

The Voice - John 1:15-28

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[0 : 0 0] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast.! I will walk by faith and not by sight.

Praise the Lord, everyone. I was reading this morning and working through Psalm 119 and verse 73 says, Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.

And then verse 74, They that fear you will be glad when they see me because I've hoped in your word. And I'm just thinking as we gather that that's why we're here, because we understand that the one who made us and fashioned us, that we want a relationship with him, that we can understand him.

We can know his word and his commandments. And it's so true that then when you see those that fear him, you're like, Oh, I'm so glad to see you. It's so good to see those that come out that fear the Lord, that that is why we're here.

And I was just thinking of all of you. They that fear you will be glad when they see me. You know, we that fear the Lord, we're glad when we see each other. It's such a blessing. Let's turn to the gospel of John, if you would.

[1 : 4 0] Turn to John chapter one. We've made it through 14 verses in two weeks. And Lord willing, we'll get to verse 28 today. I was going back over it again this morning.

I thought, man, maybe I got too much. But we'll see. I think that a lot. And the Lord gets us through it. I really want to get through this next section. As we get into John the Baptist, a little bit of what John, the apostle John, what he gives us of John the Baptist.

It's not a lot compared to what the other gospel writers give us. But I think he has a reason why he does that. So last week, we looked at the idea of the word that appears many times within this first section of the gospel of John of become, of becoming, that we are able to become something more than we ever could have been, apart from the manifestation of the word, apart from the word coming and becoming something to us, totally new, not to him.

Right. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever is the word that was in the beginning with God and was God. Right. He was there before all beginnings. But for us, man, this is something totally new.

This is something that nobody's ever experienced before up until this point. And why? Why did the father send his son? Well, we saw that he wanted to give the full expression of who he is in word, in life, in light and in name.

[3 : 0 3] So that we could be something, become something we are not, as we saw in John 1 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power, ability, authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

That's something we could not have been apart from God's desire and God's heart to give us this opportunity in Christ. Romans 8 14 says, for as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

This is spiritual birth. This is not something that we're just going to stumble into, not something we're just going to kind of gain a higher knowledge into or that we're going to perform into.

We saw John 1:13 said that we were born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man. We are not born by natural processes, natural desires or natural choices.

It was a spiritual desire because we are spiritual sons. It comes from the heart of God. It originates in his very heart. That truth came to us. How came by the word, the word made flesh or what we have today.

[4 : 09] The word made text comes by the word, that heart that God has for me. How did I know that? Because I woke up one morning and I sat in the sun and just felt something overwhelming. I might have felt something overwhelming.

But it's not going to articulate to me what the word can articulate to me. And today we're going to see that the word has with it. A voice. Today we're going to look at that voice that was sent along with the word.

So last week we ended with verse 14. We saw 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.

There's a couple of words in there. I kind of wanted to pull out the word beheld. Behold. We're going to see that. We're not going to get there this week. I thought we were going to. Where John is going to say a few different times, behold the lamb.

Behold. And here he's saying John the apostle, John the Baptist, John the apostle is saying the word was made flesh and we beheld. We beheld this. The word behold, it means to look upon attentively.

[5 : 16] It means to contemplate. It means to learn by looking. Often referring of something that's used as a public showing. Right? I think of Jesus.

Did he come and hide himself away? Did he come and, well, I mean, you can get into the inner door, the secret, secret, secret inner door once you pass all the levels. Right? Think of the religions of the world.

You think of the people who lead those religions. How accessible are they? You know, they'll come out once in a while and they'll give their benediction or whatever, but they're not super accessible.

Jesus presented himself. The word made flesh that we could look upon him attentively. We could contemplate. We could learn about him because it was a public showing.

There was nothing that he hid. In Acts 26, Paul is standing before Agrippa, King Agrippa, and before Festus in Caesarea, before he's sent to Rome. Right? And he's standing there and he's giving his defense.

[6 : 13] And he gives a history of his experience with Christ and with the gospel. And he gets to the end of that. And it says in Acts 26, verse 24, that Festus said to him with a loud voice, kind of trying to stop him, like, okay, Paul, we've had enough.

We've had enough of you just going on with this monologue. Paul, you're beside yourself. Your much learning does make you crazy. Like, you spent too much time thinking about this, Paul.

All you ever do is think about it and talk about your Bible. And you've gone crazy. Paul said, I'm not mad, most noble Festus. But I speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knows of these things.

The King Agrippa, who he's speaking to. Before whom also I speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him. For this thing was not done in a corner.

It was not done in a corner. It was meant to behold. It was meant to be seen, often of a public showing. This was something that anybody could look at. This isn't some secret thing. How do we approach that?

[7 : 14] How do we look at that? Well, I think Paul tells us in 2 Timothy. He says, hey, study. Study to show yourself approved under God. A workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

How do we do that? We're going to have to look attentively. You have to contemplate. You have to learn by looking. You're going to have to spend time with the word. We beheld his glory. Glory means, we saw last, when we covered that scripture last week, it means like something judged glorious.

Literally means a condition judged to belong to God alone. When we say God is glorious, we are saying, God, we recognize you have a condition which you alone, you alone, does this belong to you?

