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John 3:22-36

Message title: Mindset for Ministry

Big Idea: Ministry is messy, so mindset matters.

John 3:22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. 24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

1. Serve where you can while you can.

The non-negotiable for a disciple of Jesus is serving Jesus, but the negotiable is where & when.

25 Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification.

2. Keep the main thing the main thing.

Religious people can be really good at getting sidetracked with secondary issues because secondary issues do matter, but not as much.

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Focusing on the main things will produce health & good fruit.

With a certain practice, doctrine, or church, ask, "What is the spiritual fruit?"

Luke 10:27 So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

Luke 9:49 Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid *him*, for he who is not against us is on our side."

27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'"

3. Stewardship keeps us healthy & humble.

When we start getting possessive about ministry, we are getting in the flesh.

III John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

4. Make much of Jesus.

Diakonia or ministry means service, ie. to wait on tables.

31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. **32** And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. **33** He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. **35** The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. **36** He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

LIFE Group Guide:

This passage finds John the Baptist's disciples struggling with jealousy as Jesus' ministry begins to grow while John's declines. There are some important lessons for us here to learn about a healthy ministry mindset as we serve God wherever we are.

General Timeline: (Adjust as appropriate for your group's needs.)

5-10 minutes connecting personally with how everyone is doing.

45 minutes going over message with discussion questions and life applications.

5-10 minutes praying for each other

Discussion Questions:

Look over these questions before your group time. Write down your answers or ideas for at least a few questions if not all. You may not get to every question during your time but speak up if you want to talk about one of them in particular. Always try to start with question #1.

1. What stood out to you and/or what do you think God might be speaking about from this message?
2. What was causing the dispute and jealousy among John's disciples? How did John respond to their concerns?
3. John uses the metaphor of the groom and the friend of the groom. What is he communicating about his role versus Jesus' role?

4. What are "purification" issues (minor matters) that Christians today can get caught up in while neglecting the "weightier matters"?
5. Why is it so tempting to make ministry about being right? What Scriptures did we see or do you know that give us a better focus?
6. Since ministry is messy because we are all sinners at different places in spiritual maturity, how can we create space for the messiness while still pursuing holiness and unity?
7. After this study, what do you need to start doing or thinking to help you really pursue a real and right relationship with God and others?