

True Greatness

Jon Benzinger

John 1:19-28

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Last week I said that you could spend 1,000 lifetimes reading the biographies of the very best people that have ever lived. Just as our son outshines all the stars when it's in the sky, so Jesus will outshine all of those people. Verses 1:18, "Jesus is eternal. He is equal with God. He is God, he's the creator, he's eternal life, he's the truth, he's the one who makes people God's children when they trust in him. He's the God man, the possessor of God's glory, the one and only Son who is also God. He's the one in closest relationship with God and as the one in the closest relationship, he reveals the truth about God to the world."

Now, all that said, no one can top that. That's the very top. That's the best. He's the greatest, but who's second on the list of greatest people that have ever lived? Well Jesus tells us, Matthew 11:11, "Among those born of women, there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist." According to Jesus, John the Baptist is second on the list of greatest people that have ever lived, and this is stunning if you think about it. He leaves behind no writings. He had crowds, yes, but he is not some exceptional leader that's fighting wars and setting up kingdoms. He didn't influence millions in his lifetime. He didn't start any governments or universities. He had no status, no wealth, no position in society. He was a poor nomad wandering around in the wilderness, eating locusts. Completely opposite of the religious and social culture of his day. He was completely different.

Yet other than Jesus, he's the greatest person that's ever lived. Each gospel writer Matthew, Mark, Luke, John they all start with him. Those first three Matthew, Mark, and Luke they're very concerned with his history, especially, Luke. He's the one that tells us, "There are miracles and angelic visitation that surrounds his birth." They all talk about how super popular his ministry was. He may have been more popular in people's minds than the entire religious establishment. The high priest down to the lowest priest, he's more popular than all of them combined at this point. Why? Because prophecy he had been silent for 400 years, but now there's a prophet who's on the scene preaching God's word with power, and clarity, and conviction. Thousands upon thousands they're coming from all over to hear him preach and get baptized. You'd know none of that from John the writer. I didn't get any of that from reading the book of John. Why? Because John, the writer doesn't care at all about John the Baptist history. John is concerned with theology. Remember John the writer is making the case in this book that Jesus is the Christ. He's the Son of God and that everyone exposed to this book that you will have eternal life if you believe in Jesus. With these first words, Verse 19, where it says, "This is the testimony of John." He's calling John the Baptist to the witness stand to testify. He says, "Give your official statement about who Jesus is." In fact, our text has this back and forth. Five questions, five answers between the religious leaders and John the Baptist. There's kind of a courtroom feel to all of this. Just remember in calling John the Baptist, John the writer is calling one of the greatest, one of the most credible people in all of history to say, "Tell us who Jesus really is." More than a witness though, John the Baptist is also a model for each of us of true greatness.

What does it mean to be a great Christian? What does it mean to be a great follower of Jesus? How is greatness defined by Christianity? In John the Baptist we see a contrast between him and everything it means to be great in our day. He's a model for every Christian, especially every Christian leader to emulate. Here's the key, here's the secret to his greatness you ready? He's the greatest but you would never know it. There's a deference, a humility, a constant recognition of who he is in light of who Jesus is. That just permeates every interaction that we're going to look at.

Now to set the stage, this takes place somewhere near the end of 26 or the beginning of 27 AD. The text we read is actually day one of a four-day peak into the life surrounding John the Baptist. Look at Verse 29, how does Verse 29 start? The next day. Now look at Verse 35. How does that start? The next day. Verse 43, how does that start? The next day. There's this four-day grouping all with this idea that, "Hey, we're going to hear from John the Baptist who Jesus really is." Now, this is likely the height of John's popularity. Reports are swirling. Again, thousands are flocking from all the cities, and villages, and all the little hamlets. They're all rushing out into the wilderness to hear this guy preach and be baptized. This makes him something of a problem for the religious leaders of his day. See maybe he thinks he's a Messiah. Maybe he thinks he's the Messiah and a false Messiah would do a ton of damage to the nation. The religious establishment Verse 19 sent priest and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