You alone belongs the glory. Psalm 8 verse 1, O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who has set thy glory above the heavens.

God, you alone are judged to have this condition, this condition of glory. So Jesus' life alone then, his life alone displays for us what God alone possesses.

[8 : 21] God alone possesses this. Jesus alone displays that. And what is that? Grace and truth. The truth of God's unmerited favor towards you and I is what Jesus displays.

And we saw that that was the purpose of John writing this book. He says, these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, believing you might have life through his name.

And so John will take 21 chapters to display grace and truth as the only source of life. A life that is for any who would do what?

What is believe? Who would acknowledge, accept, and receive that truth. It's that simple. That simple. Anyone who would acknowledge, accept, and receive the truth of this single source of life, that his favor towards us is life.

Man, that we might partake of that. That is for us. He's going to take 21 chapters to show us that. So then the truth is not abstract. It's not an abstract set of ideas or beliefs.

[9 : 27] Well, what's your truth? Well, this is my truth. This is what I believe. This is what you believe. It's the non-abstract reality of who God is. When we say the truth, when Jesus says the way, the truth, and the life, it is the non-abstract reality of who God is.

And then those who accept who God is, not just an idea, not just as a truth, but in fact, in reality, then what happens?

We then experience the very real reality of entering into his ever-existing life, into the reality of God.

When we accept the reality of who he is, not as an abstract idea. That truth, then, it came by way of the word. It came by way of this word.

And now we see it also comes by way of a voice. Verse 15 says, John, bear witness of him. This is not the apostle John. This is John the Baptist. John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

[10 : 30] Zacharias and Elizabeth, it says that she was barren. And it says, and just in case you thought like they were still young or something, they were well stricken in years. Right? Elizabeth is Mary's cousin. Mary was 15-ish, 16.

And Elizabeth is well stricken in years. This is her cousin. Zacharias was, would have been a descendant of Eleazar or of Phineas, which would have been the sons of Aaron, the priest, as we saw in Exodus, who will survive.

He will have two other sons. Doesn't go well. They get fired from the ministry. But these two sons, and he would be one in theirs because he is a priest. Now, there are Levites who are of the family of Levi, but they are not priests.

Zacharias is a priest. They would go, I believe it's three times a year. They would go for about a week or two. And they would be at their course, their group of priests, the ones they were part of, they would go up to the temple.

And they would work the temple there. And they would also go up. All the priests would come during feast days. And so one of the times when he's there, what happens, he's there and it becomes his turn.

[11 : 35] He draws lots and he gets to go in and do what? He gets to go to offer the incense on that altar of incense. He gets to go there. And as he's in there, an angel appears to him and says, hey, you're going to have a son. He doesn't believe it, does he?

And the angel says, listen, I am Gabriel. Gabriel, I stand currently standing at the right hand of the throne of God talking to you. And you don't believe me? What are you going to believe?

And so he strikes him dumb. He says, you will be dumb until then. You know, you won't be able to speak. His wife was like, he was already dumb. But he says, you won't be able to speak until then. Mary finds out because then the angel comes to her that, hey, you're, he says, your cousin's going to have a child.

And so, boom, she goes to Elizabeth, right? If she says, hey, if I'm having a miracle baby, I want to go see someone else who's having a miracle baby. And she goes and encourages her faith there, right? And you know, she stays there until he's born.

And then it says, and she goes back. But when he's born, this John, they say, the people that are there say, oh, we'll call him John after his father. And Elizabeth says, no. I mean, we'll call him Zacharias.

[12 : 35] Sorry. Elizabeth says, no, he's going to be John. John, they'll be in your family's name, John. We're not going to call him that. Give something to his father so he can write it down. So Zacharias writes down, no, his name shall be John. And his tongue is loosed.

And he begins to praise God and to prophesy. And one of the things that says that he says in Luke chapter 1, verse 67, his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

Jump down to verse 76. And you, child, you shall be called the prophet of the highest. For you shall go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.

And through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day spring from on high has visited us. To give light to them that sit in darkness. In other words, the dawn is here.

The darkness is rolling back. To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. To guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew. So John, John the Baptist, John's son of Zacharias.

[13 : 39] He grew. And he waxed strong in spirit. And was in the desert places until the day of his showing unto Israel. So he was a goofy homeschool kid off in the woods just doing his own thing. Right? God had a call upon his life.

But he was off to the side. Just kind of doing his thing. We're going to see when Jesus comes to him. It's almost like he's not know who he is. Right? But it seems like John was a very solitary person. I don't know when the last time he saw his cousin was.

So John bear witness. This is that John. This is that John the Baptist. He bear witness of him. Witness means, we saw last week, it's something that's vocal. It's audible.

It's understandable. If it's vocal. It's not just a noise. Paul talked about that in 1 Corinthians 14. He says, hey, what good does it if I just like make a noise?

You know, if I'm just making a bunch of noises and claiming it's the spirit. Right? There needs to be an order. There needs to be interpretation. There needs to be understanding. A witness.

[14 : 38] John's witness, it was vocal. It was audible. It was understandable. It was consistent. And what did it point to? It pointed to Jesus. This was he of whom I spake. He that comes after me is preferred before me.

