

Morning Sermon Outline / October 30, 2022

“He Must Increase” John 3:22-36

I. *The debate –*

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.

²⁵ Then there arose a dispute between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purification. 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!” John 3:22–26 (NKJV)

1. *Both Jesus and John were baptizing - :22-24*
2. *A dispute arose*
 - A. *Between John’s disciples and the Jews about purification - :25. Not about baptism.*
 - B. *It seems the debate swerved off topic, to a criticism of John (the Baptist) due to his decreasing numbers! In this, John’s disciples feel defeated... though they should not have been!*

According to Calvin they should not have been in the debate at all -

“for just in proportion as they were ill-informed about doctrine, they are so much the more eager to enter into debate, as ignorance is always bold and presumptuous.” John Calvin

II. *The Undebatable –*

1. *The truth about all ministry and success in ministry, it is God ordained, God given –*

²⁷ John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. John 3:27 (NKJV)

- A. *John originally had great crowds coming to him –*

⁵ Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him ⁶ and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. Matthew 3:5–6 (NKJV)

- B. *What John is telling his own disciples is, had LESS to do with John as a person, than God’s gifting from heaven, in fact all good, whether big or small, if good, is ultimately from God and God deserves credit for it –*

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. James 1:17 (NKJV)

2. *John’s plain witness about himself and Jesus CHRIST, something the remaining of John’s disciples needed to get into their heads –*

- A. *What John had been PREACHING, saying about himself –*

²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ John 3:28 (NKJV)

- B. *John the Baptist’s disciples, are loyal in their hearts to John, but their hearts need to change, to improve in their loyalty, from loyalty to a good man, to loyalty to God and God’s Son –*

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. John 3:29–30 (NKJV)

This is a problem that often attaches itself to popular preachers and pastors, they have followers who follow them more than Christ, maybe even instead of Christ?

C. The bride must go to the bridegroom, Jesus is the Bridegroom -

⁹... ,²⁵ “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Revelation 21:9B–10 (NKJV)

D. Paul preached the same truth that John the Baptist and John the Apostle preached, Christ is the Bridegroom, the Husband to the church -

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:25–27 (NKJV)

³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:32 (NKJV)

² For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:2 (NKJV)

3. The difference between John the Baptist, and every other servant of God and Jesus is an earth to Heaven difference –

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. John 3:31–34 (NKJV)

A. John the Baptist himself was earthly, Jesus is from Heaven, and above all. - :31

B. The reason John says for no one receiving Jesus’ testimony, is it is HEAVENLY, above us - :32-33

C. Jesus spoke the words of God because He was and is God and God the Spirit is in Him - :34

Others, especially John the Baptist, had the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus had and has the entirety of God’s Spirit – ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; Colossians 2:9 (NKJV)

4. Therefore, application, every minister, and every true believer must embrace, point to and exalt Jesus Christ –

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.” John 3:35–36 (NKJV)

A. The Father (God the Father) loves the Son (Jesus Christ) loves the Son, not despite what He is and does, like God loves sinners, but because of Who He is and what He does – :35

B. Believing in Jesus is the only way of salvation, if you have Jesus you have LIFE, if you do not God’s wrath His anger abides, means stays on you - :36

III. Application –

- 1. Don’t get caught up in foolish debates, especially about one servant of Christ being better than another.*
- 2. Embrace, believe in, point to Jesus, He is our way of salvation!*
- 3. The purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to point us to Jesus!*