Let me set that scene a little bit. John is baptizing people in the Jordan River at a place called Bethany. We saw that in Verse 28. For the Bible scholars in the room, that's not the Bethany that's just a stone throw east from the city of Jerusalem. This Bethany is many miles 20, 30 miles east of Jerusalem on the east side of the Jordan River. As far as we know, as far as I can tell, this site, Bethany, mentioned in Verse 28 hasn't been discovered yet. People are still looking where is this actual place? Scholars don't know. You've got this group of priests and Levites that show up. What you need to know about them is they're not the elite. They're not the commandos of the religious leadership. They're the commoners. Priests, they perform the temple functions most of the time and the Levites are kind of the doormen. They're kind of the police, the guards of the temple in case something bad happens. This is kind of like the lowest rank of clergy in Judaism, which might be a clue that the Jews didn't really think too highly of John. They just send the nobody's to find out about him, but it'd be irresponsible if they didn't because there's so many people coming to him. Notice they're sent by this group called the Jews, Verse 19. As we follow this phrase throughout the Book of John, what we're going to see is that this phrase almost always refers to those people who don't understand Jesus, they vehemently oppose Jesus, and they ultimately demand the death of Jesus. That's the Jews in the Book of John. They're hostile leaders of the apostate religious system. They're the enemies of truth, and faith, and repentance, and ultimately, we'll see they're the enemies of Jesus himself. They send this group to find out who John is and really who does John think that he is? You catch what they're implying by their question in how John answers their question. Verse 20, he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." They asked him, "What then are you, Elijah? He said, "I am not. "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." He's adamant. He could not be clearer. He leaves no possibility for doubt. One author even asserts that John is angry. He's outraged. "How could you ask me this question? I am not the Christ. I'm not the Messiah." He says. He's not God's promised king who would destroy Israel's enemies, and set up his kingdom in Jerusalem, and establish the Jews as God's chosen people for all the world to see. He's not the Messiah and notice too. He's not Elijah. Malachi 4:5 says that "Elijah would show up before the coming of the Messiah." Now, Jesus didn't he say that John the Baptist was Elijah? Remember that? But now

John is saying, "I'm not Elijah." How do we reconcile that? Here's one way. I think John the Baptist is saying, "I'm not actually Elijah returning from heaven." Remember, 2 Kings 2 Elijah never what? Elijah never died. He just went straight from here to heaven. Had his own personal rapture and John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, but I think he's saying, "I'm not actually Elijah, who was alive 800 years ago and now I'm back. I've had a birthday." In other words, John the Baptist is saying, "I'm not Elijah in that sense, but Jesus says, "His ministry was in the power of Elijah," which means that he is a fulfillment of Malachi 4:5. Then you see that he says, "I'm not the prophet." That refers to a specific prophet, Deuteronomy 18:5 where God says, "I'm going to send you a prophet and he's going to be the prophet and you need to listen to him because my words are going to come out of his mouth."

Peter identifies this prophet as Jesus in Acts 3. That's great that we kind of understand what the text says, but what should we see from this? What I want you to see is that with each answer to each question John the Baptist is lowering his view of himself in their eyes. He's taking a much lower place than they thought. They're coming in saying, "You're going to say you're a Messiah." He's like, "I'm nothing." While distancing himself from being the Messiah, John the Baptist shows us true greatness. He is a model for us in that point **#1) Resists Exaltation. Resists Exaltation.** You and I should too. We should resist being elevated, resist being put on a pedestal, resist being thought of as more highly than we actually are. Every opportunity to take a step-up John the Baptist did what? Took a step down. John's answer to their questions suggests again that they suspected that he would exalt himself. "Hey, you're the Messiah, right? Who are you? You're the Messiah, right?" After all, he had thousands of followers coming from all over the region to hear him preach. However, he knew who he was. He knew the truth about himself and he knew the truth about Jesus, so he resisted exaltation.

There's a great picture of this in Matthew 3. Jesus shows up to John the Baptist and says, "Baptize me." Do you remember what John said to him? "No. No." The text says that he tried to prevent Jesus and that word prevent speaks of using energy and force to keep something from happening. It wasn't like, "No, Jesus, you shouldn't get baptized. Oh yeah. Actually, do it because that'd be awesome for my influence here. No, no don't do that. No, come, come." He's like, "Get out of here. Get away from me. I don't want you here. No, there's no way." He even says, "I need to be baptized by you. You come to me." He had thousands of followers. They had lines for hours of people wanting to be baptized. People are confessing their sins in droves. They're repenting of their rebellion against God. He had all the popularity, all the followers, Jesus had none. In light of all that Jesus is he resists all attempts at exaltation. It's that made him truly great. Second greatest person's that ever lived.

I wonder if that's how we treat the exaltation that seeks to come into our lives. Do we resist it, or do we embrace it? Do we resist it, or do we seek it? Or are we in the habit in the words of Ephesians 2:12 of remembering all the garbage that Jesus saved us from so that all the exaltation stays far away from us and goes to the only one who deserves it. It's good for us to remember that we are dust and he's the Grand Canyon.