For he was before me. That word preferred is our word. Then the Greek means to become or to come to exist or to be in existence. So essentially, John is saying, hey, he that is manifested after me.

He existed already before my manifestation. And he is the absolute first in existence, place, and rank. He that comes after me is preferred before me or he was before me.

He that's manifested after me. Well, yes, my manifestation was before him. But believe me, he existed first. He's first in place and he is first in rank. And John had a perfect opportunity here to be like, guys, let me just tell you, Jesus is really cool.

But my ministry is cool, too. My ministry came first. You know, I mean, Jesus is going to have a bigger ministry, but let's remember who came first and who prepared. No, John never used his ministry or his calling to make a place for himself.

[15 : 53] He used it to make a place for Jesus. Eventually, he will say in John 3.30, he must increase, but I must decrease. Why? Why?

Why do I have to decrease? Why does Jesus have to increase? Can't we both just get it? Because the best place to be in life is when I put Jesus in his place in life. And Jesus is first in existence, first in place, and first in rank.

And when I put him first in his place and I put myself in my place, I find that it's a good place to be. And of his fullness, John says, have all we received in grace for grace.

Now, I don't know which John said this. And this is what we're going to get into when we get into the book of John. Especially when we get to chapter 3. For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but shall have everlasting life.

You know, when the gospel writers sat down to write this with their quill and parchment, when they got to the words of Jesus, they weren't like, whoa, the ink's turning red. This is amazing. This makes it so much easier.

[16 : 54] Right? It wasn't like that. So just because it's red letter in our Bible doesn't necessarily mean Jesus said it. And when we get to John 3, you're going to see that. We're going to see Jesus say something and then there's a whole lot.

Is Jesus saying it? Or is John giving us an addendum kind of to that? And I think like right here, is John the Baptist saying this? You know, he said, he that was before me, he that comes after me is preferred before me, for he was before me.

And of his fullness is this John, the apostle now saying, oh, and of his fullness, this one that was before him. I don't know for sure. The truth is the same. But I'm not always sure who exactly is saying it.

I think there's a lot that John puts in on purpose. Why? So that we might believe. And of his fullness have all we received and grace for grace.

We saw in verses 11 and 12 last week, he came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

[17 : 57] So when verse 16 says, and of his fullness have all we received. This is why I think it may be John the apostle. He's pointing back and saying, hey, the ones who have received, right? What we saw in verse 11 is he came unto his own and they received him.

Verse nine said that this is the true light that lights every man that comes into the world. And all of a sudden now we're in the, he's taking ownership of this. The voice here is we.

All those who have received, it's grace for grace. It's grace for grace. What does that mean? Grace for grace. Means literally grace instead of grace.

What? You want grace instead of grace? It means one grace replacing the next grace. Replacing the next grace. So it's grace. Oh, here's grace instead of grace. Oh, and here's another grace instead of this grace.

It's just a continual building of grace. Grace and of his fullness have we received. The fullness means complete abundance. It means no corners empty. Every area full.

[18 : 58] We received it. We've laid hold upon it. We've laid hold upon something that extends God's grace to us. Grace upon grace upon grace. I think Hebrews 4.16 gives us a picture of this.

The writer says, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace. What does that throne dispense? Grace upon grace. Upon grace. Upon grace. That we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You're never going to go to the throne of grace and find it a throne of condemnation. Of guilt. Of judgment. You're never going to go to that throne of grace and he's going to go, hmm, whosoever, but not you. Oh.

Do you know the week you had? I know the week you. Right? He doesn't do that. It's grace instead of grace. For the law. And now you contrast that. This is so awesome coming out of Exodus.

Right? For the law was given by Moses. We just can't let Moses go. He keeps coming back. Good old Mo. The law was given by Moses. Given means to commit to, but it also means to minister to.

[20 : 04] So the law was committed to Moses. It was ministered to him. And Moses is the minister of the law. He was the minister of what? What is the law? It's the truth. It's the truth of God.

Right? Moses could only minister in what he'd received. He received the law. He could be the minister of the law. He had no ability to make what he had received become anything more than what it was.

I have the law. I want to make the law a form of righteousness. No, I can't do that. The law is not to make anyone righteous. We know that whatsoever things the law says, says to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God.

Who wants the law? It just makes me guilty. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. That's not a bad thing.

The law is good. The law displays God's righteousness. And essentially, the point of the law is to point to one who is righteous, not to make one righteous. Points to you and I and says, you ain't the guy.

[21 : 10] And it points to the one who is and says, that's the one. That's the one. That's the point of it. Moses could only minister into what he received. Whereas Jesus, he took the truth.

Remember, he's grace and truth. He took the truth of the law, which is what? We're all sinners. That's the truth of the law. And he combined it with the truth of grace.

And it became something so much more. And that is the fullness of God. Jesus is the fullness. Moses isn't the fullness. He's in part. He has the truth, but not the grace. Jesus combines the two.

The truth of the law is, I'm a sinner. I'm a sinner. I can't make it under this system. The fullness of God includes the grace of God. And Jesus says, yes, you're a sinner.

