

“One Mightier Than John”
Mark 1:6-8
(Preached at Trinity, April 8, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time we focused on Mark’s description of John the Baptist. He was the “voice of one crying in the wilderness.” He was the one sent from God to prepare the way of Christ. He came warning the people that the Kingdom of Christ was upon them.
2. John’s message was that this Kingdom was about to rise with the brightness of the sun. It demanded that they turn from their sins and repent.
Mark 1:4 – “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”
3. As we saw true repentance involves a change, a conversion. It will always result in fruit-bearing. Multitudes were coming confessing their sins but a mere outward confession will never do. A mere desire to be baptized will never do. There must be an inward change that results in a God honoring conduct.
4. Entering the kingdom would demand great diligence.
John is announcing something that is indeed profound. Finally, in **Verses 7-8** John reveals the great wonder of the ages – the Saviour of the world.
Mark 1:7-8 – “And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. ⁸ I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”
5. John had multitudes coming to him. He was attracting many disciples. He was one of the greatest among the prophets.
Luke 7:28 – “For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: . . .”
Yet, he did not receive glory unto himself.
Mark 1:7 – “And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.”
6. Last time I set before you the greatness of John
Matthew 11:11 – “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist”
But compared with Christ he shrinks to nothingness. Tonight I want to look at this one who was mightier than John. John was moved by the supremacy of Christ.

- I. John was moved by the supremacy of the power of Christ
Mark 1:7 – “There cometh one mightier than I after me”
- A. John was stirred by the majesty of Christ
1. Jesus and John were related – Mary and Elizabeth were cousins
 They probably knew each other as children
 Yet, John saw the majesty of Jesus – even from his mother’s womb
Luke 1:41 – “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:”
 2. Jesus is infinite in all His glory, a glory that demands worship
Hebrews 1:2-3 – “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ³ Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”
 3. John is saying that he was nothing in comparison to the greatness of Christ
- B. John was humbled by the infinite greatness of Christ
1. Great men are always humbled before Christ
 Examples:
John the Baptist
 “The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.”
John the Apostle
Revelation 1:17 – “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.”
Simon Peter
Luke 5:8 – “Then Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”
 2. As we approach Christ we see Him on a throne in light inaccessible. His radiance is full of majesty and glory.
 3. As we stand before Christ we see our own unworthiness.
 - a. We are unworthy to even untie His shoes
 In order to untie another person’s shoes what position must you take? It demands that you kneel before him. John says he’s not even worthy to bow before Christ. Our face planted firmly in the dirt is not low enough.
 - b. Our best labors for Him are less than He is due
Luke 17:10 – “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”
 4. The greatest men in the Kingdom are those who become the least
Luke 9:48 – “. . . for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.”
 - a. Those whom Jesus Christ exalts are made low in their own eyes

- C. The nature of entering into our Lord's Kingdom is to come to the end of ourselves
1. The lost man is naturally proud – he always focuses upon himself
 2. The Christian sees himself as helpless – as a child
Matthew 18:3-4 – “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”
 3. Coming to Christ demands the end of self that Christ might reign supreme
Matthew 16:24 – “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”
Matthew 5:3 – “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
John 3:30 – “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”
- C. Our Lord's servants are comforted by His greatness
1. Entrance into the kingdom demands a true change of heart. It demands great diligence – agonizing striving to enter in.
Luke 13:24 – “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”
 2. But how can this be. No matter how hard we try we always fail. No matter how diligent we are in religion it is still just religion. How can a man throw his entire being into this great kingdom?
 3. The One who is mightier than us does what we cannot do
Matthew 19:26 – “But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”
 4. The weaker we find ourselves the greater we find His strength
2 Corinthians 12:9-10 – “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
- II. John saw the superiority of the work of Christ
Mark 1:8 – “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”
- A. John's baptism was a testimony to the work of Christ
1. John's water baptism was a picture of being cleansed from sin. It looked forward to Christ.
 2. John's baptism had no efficacy in and of itself – it had no ability to wash from sin. It had no ability to change the human heart
 All John could do is point men to the necessity of Conversion. It would take one much greater to do what was essential for salvation.

- B. Christ's work is infinitely mightier
1. Jesus' baptism is the efficient work of salvation – it is effectual and sure
 2. It includes the work of regeneration
John 3:5-6 – “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
 3. By referring to Christ's baptism John wasn't talking about water baptism but the work of Christ in uniting us to His own body.
- C. Remember, Mark's Gospel is condensed
1. Listen to what Matthew adds:
Matthew 3:11-12 – “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: ¹² Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
 2. What is meant by “and with fire”
 - a. Fire could point to Pentecost
Acts 2:3 – “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.”
 - b. More particular, fire points to judgment
Matthew 3:12 – “. . . but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
Isaiah 4:4 – “When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.”
Luke 12:49 – “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?”
 3. Jesus is the ultimate judge who will bring judgment upon the world
2 Timothy 4:1 – “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;”
- C. John saw the coming judgment of Christ as immediate
Matthew 3:12 - “Whose fan *is* in his hand”
1. The first Advent of Christ was an act of judgment
 Malachi foretold the coming of John the Baptist in preparation of the coming of this great Judge
Malachi 3:1 – “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. ² But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:”

2. Jesus came to gather and save His own elect people to “gather his wheat into the garner”
Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
John 6:39 – “And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”
 3. For those who hated His appearing His birth was a great act of judgment
Matthew 3:12 – “Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor . . . he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
Mark 16:16 – “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 4. For most the birth of Christ was a terrible event. Why? Because they will not have Him. They will not bow before Him.
Psalm 2:2-4 – “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. ⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”
- C. Jesus came to gather His own. This gathering of the elect unto glory and the lost unto judgment will be ultimately accomplished when He appears the second time Jesus will come to gather those who love His appearing
2 Timothy 4:7-8 – “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Conclusion:

1. John stood in awe of Christ.
 Jesus Christ was a human being but there is an infinite difference between Him and us. It is the difference between the infinite and the finite, between the eternal and the temporal.
John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
2. As we stand before Him we appear tiny and small. Yet, through Him we are exalted and lifted up. He gives more grace to the humble.
3. We labor and serve but the fruit of our labors are in His hands. In addition, all of our work points to Him – He is the focus. John’s purpose was to point men to Christ. That is also our purpose. All that we do is of Him, by Him, and through Him – to Him be all glory and honor.