

GOD the SON:

How to be Great for God Pt. 1

John 1:19-23

Pastor Jason Dennett's Teaching Notes

NKJV- "Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

NTV- "Este fue el testimonio que dio Juan cuando los líderes judíos enviaron sacerdotes y ayudantes del templo desde Jerusalén para preguntarle: —¿Quién eres? Él dijo con toda franqueza: —Yo no soy el Mesías. —Bien. Entonces, ¿quién eres? —preguntaron—. ¿Eres Elías? —No —contestó. —¿Eres el Profeta que estamos esperando? —No. —Entonces, ¿quién eres? Necesitamos alguna respuesta para los que nos enviaron. ¿Qué puedes decirnos de ti mismo? Juan contestó con las palabras del profeta Isaías: «Soy una voz que clama en el desierto: "¡Abran camino para la llegada del SEÑOR!"

If you look up at the word "great" in the Webster's Dictionary, the definition would be "considerably above normal, above average, or remarkable." (142 people)

- Would you rather choose to be average... or far ABOVE AVERAGE for the Lord?
- Would you rather be simply normal...or be REMARKABLE for the Kingdom?
- Would you prefer to be insignificant... or make a LASTING DIFFERENCE in this world?
- Would you choose to become a failure... or to become GREAT for Christ?

Did you know that Jesus WANTS you to be great for His Kingdom? He wants you to strive to be "above average, remarkable, and GREAT" for God and His Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus said so Himself:

- **Matt 5:19**NLT - "...if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." (Teach God's Word!)
- **Luke 6:35**NKJV - "...love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High." (Love/ God's Heart!)
- **Matt 20:26-28**NKJV - "...whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Serve in God's Kingdom!)
 - "Great men and women have only a few hours to be great. Because, like the rest of us, they too must dress, they must bathe, and they must eat. And being human, they must also make visits to the dentist, the doctor, and the barber, and meet with their wives about domestic matters. But what makes them truly great is their ability to decide what is truly important, and then focus their lives on that."

The Greatness of John's **ATTITUDE**(vs. 19-23)

- **Who John Was NOT**- "Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."
 - Group was sent by Sanhedrin..spiritual guardians of Israel.

- John must've seemed **VERY** strange to them...
- Intense **Messianic** expectation during this time...
- Jews were also awaiting **Elijah's** return. (Mal 4:5; Lk 1:17)
- The **Prophet** was predicted by Moses. (Deut 18:15-19)

- **This negative attitude will PROTECT YOU in 2 important ways:**
 - This will take away any **BURDEN** of performance...
 - This will protect you from the real danger of spiritual **PRIDE**...
 - **A mother and her 6 year old son were walking through a perfume store, as the mom was admiring the different fragrances...**

- "All of man's troubles come from his pride." - **Dr. ML Jones**
- "We should take heed of pride; it is a sin that turned the angels into devils." - **Matthew Henry**
- "There is only one center of the universe, worthy of all of our attention, and that Center is **GOD**. However, if we make ourselves to be the center of our lives, we are engaging in what the Scriptures call arrogance and pride. This attitude is neither a minor glitch nor something that God simply dislikes. God hates pride." - **Chip Ingram**
- "When you're already full of yourself, God can't fill you. But when you empty yourself, God has a useful vessel." - **Max Lucado**

- **Who John Truly WAS** - "22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the Lord," 'as the prophet Isaiah said."
- Incredibly, John says that he is nothing more than a **MESSENGER**, a simple servant, only a voice, preparing the way for the Savior! *He could've said he was much more... priest son... miraculous birth... most important man..*

- **However, John simply declared that he was a VOICE, a MESSENGER** of God's Messiah, prophesied over 700 years earlier, by Isaiah:
 - **Isa 40:3-5 NKJV** - "The **voice** of one crying in **the wilderness**: 'Prepare 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 brought **low**; the crooked places shall be made **straight** and the rough places **smooth**; **the glory of the Lord** shall be revealed, and **all flesh shall see it** together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (*King's herald*)

- My friend, you too are called to be a **VOICE** for your King, in this wilderness of our world! Jesus has ordained **you** and chosen **you** to **SPEAK** for Him, to represent Him, and to **PROCLAIM** His Truth to all who will listen.
 - **John 20:21 NLT** - "As the Father has sent me, so **I am sending you**."
 - **Matt 28:19-20 NLT** - "...**go and make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 **Teach these new disciples** to obey all the commands I have given you..."
 - **Acts 1:8 NLT** - "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And **you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere**..."