And now the fullness brings grace. Continuing on in Romans 3, verse 21. But now, contrasting that to the law, now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, is shown forth, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

[22 : 10] Moses, John the Baptist, he's the last of the prophets. All of these witnessed that they were faithful to give a record of this truth. Being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

What was that? Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. Jesus then becomes the minister of truth of God's grace.

He becomes the one to minister the truth of God's grace. Because he alone can encapsulate that. Moses can't because he's why? He's a fallen man. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound.

The law was given to make it very plain. You're all sinners. You know, God doesn't want anyone to exit this life without knowing they're a sinner. I don't want to. What kind of God is that?

Goes around telling everybody they're a sinner. He wants every single person who comes into this world to know you're a sinner. You've fallen short. Sin is just a, it's a word that's in archery. It's a term that just means they missed the mark.

[23 : 17] So if you missed the target, you missed the bullseye, they sinned. Like what? I did what? Oh, you just missed the mark. It means to miss the mark. So the law came that all might know this, that the offense might abound.

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through the righteousness, through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So both Moses and John the Baptist, what are they doing? They're bearing testimony. He's comparing him to Moses saying he, John is bearing testimony to the fullness of God yet to be manifested.

So for John and Moses, this has not yet been manifested. It has been for us. So John is saying, this is what John the Baptist and Moses faithfully are doing. They're bearing witness to what they've received.

Now, verse 18, no man has seen God at any time. Neither John the Baptist or Moses has. Remember, Moses wanted to, Lord, show me your glory. And the Lord says, well, Moses, I can just show you a little bit.

[24 : 18] I can show you like the after effect of my glory. It's just too much for you because you're fallen. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the father, the one who dwells in God and with God, he has declared him.

He has to declare means to lead out, to go before, to rehearse. He's rehearsed him. Either John or Moses, they had not witnessed the fullness of God.

No man has seen God at any time. It means they've not seen his fullness. And so they can only minister in what they'd received. Fallen man, we only have the capacity to display one part of God's truth.

We only have the capacity to display the law because we're fallen. We only have the capacity to display the sin part of God's truth.

That's all you and I have is fallen man. We can say, I can display God's truth. I can display the reality of the sin. Why? Because we've been begotten.

- [25 : 26] We've been brought forth. We've been birthed in sin, into sin. Jesus, by contrast, is the only man, fully God and fully man, who has the capacity to display the fullness of God.
- Truth and grace. Grace and truth. Because Jesus is the only man who's been begotten of the Father. We have been begotten in sin. We can display the truth of the law.
- The sin part. I can't, I can't on my own display grace. I can't be, I can't be, I can give you God's grace. I can't give you God's grace. I can, I can give you the same thing I have, that I'm under condemnation.
- And that if I die in my sin, I, I shall be separated from God for eternity. I can give you that. I can't tell you that I declare you righteous and free from sin and you have God's grace.
- I can't do that on my own. But Jesus, he was begotten of the Father. He was declared. He was rehearsed. I like that word.
- [26 : 23] To rehearse. You know, you think if you're rehearsing a part or if you're rehearsing something, a speech, what are you doing? You're getting it down. You're getting it practiced so that you can accurately do what? Display the correct information.
- Doesn't do any good to rehearse the wrong speech or the wrong lines. You know, that's when you end up on YouTube. And you don't want to do that. But even if man could see God, God says, all right, Moses, I'm going to let you see me.
- We couldn't do him justice. We couldn't rehearse that. How am I going to rehearse that? I don't have that capacity. It took one who more than just saw God to rehearse God.
- It took one who came out from God. And who was God, right? John 10, 30. I and my Father are one. Are one.
- God's grace. Is it amazing that God is gracious? No. I don't think so. I mean, God could, God is, that's who he is. And he's gracious. And, you know, he's got the angels there with him.
- [27 : 24] And all those other created beings with the four faces we read about in Revelation. And you think, oh, God is gracious. What is amazing that he's gracious to me. What's amazing is that his grace extends to one who's not God, who's not of God, and who's not even worthy to look upon God.
- And yet his grace extends to me. God's grace does not just declare his favor to us. It declares that he sent his only begotten, that we too might experience begetting.
- That is the point of John 1, 12. That we too can experience begetting, not as God, but we can be begotten, be begotten of God. But as many as received him, to them gave he power, authority, the basis to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.
- You see how important it is to be born again? You see why it's so vital to be begotten again? There must be another begetting. I've been begotten into sin, but I need to be begotten into grace, into life.
- I need to be begotten of God so that we might do more than just see God, so that we might do more than be what Moses was, as great as Moses was, as great as John the Baptist was, but that we might be of God so that we might dwell in God.
- [28 : 48] Jesus, who is God and of God, came out from God to say to you and I, hey, come on, I'll bring you back into God. You're not going to be God, but you can be begotten of God so that you can dwell with God and in God.
- I've signed up. Anybody else signed up? It's not like signing up for the men's conference, guys. It's a lot easier. Being born again, 1 Peter 1, 23, not of corruptible seed, not of seed of the sin and of the flesh, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, the word that was God, with God, is God, which lives and abides forever.

We can be begotten of God. That is the amazing grace and truth, the fullness of God, displayed in grace and truth, where John would say, grace for grace, grace instead of grace, grace instead of condemnation and judgment, instead of separation, grace.

