

## **That You May Have Life In His Name - John 3:22-36**

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### **Context:**

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

*(Jn 1:1–16)*

*This witness named John The Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus and to bear witness of Jesus – we see John The Baptist publicly proclaim, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" – he says I have seen and I can say... "This is the Son of God"*

*John The Baptist is with his disciples – but when He sees Jesus walk by, John points to Jesus – and says a again, "Behold the Lamb of God!" – and when they heard this, they began to follow Jesus. Even in this moment – John The Baptist – was faithfully pointing people to Jesus – which meant, they left John to follow Jesus.*

*You will remember what happens next, more people begin to follow Jesus, the miracle of water to wine at the wedding at Cana, Jesus cleanses the temple in Jerusalem confronting corruption in a place intended for worship, we remember the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, a leader among Jewish pharisees seeing to understand more about Jesus and Jesus responds to him with these words, " 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."*

*(Jn 3:16–21)*

### **John the Baptist Exalts Christ**

<sup>22</sup> After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. <sup>23</sup> John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized <sup>24</sup> (for John had not yet been put in prison).

In two nearby regions both Jesus and John the Baptist are ministering to people, calling people to repentance and faith – John is pointing people to the fact the the Son of God is Jesus, pointing people to Him, and Jesus is saying repent and believe – that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life...

<sup>25</sup> Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”

John’s disciples were concerned – look, they are all going to Jesus... but this is exactly what John was called to. Matthew’s Gospel gives us a glimpse into John the Baptist, “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ”

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. (Mt 3:1–6)

John’s ministry was to call people to repentance and to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah, that Jesus was the Son of God – and that only Jesus could take away their sin.

<sup>27</sup> John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ <sup>29</sup> The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease.”

John is saying his joy is complete – that his calling was to prepare the way for Jesus – and that his joy is to hear the voice of Jesus who has come to be the Lamb of God – the Messiah.

John the Baptist insists – Jesus must increase. I must decrease.

John the Baptist clearly says – He who’s come from above is indeed above all.

I’m of the earth – Jesus is from heaven and above all. Whoever receives this testimony – whoever believes Jesus – is believing that God is true. Jesus, full of the Spirit, is speaking the words of God because He is the Son of God – whom the Father loves.

<sup>31</sup> He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup> He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. <sup>33</sup> Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. <sup>34</sup> For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. <sup>35</sup> The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. <sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

(Jn 3:22–36)

This could not be more clear – John’s life – and final testimony – is that the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son will not see life but that wrath of God remains on him.

John The Baptist’s story – is a powerful picture of a man called by God to make much of Jesus, to prepare the way, to deflect the attention, and call people to faith in the Son of God. John had a specific role – and was content and committed to it.

Even in the midst of what Jesus was doing – corruption and evil was still very much present, and John’s life ends because of it. We know that John the Baptist knew King Herod – and we know that John had confronted King Herod on why it was wrong for the king to marry his brother Phillip’s wife Herodias. King Herod knew John was a righteous and holy man, but Herodias did not like John, and holding a grudge, she waited for the perfect time to eliminate John. The moment came and she ordered John to be executed during a party (Mark 6).

Our passage this week shows clearly – the ongoing invitation – whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. The world was broken and evil then, just like it is now. God had raised up a man from the wilderness to point to Jesus – and that he did. Content NOT to be in the spotlight, but to lift people’s eyes and lives to the Light of the World, Jesus. John’s life came to an end by way of an execution – but his testimony remains. Jesus MUST increase.

Jesus MUST increase. The Father loves the Son. The Spirit was given fully without measure. Jesus is the Son of God. The Father has given Jesus all things into his hand. Unbelief and disobedience to the Son means the wrath of God remains... but belief and trust in Jesus means eternal life and peace.

For us – we continue to ask the question – what does it mean to have life in His name? John writes this gospel so that we too would know that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. I hear the words of John the Baptist – Jesus must increase. I must decrease.

This is what it looks like to follow Jesus. For those born again, for those who have come from death to life, from slaves to sin now slaves to righteousness, from children of wrath now children of God, there’s a new goal, there’s a greater joy, there’s a clear purpose, there’s a greater glory – all that is found in Jesus.

For Jesus to increase in our lives — let's begin with the most important decision we can make. To trust Jesus. To believe Jesus. To see He is the Son of God. To believe He is the Messiah. To believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*“The gospel is the good news that the one and only true God, the loving Creator, sovereign King, and holy Judge of all, has looked on men and women wonderfully, equally, and uniquely made in his image who have rebelled against him, are separated from him, and deserve death before him, and he has sent his Son, Jesus, God in the flesh, to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death, and to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan, and death. The gospel is a gracious invitation from God for sinners from every nation, tribe, people, and language to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trust in Jesus alone as Lord. The gospel is a guarantee that Jesus will come again in glory to consummate his kingdom for the redeemed from every nation, tribe, people, and language in a new heaven and a new earth where all things will be made new in the light of his holy presence and where his perfect rule and reign will have no end. According to the gospel, all people who do not trust in Jesus will experience everlasting judgment from God, and all people who trust in Jesus will experience everlasting joy with God.” (Platt, Don't Hold Back)*

What does it mean to have life in His name? Believe that.

What does it look like to have life in His name? Insist that Jesus become greater in your life.

Our temptation is to think that Jesus being greater begins with us doing big things... and that's partially true. When we follow Christ – our lives are to look different. But so many people get caught up in doing “big things” for God that they miss the point entirely – sometimes that looks like missionaries on the field that really aren't there for the gospel, or it looks like pastors leading churches that really aren't about Jesus, or cultural Christians acting like they love God but in reality they do not.

How does Jesus become greater in our lives? One day of faithfulness at a time. One expression of faith at a time. One “Jesus – I love you and I want you more than \_\_\_\_\_” at a time. One act of kindness in Jesus' name at a time. One choice to be humble in Jesus' name. One “I forgive you” in Jesus's name. One choice to repent in Jesus name. One choice to be a godly mother or father in Jesus' name. One act of obedience in Jesus name. One choice to deny ourselves in Jesus name. One choice to glorify God at a time.

*I read a [great article](#) by another pastor this week that I think will be helpful for you: “Over the course of their three years with Jesus, the disciples needed their ideas of big and small redefined time and again. As with most of us, they had allowed the world to define these terms for them without even knowing it. For them, the big things included important people, large crowds, and a coveted status (Matthew 19:13–15; Mark 1:35–39; 10:35–37). But for Jesus, the great things of the world were like so many mountains of feathers: impressive now (if you don’t look too closely), but ready to be blown away in the judgment.*

*What, then, is big in the eyes of our Lord? A partial list would include praying, giving, and fasting in secret (Matthew 6:1–18); humbling yourself among the last and the least (Matthew 23:11–12); spending time with children (Matthew 19:13–15); visiting forgotten people in forgotten places (Matthew 25:36); giving a cup of water to one of Jesus’s little ones (Matthew 10:42); remaining faithful with however many talents you have (Matthew 25:14–30). What is small among men is big in the sight of God (Luke 16:15).*

*The day is coming when this world’s carnival of mirrors will give way to clear sight and just judgment. Then “many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Matthew 19:30). Then we will see just how small were all the world’s big things, and just how big was the day of small things.”*

*This verse has been in my heart for many years and is one of the best ways I can have perspective on daily life. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)*

I live. By faith. In the Son of God. Jesus you love me. You have given yourself for me. Help me live in a way that glorifies You.