Now I know Dr. Phil's not going to say that to you. I know none of the other self-help shows and books are going to say that to you, but it really is good to remember that we are drops and he's the ocean. We're candles, he's the sun. We're molecules, he is the vastness of the universe. It's good for us to resist. To resist exaltation vehemently. To resist it with force. Why? Because Matthew 23:12 says, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled." Anybody want that? Do you want to be humbled? Or would you rather humble yourself? Luke 16:15 says, "Whoever is

exalted among men is an abomination to God." If the world really exalts us, if the world's really like, "You are amazing, you are awesome." We should actually kind of question that and go, "Wait a minute. Is this being exalted? Am I or somebody else? Are they being exalted for a reason that God actually dislikes and is not happy with?"

Remember Paul is a man who could especially exalt himself. 1 Corinthians 12, he went to heaven. He saw a vision of heaven. He got to be there and come back and talk about it. He says, "I could even boast if I wanted to." 2 Corinthians 12:6, "Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool for doing so." Why? Because I would just be speaking the truth. All these amazing things. That's actually true that I am pretty awesome. But he says, "I refrain from exalting myself. I refrain from boasting. Why? So that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me." He didn't want people to have an inaccurate picture of himself. He resisted exaltation. He resisted boasting or being elevated in people's minds. That is so opposite of our social media culture today, right? It could not be any more opposite. It could not be any more counter cultural. In fact, Paul is given next verse, "A thorn in the flesh." Whatever that was. He says, "It was given to me to keep me from becoming conceited." True greatness, resist conceited, resists self-promotion. It resists look at me and all eyes on me. It resists fame, and honors, and accolades. Why? Because it revels in the truth of 1 Corinthians 15:10, "That I am what I am by the grace of God and that's it." "I can't take credit for anything." John, 15:5, "Apart from Jesus, we can do..." How much? Nothing. Nothing, not a single thing. Oh, but I did that great thing. I'm great. I got that A; I built that business. I passed that test. I scored that touchdown. I did all these great things, but who caused the synapses to fire in your brain? Who caused the oxygen to oxygenate your blood in your lungs? Who gives you life, and breath, and everything else? Act 17:25.

If we're honest, we have no reason at all to ever exalt ourselves, but we have every reason on the planet to exalt the King of Kings, right? True greatness resists exaltation. It's deferential. It actually has a habit of diverting. Of redirecting people away from self and onto Jesus, which is what John the Baptist does next. Look at Verse 22. They said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" We know who you're not, but who the heck are you? They need an answer for their higher ups. Just like his previous answer, this answer diverts them to Jesus as well. It's Verse 23. He said, "I'm the voice of one crying out in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah said." He quotes Isaiah 40:3 and he applies it to himself. I want you to notice by doing so notice what he's saying, "I'm just a voice. I'm an announcer and as the announcer, the attention doesn't go to me. The attention goes to who I'm announcing and I'm announcing the Lord." He distinguishes himself from the Lord, which by the way, who is the Lord that John the Baptist is making the way straight for? What's the answer to every question in church? Jesus. Jesus, that's right. He's making the way straight to... We'll explain that in a second for the Lord, which is Jesus, but now in Isaiah 40:3, the Lord being spoken of is Yahweh. It's the divine name. John understands that many cults and false religions don't understand that Jesus is Yahweh. Jesus is God. This text is, he is implying that by what he says in this text. By saying, "I'm just a voice," John the Baptist just is saying, "I'm a nobody. Pointing people to the only somebody that ever really existed on this planet." He says, "I'm just a voice. That's all I am." He gives the location. Notice, "Crying in the wilderness." Think about that. He's not in some big city where all the people are going to come from so they don't have to go very far. It's very easy for them. He's in the middle of nowhere 20, 30 miles from the biggest city. He's not in the center of influence. He's out in the sticks in the middle of nowhere. He gives his mission crying out, make straight the way of the

Lord. This comes out of the ancient world. When there would be your king would come to your city, they would fix all the roads going in and going out to make sure that it was an easy trip for the king. All the potholes would be filled in. All the bumps would be flattened. The debris would be removed. If you think about John, he didn't show up with a shovel, right? Hey, let's go do some work projects around Israel. It's not what he's talking about. It's a metaphor for what? It's a metaphor for getting people's hearts and lives ready to meet the Messiah when he steps on the scene.

