

Series on John: "Believe" Message #4

C.R. 2-3-19

"The Witness of John"

Text: John 1: 19-34

Intro: It is very clear in the opening chapter of John that he being led by the Spirit of God wanted us to know some thing about John the Baptist. We have already read about him in this gospel in v.6, v.15, and now in these verses. Today we will take a closer look at John the Baptist and what made him so special.

Believe it or not I only have two points to the message today and trust me it feels weird. Rest assured I can preach 2 points as long as 3.

1) **The Messenger John**

- a. We know from the other Gospels that John the Baptist had remarkable parents. Their names were Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- b. We know that they were elderly, and they were childless.
- c. Zechariah was a priest and by lot it was his turn to perform his priestly duties, including the service of offering incense, considered the most sacred of all priestly duties.
- d. Keep in mind that God has been silent for 400 years.
- e. As he performed his duty, the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared in the sacred place and spoke to the old priest. Can you imagine?
- f. That was in and of itself amazing enough, but it was what he told the old priest that was even more amazing.
- g. **Luk 1:13** But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.
- h. **Luk 1:14** And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.
- i. **Luk 1:15** For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.
- j. **Luk 1:16** And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.
- k. **Luk 1:17** And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
- l. Zechariah did not believe the words of the angel and he was struck mute. (Imagine him trying to tell his wife without words what had happened and what was about to happen)
- m. Talk about the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, and John doing cartwheels in the womb.
- n. We don't have many details of childhood, but we do know that John made his way out to the desert and the wilderness and later would begin the ministry that he had been born to do.
- o. From out of the wilderness came a giant of a man. The son of a priest whose mother was the daughter of a priest and was also a Nazarite being raised to be a prophet.. His dress, his diet, his demands made people think he was Elijah. Fire in his eyes, and word in his belly.

- p. Multitudes were drawn to hear him as he preached the message of repentance.
- q. It would not take long for his name and message to spread all the way into Jerusalem and to the ears of the Pharisees.
- r. Who is this man? Where did he come from? What is he doing?
- s. 400 years of silence had been broken with a wild eyed, long haired, funny dressed, strange diet, preacher preaching a message of repent and get ready. Things are about to change.
- t. Having been asked “Who are you?”, lets take a close look at his answer. It is amazing what we will uncover.
- u. **V.23** I am the voice. **Isa 40:3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. He did not say “I am the Word, he said I am just a voice.
- v. I am merely a workman making a road for the Messiah.
- w. How easy it would have been for him to make himself a superstar, and a famous man among the people, but he knew it was not about him, it was about the one coming after him.
- x. He moved the emphasis away from himself. (How rare)
- y. He made it clear that he was not the Christ. He would go so far as to say that Jesus was so exalted that ordinary people like himself were unworthy to perform a task relegated to the lowest slave.
- z. John gives us one of the greatest examples of humility. Note what Jesus would say about him. **Mat 11:11** Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
- aa. The greatest saints of God have had this same characteristic, they were clothed in humility.
- bb. **Illustrate:** One evening, the great conductor Arturo Toscanini, conducted Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. It was amazing, and at the end the audience went wild. They clapped, they whistled, they stomped their feet as they were caught up in the greatness of the performance. Toscanini bowed and bowed and bowed then acknowledged the orchestra. When the ovation subsided, he looked at the musicians almost out of control and said “Gentlemen, Gentlemen, I am nothing (Amazing he said this because he had an enormous ego), He added “You are nothing, but Beethoven, is everything, everything, everything”.
- cc. This is the attitude so desperately needed today.

2) The Message of John

- a. **Look at V.29.** Wow what a message.
- b. Note the peculiar name John gave to Jesus. “the Lamb of God”.
- c. **He is called the lamb only twice in the O.T., only twice in the gospels, only once in the book of Acts, and only once in the epistles. However, he is called the lamb 28 times in the book of Revelation.**

- d. John is not saying this in the fact that he was meek and gentle as a lamb although there is some truth in that. It means that Christ was the great Sacrifice for sin.
- e. The listener of John would go back to Abraham and Issac and Mt. Moriah. They would surely think of the morning and evening sacrifices at the temple. They must have thought about the words of **Isaiah 53:7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Surely their mind would go back to the night of the Passover as the blood had to be applied to the doorpost.
- f. **John Phillips:** John did not introduce Jesus to the nation as the Son of God, nor as the holy one of God. He went right to the heart of Israel's need, of the whole world's need.
- g. **John was laying out the theme of our message even to this day. Our message must be the sacrificial death of Christ.**
- h. It is dangerous to move away from the blood. Too many have.
- i. There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.
- j. What can wash away my sin, NOTHING but the blood of Jesus.
- k. The BLOOD of Christ cleanses us of all sin.
- l. **Read from J.C. Ryle book on John** See attached.
- m. Yes, Christ worked miracles, and he can still work miracles in our lives today, but these are benefits of the gospel, not the gospel itself.
- n. The gospel centers on Christ as our sin bearer. The Lamb of God.
- o. Note what he said next. "Who takes away the sin of the world."
- p. Much debate here. I believe this. He made atonement sufficient for all, and that all are savable, though not all saved.
- q. J.C. Ryle. "I hold as strongly as anyone, that Christ's death is profitable to none but to the elect who believe in his name.
- r. **J.C. Ryle** "But the lost will not prove to be lost because Christ did nothing for them. He bore their sins, he carried their transgressions, he provided payment; but they would not put in their claim to any interest in it. He set the prison door open to all; but the majority would not come out and be free."
- s. Christ is a Savior. He did not come to be a conqueror, or a philosopher, or a teacher of morality. He came to save sinners. He came to take away sin.
- t. Christ did a complete work. The sins of everyone that believes on Jesus are made as though they never sinned at all.
- u. He is a mighty savior. A savior for all mankind. Not just the Jews, but for the gentiles as well. For all mankind.
- v. He is still taking away sin even now. Daily purging, daily cleansing, daily washing, the souls of his people. Daily supplying mercy and grace. He is ever taking away sin.
- w. Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power, are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you washed in the blood, in the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb.

- x. Lay aside your garments that are stained with sin and be washed in the blood of the Lamb. There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean O, be washed in the blood of the Lamb!