I know what I deserve. I know who he is. And the fact that he came to manifest his heart towards me was grace to be received. And this is the record of John, John the Baptist.

When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who art thou? So John the apostle gives us that prologue of John the Baptist's ministry. This is what he's coming to do.

[30 : 20] John is so heavily, John the apostle is so heavily loading up our start into the life of Jesus, into these 21 chapters, that there's no way we're going to be able to think of Jesus as anything else than what John's like.

This is who he is. You're not going to go into this thinking, he's just a good teacher. He's just one of many. He's just some guy. He was just born. He just, you know, he reached a higher place.

No, no, no. We're going to go into this realizing, wow, the greatest men of all, Moses, John the Baptist, none of these guys could touch this guy because of who he is. So they sent to John with the question, the priests didn't come themselves, or the Pharisees didn't come themselves.

I'm sorry. They sent priests and Levites. And who are you? Well, why do they want to know who he was? Well, we don't get this from the gospel of John, but in Luke, it tells us John was quite a preacher. He must've grew up in the South.

He said to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, oh, generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance and begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father.

[31 : 29] For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid under the root of the trees. Every tree therefore, which brings not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.

And so they are sending these guys and saying, who, who are you, John? What's your record? The word record in the Greek is to testify literally according to the office of a prophet.

John, you act like you're a prophet. Are you a prophet? Who are you? Well, he was a prophet. Luke 16, 16 says the law, Jesus said the law and the prophets were until John.

John was the last of the, of the prophets. He was the last one under that old covenant umbrella to prophesy, to speak forth the truth of the coming Messiah.

And essentially those with authority, they wanted to know who do you think you are? Where do you derive your authority from, John? Who are you? Here again, he's given a chance to make a name for himself.

[32 : 32] Well, let me tell you about my miraculous birth. You know, let me tell you about my cousin. Let me tell you about, he didn't use his ministry or position to be more than he was.

Did he? Didn't try to make himself more. Neither did he minimize or allow anyone else to minimize who he was. Think of Ephesians 2, 10. It says, we are what we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

What are we? Well, if you know my ministry, if you know who I am, you know, what God has done in my life. I'm just his workmanship. It's all we are. We're his workmanship.

We're not the workmen. He's the workman. We're his workmanship. We're the poema. We're the, we're the, oh, rehearse.

We're what he's using to rehearse to the world. That's it. It's just him using it. Now, I'm also not going to let anyone diminish that. Who do you think you are? Who do you think you are?

[33 : 32] What authority do you have? Who are you? Man, I'm his workmanship. I belong to Christ. I am his workmanship. All this mess. That's his.

And he's been able to use it. Praise God. So John, he didn't make more than he was. Neither did he diminish. He said, he confessed and denied not, but confessed.

I am not the Christ. Interesting wording here. You think it would be that he denied not. I am the Christ, you know, or that he denied not. I'm that he denied. I'm the Christ. I think it would say he denied.

I'm the Christ. I'm not the Christ. But he confessed, denied not, but confessed. Confess there is the same word we see in 1 John 1, 9. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In the Greek, it's homologeo. One of the few Greek words I think I can say correctly. It means to say the same thing as, to agree, to assent. He's saying the same thing.

[34 : 32] He's agreeing. So he's confessing. He's saying, hey, I'm saying the same thing that the word that was given to me is saying. I'm not, I'm not changing that. I'm not the Christ.

Deny to contradict a previously established statement or truth. He says, I'm not going to contradict or, I'm not going to contradict a previously established statement or truth that he's the Christ and I'm not.

I'm not going to contradict that. I'm going to agree with that. I'm going to say the same thing as every time you ask me and everything we're doing, I'm not going to change who I am. And I'm going to change that statement. I'm not the Christ.

It's not me. I'm not going to contradict that. John was faithful in his witness by staying true to the message he was given. Never deviated from that message. No matter how big he was, no matter who came to see him, John's authority was to do what?

His only authority was confession to say the same thing as. It's all I can do is just say that what I've been given to say. Guess what our authority lies in? Our ability to confess, to say the same thing as.

[35 : 37] I don't have anything new to bring, you know, it's like, well, who are you? Well, I have just received direct revelation from God and I would like to tell you. No, we have the same thing.

We're going to say the same thing as we're not going to contradict it. And they asked him, well, okay, what then? Are you Elijah? He said, I'm not.

You that prophet? He answered. No. Can you elaborate a little? He's like, no, it's like, I'm not going to waste my time on that. Elijah. That would be Malachi 4, 4 through 6, where the prophecy and the promise is given that I will send you Elijah, the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And we know Jesus would say to the Jews who rejected him, say, Hey, John was Elijah. If you would have received him, if you would have received him, he was Elijah.

He was the one hearkening the kingdom, but you rejected him and you rejected the kingdom. And so guess what? There's been this big gap. It's been given to the Gentiles now to come in, but God will once again, restore, take up his efforts to restore the kingdom as promised to Israel.

[36 : 50] That's where we're at in revelation and Wednesday nights. And yes, one who is an Elijah figure was Elijah type will come. And we see that in revelation as well.