- Not only was John a special **VOICE**, he was a **DEDICATED** and **SEPARATED** voice for Christ. John wanted to make sure that nothing in his life hindered his witness for Jesus.

- It appears that John the Baptist had taken the holy vow of a **NAZIRITE**, so he could live absolutely **SET APART** to his King and his mission.
 - **Num 6:2-8 NLT** - "If any of the people, either men or women, take the special vow of a Nazirite, setting themselves apart to the Lord in a special way, 3 they **must give up wine and other alcoholic drinks**. They must not use vinegar made from wine or from other alcoholic drinks, they must not drink fresh grape juice, and they must not eat grapes or raisins. 4 As long as they are bound by their **Nazirite vow**, they are **not allowed to eat or drink anything that comes from a grapevine**—

not even the grape seeds or skins. 5 They **must never cut their hair throughout the time of their vow**, for they are holy and set apart to the Lord. Until the time of their vow has been fulfilled, they must let their hair grow long. 6 And they **must not go near a dead body during the entire period of their vow** to the Lord. 7 Even if the dead person is their own father, mother, brother, or sister, they must not defile themselves, for the hair on their head is the symbol of their separation to God. 8 **This requirement applies as long as they are set apart to the Lord.**” (Hair, wine, diet, social life, death in the family..)

- In addition to this, John’s dedication also affected his choice of **OCCUPATION & PROFESSION**- the Jewish Priesthood. John’s father Zacharias was a priest, and John could’ve been as well. This would’ve meant a life of ease, of comfort, of public prestige, of high reputation and respect.
- Instead of all this, John choose to live for the Kingdom of God, and not the kingdom of man. Rather than impressing the people of society, John wanted to please the Lord of eternity.
 - Instead of the visibility of the Temple, John choose the **DESERT** of obscurity;
 - Instead of the position of a priest, John choose the position of a **SLAVE**;
 - Instead of luxuries and privilege, John choose the **SACRIFICE** of **SERVICE**;
 - Instead of living for his dreams, his passions, and building his personal kingdom... John choose to live **DEDICATED** to His King, and be a **VOICE** for His Kingdom!
- You and I are also called to **SEPARATED** to the Lord as John was. We too are called to be **DEDICATED** servants, and faithful **DISCIPLES** of Jesus in this wilderness of a world!
 - **Luke 9:23NKJV** - “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny** himself, and take up his **cross** daily, and **follow** Me.”
 - **Luke 9:23AMP**- “He said to all, If any person wills to come after Me, let him deny himself [disown himself, forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up himself] and take up his cross daily and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also].”
- **APPLICATION: If you want to be great with GOD, you must CHOOSE TO HAVE A GREAT ATTITUDE - you must truly understand who you are NOT... but also understand who you ARE in Christ!**
 - **WHO AM I NOT???**- I am **not** the SAVIOR; I **cannot** SAVE anyone; in and of myself, I can do **NOTHING** of eternal value; in and of myself, I **CAN’T** rescue or help anyone. (Jn 15:1)
 - **WHO AM I IN CHRIST???**- In Jesus, I have a strong and unchanging **IDENTITY**: I am His **SERVANT**, and I am His **HERALD**. I am called to be His **VOICE** in this world, a special **MESSENGER**, a dedicated **WITNESS** and **DISCIPLE**.
 - As I look to **JESUS** for power, as I look to **JESUS** to equip me, train me, and use me to share His truth, spread His love in the world, **JESUS** can do GREAT things in and through my life... for **HIS** Kingdom, and for **HIS** glory!
 - **"Great men and women, have only a few hours to be great. But what makes them truly great is their ability to decide what is truly important, and then focus their lives on that."**