In Luke 3:5 he explains the metaphor with this, he says, "Every valley shall be filled in." The idea, being all the low places in people's lives caused by sin those will be brought up to God's standards. He adds, "Every mountain in hill shall be brought low." The idea being all the pride, the conceit, the resistance to the Lord being the Lord of our lives. All that's going to be leveled. All that's going to be brought low and humbled. He adds, "The crooked shall be made straight." The idea being the perverse, the debauched, the devious parts of people's lives brought into alignment. Here's God's will. Here's their life. All those deviant things removed. Then he adds, "The rough places shall become level." The idea being the rocks, the clutter, the debris of life that slows us down in our pursuit of God. All that removed in order to have Christ. What John is saying is, "I'm here to get people ready to meet their God and that happens when they repent, when they turn from their sins and get their lives right before God." He's like, I know I have thousands of people listening to my preaching. I know I'm baptizing thousands and thousands of people too. I know I have all this attention, but I'm just a voice. I'm nothing. I'm just a voice. That's all I am. I'm just a voice. He's the word. John the Baptist is making sure the honor goes where it belongs, which is not anywhere close to him. Despite the wide-ranging influence of his life and all the attention that came from that, he seems entirely unmoved by the fame and success of his ministry. He's not going to let any of that keep him from pointing people to Jesus and by doing so, he shows us true greatness. He's a model for all of us in this to point **#2) Seek Insignificance. Seek Insignificance.** He is what every Christian should be and especially what every Christian leader should be. He has the thousands of followers, but says, "I'm only a voice. I'm nothing. The significance of what you're seeing here," John the Baptist is saying, "Is not all the people and it's not all the attention. The significance here is in the one I'm pointing people to. He's the only one that is significant." He's happy to lower his significance in people's minds so that the truly significant one, the Lord Jesus Christ is not ever eclipsed by him. He'd rather people see Jesus and forget about him. When you think about the greatness of the son in the sky, is there anything less significant than an ant compared to the sun? Well, the distance between one ant and the sun is microscopic compared to the distance between Jesus and John the Baptist and really Jesus and us. That's why he said John 3:30, "Jesus must increase, but I must decrease. My significance, my influence, the attention I'm getting must go down because the only thing that makes my life matter is people seeing him and that's it." John is saying. He's happy to eradicate himself so that more people see Jesus than see him. He pushes back against the honor, pushes himself away from the titles, and the flattery, and the glorification that people so easily give just to be a voice. He doesn't want the honor he could get if that would keep people from seeing Jesus. He thinks less of himself and he thinks of himself less so that people will see Jesus in and through his life. He would gladly be nothing, so Jesus is everything to people.

As we meditate on that for a second, it's easy to ask ourselves the question now, can we say the same thing? Can we really say that in the areas of interaction, and life, and influence that each of us might have, do we say the same? Could we say the same? Or is it, oh Lord, just give us the grace in this social media, saturated world where self-exaltation and seeking significance where

that reigns and it's constantly screaming. This is ideal for you. Give us the grace to decrease. To self-a base. To be insignificant. Why? So that Jesus will be everything through us.

1 Peter 5:5 illustrates this with clothing. He says, "Cloth yourselves, wrap yourself, surround yourself all of you with humility for God is opposed to the proud it gives grace to the humble." Just how clothing is, how we are perceived because our clothing wraps around us. He's saying, "Are you perceived by your humility? Is humility what people see in their interaction with you?" Oh, I know that's really not what the world says you should be. You should be all of these other things, but there is something totally counterculture that John the Baptist is going, "No, no, actually there's something better than that. It's humility." See pride is the one sin we fight not to kill. However, when we seek insignificance, when we seek humility, God notices that. God blesses that. James 4:10, "Humble yourselves before the Lord." Recognize you are an ant before the sun. Recognize you are nothing and he is everything. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.

In a world where we are rewarded for prideful ambition, rewarded for activities where it's really hard to distinguish, was that done for the Lord or was that done for me? We're pursuing significance should be something every Christian should have that and maybe even Christian leader should have that. Just strive for that because then you could use that for the truth. You could use that for the church. You could use that for the glory of God. You can use Jesus to advance those things. Wait a minute let's just be different. Let's just be like John the Baptist say get that stuff away. Keep it away. Let's be counter cultural. Let's be truly great. Let's be like John the Baptist who sought insignificance. Who was happy with being nothing so that Jesus would be everything through him. He must increase, but in order for that to happen, I must decrease.

