

## **“The Tip of the Spear”, John the Baptist - John 1:29-37 February 15, 2009 - Skip MacMillan**

Last week we ended with John's experience with God, his doubt and his death. Scripture says, "John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place" (Matthew 14:12-13).

### **His Mission / Purpose**

#### **John's Gospel**

- Sent from God, as a witness to testify concerning the Light, John 1:6-8

#### **John the Baptist said (John 1:23 and Isaiah 40:3):**

- Isaiah 40:1-3
  - Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.
  - Prepare the way for the LORD.
  - Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.
  - John was to create a landing strip for the LORD'S return; he is comparable to the special forces of our military: on the ground first, dropping into hostile territory before anyone else, preparing for the invasion.

#### **Gabriel (Angel of God) said (Luke 1:16-17):**

- He will bring back many people to the Lord their God (Luke 1:16).
- He will go before the Lord, in the spirit of Elijah (Luke 1:17).
- He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children (Luke 1:17).
- He will turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous (Luke 1:17).
- He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord, preparing people for the Lord's arrival (Luke 1:17).

#### **Zechariah (John's dad) said (Luke 1:77-79):**

- He will "give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God" (Luke 1:77).
- "to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79).
- "to guide the feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:79).

#### **Jesus**

- "John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did" (Matthew 21:32).

#### **Point people to Jesus**

- "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

John was on mission before he knew all the details, before he knew exactly who was the Messiah. John is a living display of obedience done in faith, believing in God's call on his life, trusting God at His word **before he had all the details** (John 1:29). God rarely, if ever, gives details. He just says "go." And John went.

John's mission was to sound the call, to announce, the Groom has arrived, He has come for His bride! He has come to redeem her, he will take her home, heal her and give her new life.

Why didn't John become a disciple?

- Not his mission!
- He is the tip of the spear! To construct the landing strip, prepare for God's invasion.
- He had a specific calling and once that calling was completed, he went home to the One who sent him.

## **His Message**

**Humanity** - Luke 3:11-14: share, don't exploit and be content.  
Parallels Christ's message.

**Hope** - his mission was to declare TRUE HOPE is found in the LORD! What if all of Isaiah 40 made it into John's message?

- Sin atoned for: "Proclaim to her (Jerusalem) that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for" (v. 2). "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
- Men and God: "All men are like grass . . . The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever" (v. 6).
- "Here is your God!" (vv. 9-10). "See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power . . . see His reward is with Him" (John 1:29).
- Jesus cares for His people: "He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (v. 18); John 10.
- Who is greater than God (vv. 12-20).
- God is sovereign (vv. 21-24).
- God sees into your specific life (vv. 27-31).

**Declare the Gospel - "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).**

- First, he points out the Redeemer, "the Lamb of God," "Jesus Christ".
- Second, he preaches the Gospel message, "who takes away the sin of the world."
- There is no other "Lamb of God".
- There is no other means for removal of sin.
- John's message declares that Jesus Christ is our redemption.
- Apocalyptic and triumphant lamb, warrior Lamb, of Revelation 7:17 (DA Carson).
- "The world," inclusive, not genetic, no borders, but "all" and "everyone" who calls on the LORD.
- I am not the one but I know who is!
- This is your mission, to point to Jesus as the redeemer, forgiveness of sins, true peace.

**Repentance** - "Repent for the Kingdom of God is near" (Matthew 3:2).

- Great urgency for repentance was in line with the prophet Elijah, 2 Kings.
- Personal and individual repentance, Matthew 3:1, Mark 1:2-5.
- Being in the genetic lineage of Abraham would not "cut it".
- God's Kingdom is based on personal faith and new birth (John 3:1-16) (DA Carson).
- Regardless of who you are, you must as an individual repent of your sin and believe in Jesus Christ, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.
- John's baptism was a sign of this repentance (Matthew 3:1-10, Mark 1:2-5).
- Repentance is to turn, to reorient yourself toward God, to face Him, so as to seek Him.
- Repentance clears the heart for the Messiah to enter in.

**A voice** - "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, Make straight the way for the Lord" (John 1:23).

- The voice: not the Word, but God's breath over vocal cords, a tool in the hand of God.
- Of one: one person, one voice calling in a barren place.
- Calling: I am alone but I'm standing my ground, speaking in faith and calling out "Get ready for the LORD for He is coming."
- Humble, powerful, alone, authoritative, called, clean, simple, focused.
- "In the desert prepare the way"; the desert of the human soul, wasteland of spirituality.
- I stand as one voice calling: prepare to meet the LORD.

- You are the voice of the Lord, the gospel message.
- You are one person, you may be the only one (at work, neighborhood, family or home).
- Calling out to those around you, "Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the earth." You do this by your lifestyle, words, patience, attitude and heart.
- You may feel like you're in the desert, but stand in God's redemption of you, His call on your life, the hope found in Him that He will wash over that desert.

His message was not to heal, nor was it to become a disciple but to be the sole voice, calling out "Prepare the way for the LORD."

This is our message:

- to speak the message of true hope found in the LORD
- Point to Jesus Christ and say "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"
- Call people to repent for the Kingdom of God is now!

## **Ego Subjugation**

### **The scene:**

- All the people coming to John, "People went to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan" (Matthew 3:5).
  - "people were constantly coming to be baptized" (John 3:23).
  - John is well known entity, he has a niche.
- Then, an argument developed, a "certain Jew" tried to stir things up "everyone is going to Him (Jesus)" (John 3:26).
- "Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples" (John 4:1-2).

### **Ego Subjugation Statements:**

- **Submission**, "I need to be baptized by you and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:14).
- **I am no one, invisible, a servant of the LORD**, I am not Elijah, the Prophet nor the Christ, John 3:20-21.
- **I will be humble and use the talent given me**, " 'everyone is going to Him.' To this John replied, 'A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him' " (John 3:26-28).
- **I am not the focus**, I am the friend of the Bridegroom, who waits, listens for his voice and I'm filled with joy when I hear His voice (John 3:29).
- **I know who I am and who I am not**, "The One who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one from the earth" (John 3:31).
- **Power and Humility**, "After me will come One more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie" (Matthew 3:12, Mark 1:9).
  - John is positioning himself in comparison to Jesus
  - During this time a Teacher-Student relationship was intense and similar to a Master-Slave relationship, with the only exception being that the student did not have to remove the teacher's sandals, the slave did (DA Carson).
  - John is saying not only am I not His student, but I am not even the equivalent of His slave; I am less than that. Recognize who we are dealing with, God the Son!
  - I don't hear a guy with poor self-esteem; I hear a free man, who knows who he is and who he is not.

- **“He (Christ) must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30).**
  - He who is in me is greater than he who is in the world, but is He greater than you?
  - Ego subjugation, subjugating the ego under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
    - I do what He wants, not what I want.
    - I follow His ways and not my ways.
    - I am more concerned that someone know Him than know me.
    - He must become greater in my life, my ego and flesh must become less.
  - John is lost in the glory of God, in the ultimate supremacy of Jesus.
    - He is not promoting himself, his ministry, his territory.
    - He is free and open handed, God can give or take away as He wishes.
    - It was not John’s idea to begin with and he is certainly not going to assume responsibility now.
  - Is this how we think, is it true, is this our motto?

**Points:**

- God has given you a mission and a message.
- You are to prepare the hearts and minds of those around you for the LORD’S entrance.
- You are to speak into their lives the hope of the gospel message – He loved us while we were still sinners!