One who takes up that mantle, that profit. I say, okay, well, you're not Elijah. Who's promised. What about that profit? Well, that speaks to Deuteronomy 18, where the Lord says that he will raise up onto them a profit from among their brethren, like unto Moses.

Like, well, maybe you're the guy who's coming to replace Moses, Moses, Elijah. These are our heavy hitters. Are you one of them? And he said, what? No, he could have said, but guys, I come to you in the spirit of Elijah.

I'm, I am an Elijah type. He could have made more of himself or tried to. You see, in the moment, it's very easy to promote self. Very easy in the moment to, well, you know, I'm a, I'm a, whatever.

I, I, you know, I'm a sanitary technician. I drive a garbage truck, you know, but you can make yourself see more in the moment.

[37 : 59] The problem is maintaining that. It's not easy to keep oneself promoted. It takes an awful lot of effort to try and keep self promoted. But John didn't do that. Proverbs 27, two says, let another man praise you and not your own mouth, a stranger and not your own lips.

What does that mean? Man, be secure who you are in Christ. Just be secure with who you are. Someone else wants to praise you. Great. Someone else wants to say something, whatever. Don't take it personal. In the sense of like taking it to heart.

Like, yeah, I really am that. Huh? No, don't do that. And Jesus said, don't be like the Gentiles. They lorded over one another, trying to use each other to step up and get a little higher.

He said, man, serve. The son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, serve one another. Jesus would eventually answer the Jews who would come to him and say, who are you?

You tell them who he is. They said, we can't believe you. We won't believe you. Nope. Because you bear record of yourself. So it's not true. Well, here they're saying to John, they're happy to hear, John, who are you?

[39 : 05] Are you a prophet? And are you Elijah? They don't give Jesus any chance to do that. So we don't want to hear anything you have to say because you're speaking of yourself. Well, Jesus, Jesus answers them. And John eight.

And he said, though I bear record of myself, my record is true. For I know once I've come and where I go, but you cannot tell once I come and where I go.

He says, listen, you're right. I am speaking of myself, but there's a difference here. I know where I came from. I know where I'm going. Your problem is you won't accept where I came from and you won't accept where I'm going.

Jesus, like John, wasn't worried about what other people thought about him, but he did not let that diminish who he was.

He didn't worry about people's praise to lift him up. And he wasn't worried about someone diminishing who he was and who his ministry was. And sadly, these men, they should have known because their position, their authority, they should have been the ones like John to say, Hey, here he is.

[40 : 08] Here he is. We've been waiting for him. Yeah. And he said in verse 23, he said, you want to know who I am? I'm the voice. I'm just a voice.

I'm just a voice. I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord. I said, the prophet Isaiah said, I'm a voice. You can forget everything about me.

You can forget that I ate locust and honey for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can forget my cool, trendy, you know, boho camel hair kind of look. You can forget all that, but remember what I said, because I'm the voice.

I'm the voice. So Jesus is the word and John is the voice. Guys, we're not the word. We don't got anything except a homologo.

We just speak with the same voice. We speak the same thing. That's all we have to give. Now, John, he was quite happy to speak of himself in relation to Jesus.

[41 : 09] He says, you want to know who I am? Let me tell you who I am in relation to Jesus. John's identity here is based in the prophetic and true word of God. He says, Hey, I'm that voice that was prophesied in Isaiah.

Revelation 19, 10 says, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit behind all prophecy. That spirit behind it is what?

To speak of Jesus. To speak of Jesus. Not to speak of me, not to speak of, you know, my prophetic ministry, but to speak of Jesus. Isaiah 40 verses one through five says, comfort you, comfort you.

My people say, if your God speak, you comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished. Her iniquity is pardoned for she's received at the Lord's hand double for all of her sins.

Double doesn't mean double punishment. It means her sins have been matched, matched with a solution. Grace upon grace. The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare you the way of the Lord.

[42 : 14] What is John preparing the way for? For that one is going to come and say, comfort you, comfort my people, man, your sins have been taken care of. Prepare you the way of the Lord.

Make straight in the desert, a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted. Every mountain and hill shall be made low. And the crooked shall be made straight. And the rough places shall be plain.

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And wasn't he? And all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. What a privilege to speak with a voice that can say the same thing as the mouth of the Lord.

What a privilege we have whenever we speak God's word. Why a wilderness? Why a wilderness, John? The voice of one crying in Jerusalem?

The voice of one crying in Rome? The voice of one crying in the wilderness? Why the wilderness? Well, what is a wilderness? Wilderness is a lonely, desolate, uninhabited, barren place.

[43 : 13] He was sent to do what? He was sent to make straight. To make level. To guide or steer. To do what? To steer us through lonely, desolate, uninhabited, barren places.

Declaring that what is coming? Fellowship, joy, and fruitfulness. Isn't that the voice that came to us? When you were lonely, desolate, uninhabited, and barren, the voice came and said, hey, there's comfort, joy, fellowship, and fruitfulness in the word.

In other words, John came to make straight, to lead straight, stay straight. Why? Because the king was coming.

The wording here was, before the king would come, they would go before, and they'd prepare the way. Any high place, they would flatten it. Any low place, they'd fill it. Any obstacles, they'd remove it. And John was sent to remove all obstacles, because the king is coming.