Now true greatness is at the heart of the final question and answer session that goes on between this delegation and John, notice Verse 24. Now they'd been sent from the Pharisees. When they asked him, "Then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet? So, what's going on here?" The Pharisees, they are the guardians of the law. They're the guardians of the rabbis, interpretations, and traditions that kind of surrounded the law. It seems that they were part of this delegation of priests and Levites and that's why things go to the next level. See, there's a man preaching and baptizing thousands are flocking to him and they had to know everything about him because he's ministering outside of their authority. They're the ones with all the influence. They're the one who says what happens in religion and in the first century Judaism. They're like, "What's going on here? Who the heck are you? You're doing this outside of authority." By John saying, "They were sent from the Pharisees." You can sense if you know the story already, which most people reading this do, can sense this is being ratcheted up a little bit. You don't have the authority to be doing what you're doing and oh, by the way, you're treating God's people like they're Gentiles.

See baptism was for Gentiles. It's not for Jews. If you're a non-Jewish person and you want to embrace the religion of Judaism, you needed to be baptized as a picture of washing off all your Gentile filth. All your non-Jewishness. You got to wash all that off in order to become Jewish and follow the God of the Bible. That's what they're saying. By John baptizing Jewish people, he's saying "You're just like Gentiles. You need to be cleansed from all of your sin and all your unrighteousness." The Pharisee would be saying, "These people are all great standing citizens in the synagogue. How can you say they're the ones that need to be baptized? They don't need to be cleansed, they're God's people." These two never really meshed very well. Matthew 3:7 says that "When the Pharisees showed up to see John the Baptist preaching he called them a brood of

vipers." Do you know what a brood is? I had to look this up. I wasn't sure. You might have a brood in the kids' ministry right now. A brood is your children. It's your kids. He goes, "You children of snakes. You need to repent too." There's no love loss between these two, but he doesn't give into their intimidation. Verse 26, John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one, you do not know. I'm a nobody. I just baptize with water, but there's another one here in your midst and you don't know him." Now Verse 29 says, "That Jesus showed up there the next day." Meaning Jesus wasn't there before their actual eyes, but he was in their land. He was among them as people. John is saying by focusing on baptism, you missed the point. You should be concerned about the one I'm baptizing people and getting them ready for. You should be focused on him. Not me. The witness in other words now is confronting the prosecuting attorneys. He's indicting them. One author put this way he said, "In their zeal to expose false Messiahs, they missed the true one." Why should they follow Jesus instead of John like in Verse 27? Because this one that you don't know is, "He comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I'm not worthy to untie." He's coming after me. It could be he's younger than me. We know from Luke chapter 1, Jesus is six months younger than John or he just could be saying his ministry is going to come after mine either way. He's saying, "I'm not worthy to untie that guy's sandal." See after a whole day of dirt, dust, dung, and a whole bunch of other bad stuff on the ancient roads, the worst, most demeaning, most wretched job for a servant was taking off the sandals of his master. In fact, no servant would ever do that. That job was reserved for the slaves. Even when it comes to the slaves, they'd be like, "I'm not doing that. I'm not doing that." Who's at the bottom of the org chart? That's your job. Who's the one at the very bottom? You got to do that. It was the most disgusting thing to care for the feet of your master. Notice what John the Baptist is saying, "I'm less than the lowest slave to this one that you don't even see. The most demeaning task of a slave. I'm not even worthy to do for this one." He said that and he meant it because John the Baptist was true greatness. He's a model for us that we, like him, should also, **point #3) Embrace Unworthiness. Embrace Unworthiness.**

I mean unworthiness before God. I mean humility when I say that. He did not seek fame and influence; he did not seek money. He didn't seek followers to himself. He didn't seek titles. He saw it to be low and what have we seen so far, every chance he had to exalt himself, he passed on it. He didn't seek disciples. He didn't seek esteem from anyone. He didn't give a rip about any of that stuff. Why? Because he'd come to realize all of that is worthless because he'd already embraced being unworthy compared to Jesus. It's like Paul 1 Corinthians 15:9 saying, "I'm the least of the apostles." He says, "I'm unworthy to be called an apostle because of my many and the severity of all of my sins." He said, I don't even deserve any title like that at all.

