



# Pilgrim Home Baptist Church

NT 2022 Q4 • LESS OF ME; MORE OF HIM • JOHN 1:19-34; 3:22-30 • 9/18/2022

## MAIN POINT

John had a clear understanding of who he was and who he was not and as a result, lived a great life.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Bring a mirror to the group and either pass it around or hold it so people can see it.**

**Ask: "What do you see?" You will surely hear varied responses as people describe what they see reflected in the mirror.**

When people look at a mirror, we rarely ever pay attention to the mirror itself; we focus on what the mirror reflects. A mirror is an apt description of a Christian. Our goal should be that we so reflect Jesus that people are not aware of us, but they are keenly aware of the way we reflect. A life that reflects Jesus is truly a great life. In the life of John the Baptist, we get an example of how to do this.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:19-30.

**How does our culture determine who is important or worthy of attention?**

John moved out into the middle of the desert. He lived as a hermit, wore clothes made out of camel hair, and ate locusts (Matt. 3:4). He made a point to insult pretty much everyone of importance. For example, he called the religious Pharisees a brood of snakes (v. 7). He publicly

rebuked the ruler of the region and later got himself thrown in prison and ultimately beheaded (14:3-10). Some might view John the Baptist as a man of wasted potential. But John's life can be summed up in verse 29: "Here is the Lamb of God."

**How did John point others to Jesus instead of pointing to Himself?**

**What can we learn about following Jesus from John's words and actions?**

| ASK A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:31-34.

There was a time when we might have known facts and stories about Jesus yet not have believed in His true identity and confessed Him as Lord. At some point, though, we had a personal encounter with Jesus and saw Him as He really is. For John, that moment came during Jesus' baptism. John suddenly realized that his relative, whom he thought he knew for so long, was more than just a relative. He is the Messiah, the one and only son of God.

**What are some experiences that have shaped your understanding of Jesus?**

**How has encountering Jesus transformed your life?**

**What are some things that help you remember your encounter with Christ and remain focused on Him?**

| ASK A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 3:22-30.

John always kept the focus and attention on Jesus, not on himself. John's followers were concerned Jesus was growing in popularity, and that His popularity was actually costing John some of his own. John's response? "Good!" Building his own reputation, platform, and resume was all for naught; the only way to build something eternally valuable was to point others to Jesus.

**What are some areas in which you struggle with being humble?**

**What are some symptoms of a life that is self-focused?**

**What are some characteristics of a life that is Christ-focused?**

John the Baptist knew who He was and he was quite content with the person God made him to be. Because he rested confidently in who he was in God, John never needed to point to himself; he was content to point solely to Jesus.

# APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How can you give Jesus the place of prominence He deserves in your life today?**

**What are some practical ways to live out: “He must increase, but I must decrease”?**

**What’s one way you can choose to use your time that points others to Jesus?**

# PRAYER

Thank God for His presence and involvement in our lives. Commit to living lives focused on Him. Ask God to show us areas where we are lifting up ourselves when we should be lifting up Jesus.

# COMMENTARY

| JOHN 1:19-34

1:19-2:11 This introductory unit presents the first week of Jesus’ ministry: Day 1, John’s witness about Jesus (1:19-28); Day 2, John’s encounter with Jesus (1:29-34); Day 3, John’s referral of two of his disciples to Jesus (1:35-39); Day 4, Andrew’s introduction of his brother Peter to Jesus (1:40-42); Day 5, the recruitment of Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51); and Day 7, the wedding at Cana (2:1-11). During this early stage Jesus was hailed by John the Baptist as the “Lamb of God” (1:29,36), gathered His first disciples, and performed His first “sign”—turning water into wine (2:11).

1:19-21 John denied being the Christ (cp. vv. 8,15; 3:28), Elijah, or the Prophet. “The Messiah” refers to the coming greater Son of David, predicted in the OT (2Sam 7:11-16; Hos 3:5). Elijah, who never died (2Ki 2:11), was expected to return in the end time (Mal 4:5) to “restore everything” (Mt 17:11; cp. Lk 1:17). John the Baptist resembled Elijah in his rugged lifestyle (Mt 3:4; cp. 2Ki 1:8) but denied being Elijah. Moses predicted the coming of “the Prophet” in Dt 18:15,18 (cp. Ac 3:22; 7:37), who was expected in Jesus’ time (Jn 6:14; 7:40); John denied being this Prophet as well (though he was a prophet; see 10:40-41; Mt 11:11-14).

1:23 John was a voice... crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord in keeping with Isaiah’s words (Isa 40:3; cp. Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4). This messenger of God was to prepare the way for Yahweh’s coming by preaching repentance and divine judgment. Isaiah’s vision in Isa 40-55 drew heavily on exodus typology and envisioned a new exodus of God’s

people in which God's glory would be revealed and His people delivered. This would be accomplished by the coming of the Servant of the Lord (see esp. Isa 52:13-53:12).

1:28 John was baptizing at the Jordan River. Luke 3:1 places this event in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius ( a.d. 14-37), or a.d. 29. John would have been about 33 years old. The Bethany across the Jordan (cp. 10:40) was probably not the village near Jerusalem where Lazarus was raised (cp. 11:1,18) but the region of Batanea in the northeast (called Bashan in the OT).

1:29 On the next day, see note at 2:1-2. John the Baptist's references to Jesus as the Lamb of God may echo the lamb led to the slaughter mentioned in Isa 53:7. John may also have proclaimed Jesus as the apocalyptic warrior lamb who would bring judgment (Rev 5:6,12; 7:17; cp. Mt 3:7-12; Lk 3:7-17). Takes away the sin of the world refers to Jesus' sacrificial, substitutionary death, which appeased God's wrath against sin and sinners (1Jn 2:2; 4:10).

1:31 By I didn't know Him John probably meant that he did not know Jesus was the Messiah until he saw the sign from God mentioned in verses 32-33.

1:32-34 The Spirit did not just descend on Jesus, He rested on Him (cp. 3:34)—a sign of Jesus' divine anointing. In the OT, the Spirit came upon people to enable them to accomplish specific tasks. Isaiah predicted that Messiah would be full of the Spirit at all times (Isa 11:2; 61:1; cp. Lk 4:18; see note at John 5:31-47).

1:35 In 1:35-4:42 John narrated events that fell between Jesus' baptism and the start of His Galilean ministry.

## | JOHN 3:22-30

3:22 Jesus left the vicinity of Jerusalem and headed to the Judean countryside. In 4:3, Jesus left Judea altogether, returning to Galilee (2:12) by way of Samaria.

3:26 On John the Baptist as a witness to Jesus, see note at 5:31-47.

3:28 John's assertion that he had been sent ahead of the Messiah may allude to Mal 3:1 (cp. Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lk 7:27).

3:29 John's reference to Jesus as the groom (cp. Mt 9:15) identified Jesus as Israel's long-awaited King and Messiah. In the OT, Israel is frequently depicted as God's "bride" (Isa 62:4-5; Jer 2:2; Hos 2:16-20). John's role was that of the groom's friend, who selflessly rejoiced with the groom (1:6-9,15,19-36).

3:30 John the Baptist downplayed his disciples' concerns expressed in verse 26. Now that the Light had come (1:6-9), the "lamp" had done its work.