Do you know what you're sent today to do? We're sent to remove all obstacles, in people's lives, because the king is coming. How do we do that? Just be a voice. Just homilago. You don't have to be anything.

[44 : 22] Some say, well, who are you? I'm nobody. I'm just a voice. But I tell you what, that obstacle that's in your life, I know how you can remove that. If you just listen to my voice, the word that I'm telling you.

So what was that? Verse 23. He said, I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah. And they which were sent, it tells us here, John the apostle says, hey, those that were sent, they were of the Pharisees.

They should have known better. They should have known. Unfortunately, the scribes and Pharisees, they did not use who and what they were to prepare for the king. Did they?

Nope. Jesus would say, whoa, unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. They don't remove obstacles. They put obstacles. You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in.

Wake up. Not only are you not going in, you're making it harder for other people. Get out of the way. They attempted to use the coming king to maintain who and what they were.

[45 : 34] They had attained and they wanted to maintain it. They promoted self and to maintain it. What did they need to do? To keep self alive, who has to die? We got to get rid of the king.

I want self to stay alive. In Mark chapter 12, there's the parable of the vineyard where the master makes the vineyard and he lends it out, rents it out to these guys who come in and they get so comfortable with it.

So comfortable with taking ownership of it and authority of it and using the fruits of it. They begin to use it for themselves. They say, Hey, you know what? This is ours. But then he sends his servants to say, Hey, it's time to receive, you know, I haven't collected rent in like two years.

I'm coming to collect some rent. And instead of paying the rent, they beat them and throw them out. They send some more and they treat them shamefully. I send them away empty. And he says, I have one son.

I have a well-beloved son. And certainly when they see him, they'll realize what they are, what their due is to me. Because you see, he will be the express image of me. He will represent me.

[46 : 39] But those husbandmen said among themselves, Oh, this is the heir. I got an idea. If we kill him, the inheritance will be ours. Is that what happens? Is that even logical? You see how illogical it is to promote self and, and to push aside Jesus.

That's not going to happen. You can't take anything that way. What's going to happen? Well, he's going to come in with his armies and he's going to destroy them. They use the King to maintain what they had instead of using what they had to promote the King.

And so they asked him and they said unto him, Okay, well, then why are you baptizing? What's going on with this under the water stuff, John? If you be not Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet.

What they're saying is under whose authority do you do this? You see, I had to research about this. Okay. I think why, why is it such a big deal is baptizing?

Well, baptism for the Jews was only for Gentiles. It was only for proselytes. They would baptize them. They would administer that for those who wanted to come in to be Jews.

[47 : 42] It was very rare for the, the master in a sense to do the baptizing. He would have his disciples do it. So to have John doing this, they're like, who are you?

Cause you have, remember John had disciples because some of them went and followed Jesus. So he's like, why are you doing this? And what does this mean? John four verses one and two will tell us this bit of information that the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.

Jesus baptized. But we have this addendum though. Jesus himself baptized, not, but his disciples. And that was the usual way of doing things. So nobody could claim to say I'm the descendant of the one guy that Jesus baptized.

No, he didn't. His disciples did. So they're asking, why are you baptizing John? Baptism for a proselyte or one who is coming in to the Jewish religion or faith required a renunciation of evil, complete immersion in water, and then reclothing.

As a member of now the Holy communion of law keepers. I want to be one of those who comes to be a part of those who have the law. I'm, I'm, I'm born a Gentile, but I want to be in a sense, one of God's people in Israel.

[48 : 56] Baptism was an outgrowth of ceremonial washing. So they would wash. Remember there's a bronze laver for the priests. Well, and by the time the temple comes, there's other washings.

And then those that would go up to, um, the feast, they would also wash. So this is an outgrowth of the ceremonial washing, but it was only for Gentiles who wanted to become Jews in submitting to John's baptism.

A Jew had to identify with Gentile converts. This was a genuine sign of repentance. If one to submit to John's baptism as a Jew, say, yeah, I, I really repent in humility.

So the novelty in John's case and the sting behind the practice was that he applied to Jews, the ceremony, which was held to be only appropriate in the case of Gentiles coming newly into the faith.

He put Jews in the same class and that to them was horrifying. Who are you? And what are you doing? But I like that baptism, the complete immersion of water, renunciation of evil and being reclothed as a member of the Holy communion of law keepers.

[50 : 08] Lord willing, at the end of February, we're going to do baptisms. Try and figure out a way to do it right over here. If you want to be baptized, man, come and see me. If you want to be baptized and you don't want to come and see me, wear your swimsuit, shorts, t-shirt, and bring a towel and confess Jesus is Lord and we will baptize you.

Why? Why do we do that? Because I want to identify with the fact that I've been reclothed. I have been begotten again, and I am part of this communion.

I am part of this body of Christ. So John answers them and said, I baptize with water. Yes, I do. But there stands one among you.

If you know not, and we're going to find out next week, it'll say that Jesus, John baptizes with water and Jesus will baptize with something so much greater. You can read ahead to figure that out. He says, I do baptize with water.