See it's only when we embrace unworthiness that we will do what John the Baptist did, which is call people to follow Jesus instead of calling on people to follow us. If there's even a hint of seeking worth in our hearts, it will be easy to use Jesus to get followers for ourselves. We'll look at this next week but drop down to Verse 35. I want you to see an illustration of John doing just this. Verse 35 says, "The next day." This is day three. "The next day John was standing with two of his disciples." You pictured the scene. Thousands of people around. He's standing with two of his disciples and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God. He points to Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Standing with two of his disciples. Verse 37, "The two disciples heard him say this and they followed Jesus." You see what John did there? "What are you following me for? Get out of here, follow him. Jesus is the only one who's worthy. He's the only one who deserves all the glory, and honor, and praise, and influence. Jesus should be

lifted up. Get me out of the spotlight, get out of here, go follow him. He's all that matters. Not me," John says here.

In our desire for people to like us, for people to admire us, to think that we're smart, or godly, or someone we should follow, and listen to, and learn from, and our desire to be examples for people to follow. Our desire for these things is Jesus seen as worthy or are we seen as worthy. At our jobs, our schools, in our homes is Jesus the worthy one? Or does everything need to revolve around you? John was adamant. He was obsessed with making sure nothing revolved around him. That is true greatness. As I often say because of our sins, Jesus should have nothing to do with us and because of our sins, he should also do nothing at all with us. Yet he does. He takes people who are unworthy and says, "I love taking unworthy people and using them to show people how great I am not how great they are." He's the planet. We're the moon. We're the planets. He's the sun. One day, every knee that has ever existed will bow down to none of us. All will bow down to him. He will be the only worthy one on that day. On that day when reality is understood in its fullness, on that day when faith becomes sight, we will recognize that all the things that all of us, we put all of this worth into, we will all see it for what it is. It was absolutely worthless compared to him. The idea then is if that's true, if that's common, if that's reality, let's embrace being unworthy so that all worth can come through us to him.

Now to close, I want to bring us back to Verse 26. "Among you stands one you do not know." Jesus was right there in their land among the people and they missed him. I mean, tragic doesn't even begin to describe how awful that would be to have Jesus right there and miss him. Yet I wonder is Jesus in your life, but you don't know him. You think about it. He was everything that these religious leaders were hoping for. They're living under Roman oppression, yet they have all of these promises in the Old Testament about the God of the universe, protecting them and destroying their enemies, and setting up the kingdom, and reigning over the world, and vindicating them, you are the chosen people. They heard this century after century. They're hearing this whenever they would go to the synagogue. They're longing. They're waiting. Every Messiah that shows up, they're like, "Maybe it's him." There's this group of people that would follow these false Messiahs all the time. Just hoping maybe this is the one that's going to set us free. This is the one that I'm hoping for. He shows up and they miss him. He shows up and they put him to death, which means that we should never think we won't miss him too, right? Yeah, but preacher, I mean, you don't understand this Jesus, I mean, he's not really doing it for me. He's kind of not what I expected. I kind of expected something a little different. I got my picture of who I want to be and what I think, and this Jesus doesn't fit into that. It kind of rubs me the wrong way and doesn't really fit with what I'm thinking is true. The issue is not does Jesus fit our expectations? The issue is, is Jesus who the Bible says he is? If he is, then what we have to do is bring our expectations of Jesus in line with reality.

If you hear his voice, do not harden your heart in rebellion. Like on that day 2000 years ago, he is here right now. Come to him. Believe in him. Oh, I know you can't see him, but you can talk to the person next to you. More likely they will say something like, I didn't come to a religious system. I didn't come to a system of ethics. I didn't come to a theology or a bunch of ideas. I didn't come to an apologetic just so that I could feel like I'm right. I actually came to a person, The Lord Jesus Christ. An actual person that actually transformed my actual life and he'll do that to you too. Come to the Lord, Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. Let's pray.

Jesus there are some truths in this text that tell us some obvious things, but it can be really hard to respond in obedience to them. There are things that we think, and there are ways that are just

normal for us to act that get in the way of the humility that this text is really showing us in John the Baptist. It's hard to recognize, and respond to, and to kill pride in our lives to help us do that and help us do it not so that we can be better people that's fine. Not so that we could be great. That's fine too, but the greatness of John the Baptist it's seen in how his humility allowed him to point people to you and that's really the idea. The humility would get us out of the way completely so that people would see you instead of us. Wherever we are as we listen to this here or online, wherever we are with you help us. Maybe it's the humility of saying I'm done fighting Jesus and I'm going to surrender to him. I'm going to give him my life. Make that happen please. For everyone else, may it be this maybe in some small ways show us how exactly we can decrease so that you can increase in and through our lives. That would be giving you glory. That's what we're going to sing about now. May your name, may your greatness be seen through our lives I pray in your name. Amen.