing and feel like you’re not doing enough. Social media, school, even church can make you feel like you have to stand out or prove yourself. But John didn’t do that. He stayed focused on what God had called *him* to do, even when it meant stepping back. That kind of focus takes humility and trust.

**2. John’s job was to prepare the way for Jesus. What does it look like for someone today to point others to Jesus instead of themselves?**

It could be the way someone serves quietly without needing credit. Or the way they talk about Jesus instead of just giving their own opinions. Maybe it’s inviting someone to church, praying with a friend, or just showing love in a way that makes people curious about what they believe. Pointing to Jesus means showing people who He is, not just showing off yourself.

**3. John calls out the religious leaders and warns them that repentance isn’t just about words or appearance. Why do you think people sometimes act religious but avoid real change?**

It is easier to look good than to be real. Sometimes people can think going through the motions is enough. Showing up to church, being nice, saying the right things. But they are not actually surrendering anything. Real change takes honesty and humility. John challenges that kind of surface-level faith and calls people to actually turn back to God.

**4. John says someone greater is coming, someone who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. What do you think it means to live like Jesus is the one who truly brings power and transformation?**

It means not relying on yourself to be good enough. If Jesus is the one who brings real change, then you live with dependence on Him. You keep your heart open and your life surrendered. And you remember that following Jesus isn’t about impressing people. It’s about letting Him lead and shape who you are becoming.

**5. Jesus didn’t need to repent, but He was still baptized. Why do you think He chose to do this, and what does that say about His mission?**

Jesus was showing that He was fully stepping into the mission the Father gave Him. He didn’t need to be cleansed from sin, but He identified with us anyway. His baptism marked the beginning of His ministry, and it showed obedience, humility, and surrender. It was a way of saying, “I’m all in.”

**6. When Jesus is baptized, the heavens open and God speaks. What does this moment tell you about who Jesus is, and how does that shape how we respond to Him?**

This moment makes it clear that Jesus is the Son of God. God speaks, the Spirit descends, and everything points to Jesus being the one they have been waiting for. It is a moment of clarity and confirmation. Knowing who Jesus really is should lead us to trust Him, follow Him, and take our own role in His mission seriously.