

The Word Made Flesh

He Must Increase

John 3:22–31

The Context

- Jesus and His disciples begin baptizing in Judea at the same time John the Baptist is baptizing nearby.
- A conflict arises when John's disciples complain that "everyone is going to Jesus," revealing jealousy, insecurity, and a desire for influence.
- Instead of rebuking them or feeding into the insecurity, John teaches them a foundational lesson in humility and kingdom-mindedness.

Five Truths John Teaches His Disciples

1. Everything Is a Gift from God

"A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven."

- John reminds them that any influence, fruitfulness, ministry, or crowd they had was given by God, not earned by merit or personality.
- This destroys the illusion of being "self-made" and cultivates humility and gratitude.
- When we see everything as a gift, entitlement dies and thankfulness grows.

2. Know Who You Are Not

"I am not the Christ."

- John refuses to pretend to be more than he is; he is not the Messiah, not the Savior, and not the answer to everyone's problems.
- His humility stands in contrast to insecure leaders who need constant affirmation.
- Pastors and Christians alike flourish when they embrace their role and reject the temptation to be the hero.

Zeal for His House

3. The Bride Belongs to the Bridegroom

“The one who has the bride is the bridegroom.”

- John refuses to place himself at the center of the people’s affection.
- The Bride—God’s people—belongs to Jesus alone.
- It is dangerous when leaders crave the attention, praise, or loyalty that belongs to Christ.
- Christian leaders must direct hearts toward Jesus, not themselves.

4. Joy Comes from Supporting Jesus, Not Replacing Him

“The friend of the bridegroom... rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice.”

- John embraces his supporting role with joy, not resentment.
- Jesus is the main character; John is the joyful friend helping the wedding happen.
- The church must resist elevating leaders as stars—everything is about Jesus, not personalities, platforms, or brands.

5. The Heart of Christian Maturity: He Must Increase

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

- John’s joy is complete because Jesus’ ministry is growing, not his own.
- Our lives must reflect the same posture: Jesus exalted higher, ourselves lower.
- True discipleship moves us away from self-promotion and toward Christ-centered living.
- John concludes by reminding them: **Jesus comes from above and is above all.**