Christmas: The Most Worshipful Time of the Year

Celebrating the Lord's Arrival to Save Us From Sin

A Personalized Portrait of Christ–like Humility:

A Voice Calling Out From the Wilderness

John 1; Luke 1; Matthew 3 & 11; & other supporting biblical references

—Introducing today's message: During the Christmas season, typically our focus is influenced by what many people call *the tyranny of the urgent*. We might try to live by the idea that *Jesus is the Reason for the Season*, but often life becomes increasingly hectic & hurried. In our study today, we're going to take an *up–close & personal look* at someone who doesn't usually get a great deal of attention & even though he gained a lot of popularity & prominence during his life, he always tried to shift the attention he received away from himself. ***John the Baptist*** was chosen by God to prepare the way for Jesus & his life was an amazing example of *humility*, *hopefulness*, *honesty*, & *honor* toward God.

Here are some relevant comments & statements about **John the Baptist**:

"There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light."
—John 1:6–8

"God comes in the most unexpected ways to some of the most unlikely people in order to forward His purpose!" **—Alistair Begg**

"John the Baptist is one of the most important persons in the NT. He's mentioned at least 83 times. He had the privilege of introducing Jesus to the nation of Israel. He also had the difficult task of preparing the nation to receive their Messiah. He called them to repent of their sins & to prove that repentance by being baptized & then living changed lives."
—Warren W. Wiersbe

"When Jesus asked John to baptize Him, He wanted to display His identity and mission to the watching world, and commence His public ministry. Being plunged into the water clearly indicated that Jesus came to live, die, and rise again." **—Erwin W. Lutzer**

"He (Jesus) must increase; I (John the Baptist) must decrease."
—John 3:30

—The primary lesson we need to learn from this study:

John the Baptist understood & fulfilled his role & responsibility!

He was_____ & _____ by God to:

_____ the way for the Messiah &

_____ of the way

so God could do what _____!

1 **John's _____ was _____ !**

2 **John's ministry was _____ & _____ !**

He was living in the wilderness, **BUT** he was _____

His popularity wasn't something he _____ !

He was executed in _____ because of a _____ !

His _____ was _____ **&** _____ !

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3 **John was an amazing** _____ for us to follow**!**

—His _____

John was content & comfortable with living in the **shadows**.
John was more than willing to play **second fiddle**.
John always expressed that he was **subordinate** to the One who was coming after him.

—His _____

John spoke truth & honesty & wasn't afraid of saying what needed to be said, even though it was hard to hear.

—His _____ by obeying what God called Him to do!

John pointed out the reason why the Messiah was necessary & called out the sin of the culture. He was the fore–runner for the Messiah & he knew his role was to prepare the way for the Messiah

—His _____ that God's plan & purpose was being set in motion!

John proclaimed the Gospel with boldness because he knew God was sending the "Lamb Who would rescue the world from sin!"

—PERSONAL REFLECTIONS & APPLICATIONS TO ENCOURAGE OUR FAITH–-

John provides us with a model of _____ !

—He ***knew*** what God wanted him to do & _____ !

—He was willing to go ***before God*** _____ !

—He was a ***humble servant***! He didn't seek the _____

—He ***proclaimed God's message with*** _____ even though he knew that there would be _____

—He was a ***voice calling out in the wilderness***! Based on the way our culture is suppressing God's truth, we're living in the _____

Some Discussion Questions to Help us Dig Deeper

Please carefully read the Bible passages included with each question!

—1— John the Baptist was an amazing example of humility. He never seemed to seek glory for himself and John was content & comfortable with living in the **shadows,** was more than willing to play **second fiddle**, & typically expressed that he was **subordinate** to the One who was coming after him. How would you describe humility? Noting how John is described in John 1:19–34, what lessons can we learn from him about being humble? For more about humility please read Philippians 2:1–11.

—2— Please notice how John the Baptist presented the message God gave him in Luke 3:1–20 & John 1:19–37. We might suggest that John was both bold & blunt in his witness. In our culture today, is there a place for us to be so bold/blunt? You might also consider Romans 1:8–32 & 2 Timothy 4:1–8 to help answer this question.

—3—John the Baptist's life and ministry pointed people to Jesus Christ. As John 1:8 explains of John, "He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the Light." In Luke 3:1–20 we read about John's message to those who came to be baptized. Some might suggest that pointing people to Christ requires confronting their sin, warning about the reality of the coming judgment, and recognizing His authority over all. How can we confront someone's sin without being needlessly offensive? How important is it to confront the problem of sin? In sharing our faith, how can we know whether to emphasize God's love & grace, or His judgment & justice?

—4— Let's look back at the narrative surrounding John's birth in Luke 1:1–25 & Luke 1:57–80. Elizabeth & Zacharias were an older couple, past the age of having children. God completely surprised both of them when they found out they were going to become parents. Zacharias wasn't willing or able to believe what he was told by the angel & Elizabeth was grateful, but guarded about what was happening. Regarding the issue of doubt & faith, what concerns or questions cause you the most doubt? Why? How can you discern whether a person's doubts are valid or honest questions or a smokescreen for sin? Is doubt ever related to praying, "If it be Your will"? Why/why not? Faith is not a leap in the dark; it is based on solid evidence. How can we know when we're demanding too much evidence?