

Sunday Morning Message

February 13, 2022

The Forerunner – Pointing the Spotlight on Christ

The Gospel According to John

Text – John 1:6 - 9

Congregational Reading – John 1:6 - 9

Introduction

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." (John 1:6)

No study of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ would be complete without a careful examination of His forerunner, John the Baptist. John was certainly a unique individual, as we will soon see. He was a fiery, uncompromising preacher, full of the Spirit of God from his mother's womb. He was a simple man, dwelling in the wilderness near the Jordan River where he baptized. He had a very simple diet, and a very simple wardrobe; but he preached with power, holding nothing back. He feared no man, not even the king of the land, Herod. Let us take a quick look at the man who was sent from God to pave the way for the Lord Jesus.

I. The Prophecies Concerning John the Baptist

A. Isaiah 40:3 – 5

"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. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." (Isaiah 40:3-5)

B. Malachi 3:1

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

II. The Presentation of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5 – 24; 39 – 80)

A. He had a Miraculous Birth. (1:5 – 17; 24 - 25)

B. He had a Muted Father (1:18 – 23)

C. He had a Marvelous Ministry (1:76 – 80)

D. He had Mysterious Ways (Luke 1:15; Matthew 3:4)

"And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Matthew 3:4)

III. The Purpose of John the Baptist (John 1:7 – 9)

John's purpose, according to our text was to bear witness of the true Light of the world – the Lord Jesus Christ. John's public ministry came before Jesus' public ministry. John's purpose was to prepare the world for the coming Messiah.

Practical Point – We have a very similar purpose. We are to bear witness of that same true light. We are here to point people to Christ. We are little lights. We reflect the light of Christ that we receive from His Word, and we also shine the light of Christ that is within us through the indwelling Spirit of God.

We are here to make the Lord Jesus look good to the world around us. We are to magnify the Lord:

"O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together." (Psalm 34:3)

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord," (Luke 1:46)

IV. The Pre-eminence of Christ Taught by John the Baptist

A. John 1:19 – 28

B. John 3:23 - 36

V. The Preaching of John the Baptist

A. Matthew 3:1 – 2 – It was Prophetic

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Repentance – change of heart, mind and attitude that leads to a change of direction

Kingdom of Heaven

1 – General rule of God over the affairs of man on earth from creation through the Millennium.

2 – Specific rule of Christ over the earth during the Millennium.

3 – As distinguished from the “Kingdom of God” which is a broader phrase, which would include God’s rule over everything in the universe and specifically references often the New Birth. The Kingdom of Heaven is included in the Kingdom of God.

B. **Matthew 3:7 – 12**; Luke 3:1 - 9 – It was Powerful

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

(Matthew 3:7-12)

C. Luke 3:10 – 20 – It was Practical

D. Mark 6:17 – 18 – It was Pointed

"For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." (Mark 6:17-18)

VI. The Problem of John the Baptist (Luke 7:19 -23)

Herod put John into prison for his preaching against Herod’s marriage to his brother’s wife. He has been preparing people for the coming of the kingdom of Heaven; the earthly kingdom. But it becomes apparent to John that the kingdom is not coming yet. He is confused, and wonders whether there will be somebody else that will come in the future to deliver Israel; so he sends some of his disciples to talk to Jesus about it.

VII. Jesus’ Pronouncements Regarding John the Baptist

A. Luke 7:24 – 35

B. Luke 20:1 – 18

VIII. The Parting of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1 – 12)

Conclusion

John was a wonderful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He fulfilled God's will for his life with passion and zeal. Would to God that we had some more preachers and teachers today who had a passion for the things of God. He was feared no man save his Lord. He served God without desiring attention or demanding reward. We can learn a lot from the example of John. John wasn't concerned about his status; he was concerned about the Lord.

Just as John's purpose was to point people to Christ, it is also our purpose to draw attention to Him. We do that by:

1. Living out His Word
2. Giving out His Word
3. Loving People in the World

Christian, get your focus off of yourself, and instead focus on Christ, and His mission for you in this life. Like John the Baptist, we are not called here to this earth to live like this world is all that we have. We are ambassadors for the Lord. We are on a mission, and we must remain focused on that mission.

Like John, we must be content with the simpler things in life. John had simple clothes and a simple lifestyle. Why? He wasn't living for this world. He was living for the world to come. He was only here on earth for a short time, and he fulfilled his purpose – pointing people to Christ. And, that's the same purpose that we have. Stop thinking that this world exists to fulfil your every desire. You are here on this earth to fulfil Christ's desires. You are here to serve Him. You are here to bear witness of His Light – to reflect His light and his love to the lost world around you. It's not about you, it's all about Him.

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

John understood that. He got it. We need to get it as well.