

## Matthew 3: 1-12

## Discussion notes Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February

1. What was the main thrust of John the Baptist's ministry? (Matthew 3: 1-3, see also John 1: 29)  
What needed to be prepared (v3) and how did his ministry do this?  
What was new to the Jews about John's message? (Think of O.T. sacrifices!)
2. What is sin? (More than what we say/ do? A heart problem?)  
What can Holy Spirit baptism do, that water baptism cannot do? (See v11)  
How can we overcome sin and not be mastered by it?
3. What does it mean to repent? Is it just feeling sorry for what we've done or is there more to it than that?  
How active are you in choosing to give up ungodly things and go God's way instead of your own? Spend some time reflecting on this.  
Why is it important to keep our repentance up to date?  
If you feel able, share any practical steps that you have taken to help you in this area.
4. What were the characteristics of the people coming to be baptised by John?  
What were the characteristics of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Why was John seemingly so hard on them?  
Jesus said: 'Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.' What made John so great in Jesus' eyes?
5. What is John trying to say to the Pharisees in v10? What can we learn from this?
6. How's your spiritual heart? Do you recognise yourself in any of the people in this passage?  
Do you daily recognise your need of Jesus and his power in your life?  
What challenges/ encouragements do you take away with you from this passage?  
What steps can you take to meet these challenges?
7. Spend some time praying for loved ones who don't yet know Jesus and who aren't assured of 'standing secure in the judgement' and being gathered safely 'into the barn'. (v12)