Matthew 3, 11, I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that comes after me is mightier than I. John's baptism was all about identifying, identifying people as one prepared for the coming King.

[51 : 19] I baptize you with water unto repentance saying, I'm prepared. I'm prepared for the coming King. And he's going to do so much more than baptize you with water. He that comes after me is mightier than I, because he can baptize you with something so much greater.

He can clothe you, clothe you in something so much more lasting than just a white robe or a new robe as a proselyte. And he can make you part of something that is a communion and a community that lasts for eternity.

Matthew 3, 5 and 6. It says, then went out to him, Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan. And we're baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

John says, I baptize with water for repentance, for confession of sins and preparation for something so much greater. I'm not that greater thing. I'm just pointing to it. Why do we baptize?

Because it points to something so much greater. And because it represents something so much greater that's been done to us. He, it is who's coming after me is preferred before me. He said, I already told you this.

[52 : 25] Remember? The one who came before me, he was before me in place, in existence, whose shoes, whose shoe latchet, I am not worthy to unloose.

That's a weird statement. Why would he say that? Because it was the job of the very lowest of low slaves to remove the sandals. It was said that of the, the Pharisees or the priests, that they would have, you know, disciples and the disciples could be made to do any menial task, anything, except that.

They would not. It was only for the very lowest of the low. You understand when Jesus, the last supper, laid aside his garments, girded himself in a towel and went and washed the disciples feet.

Why Peter's like, don't you touch me, Lord, you're, you're, you're claiming to be the very least among us. The job of unlatching the sandal was reserved for the lowest of slaves.

And John is saying here, there is one who came before me. There's one who I don't even have the authority to do the very least of things. You're asking me of my authority.

[53 : 38] Guys, there's one standing in your midst that I don't even have the authority to do the least thing in his life. The least thing to him. You don't realize how great, how much greater he is. This one derives his power and his position, not from popularity, but from who he is.

He's the word. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. Bethabara means house of the Ford.

It's where the Fords were, not Henry Ford, but where you would Ford the Jordan. These things were done in Bethabara. They were done at the place. It's also referred to as Bethany beyond the Jordan.

If you see in scripture where Mary and Martha and Lazarus, Lazarus, who Jesus raised out of the grave, lived in Bethany, that's near Jerusalem, about a day's walk from Jerusalem. Then they'll refer in scripture to Bethany beyond the Jordan, so they could keep him straight.

It's like living in Charlotte, right? Every surrounding town is named after somewhere else in the country. You know, it's like, you're from Denver? When we first moved down here, someone's like, yeah, I'm from Denver. I'm just visiting your church.

[54 : 41] I'm like, you came all the way from Denver? That's amazing. Wow. I didn't realize. In Joshua chapter four, Joshua is leading the people out of the wilderness.

After 40 years in the wilderness, wandering, the unbelieving generation has died off. And Joshua leads them to the edge of the Jordan. And the Lord tells him, hey, send the priests in with the ark.

And as soon as their feet rest in the water of the Jordan, the waters will cease. And literally when you go and you read the wording is that they are heaped up. It even tells the place like some miles upstream.

And the idea is the water is heaping and heaping and heaping as the Jordan is flowing. I cannot imagine if you live in a little hut or something near that area of the Jordan, you're like, hey mom, something weird is happening.

Just heaping and heaping and heaping. And when their feet rested, the Jordan was dried and they crossed over. And in Joshua four, verse one, it says, it came to pass when all the people were clean, passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua saying, take you 12 men out of the people, out of every tribe of man and command you them saying, take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priest's feet stood firm, 12 stones.

[56 : 02] And you know, each one of those guys was trying to outdo the other guy for the biggest stone, carrying it on his shoulder. And you shall carry them over with you. And you shall leave them in the lodging place where you shall lodge this night.

You shall carry them over and you shall make a memorial on the edge of the Jordan in the promised land. And Joshua called the 12 men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel out of every tribe, a man.

And Joshua said unto them, pass over before the ark of the Lord, your God into the midst of Jordan, take you up every man of you, a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel.

Almost seems like maybe these guys went first. So the priests were standing there, the waters are rolled back and you see these guys go, one grabs a stone and goes another one. And they go and they set them up and drop them there.

And then here goes the people. That this may be a sign among you, that when your children shall ask their fathers in time to come saying, what mean these stones?

[56 : 59] Wow, these stones are right here. Verse seven, Joshua four, you shall answer them. The waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

When it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off and these stones shall be for memorial under the children of Israel forever. And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded and took up 12 stones out of the midst of the Jordan.

As the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel and carry them over to the place where they lodge and laid them down there. And Joshua also here set up 12 stones in the midst of Jordan.

So here the one is the Lord told him to carry out. And then he also set up 12 stones in the midst of Jordan. In the place where the feet of the priests, which bear the ark of the covenant stood.

And they are there unto this day at the time of the writing of Joshua. John is baptizing in the place where Joshua had led Israel. The place where Moses could not lead because grace and truth came by Jesus, Yeshua, Joshua, Messiah.

[58 : 11] Where did he lead them? He led them into promise. And so when John says, get goosebumps. When John says, God is able of these stones to raise up the children of Abraham.

He's standing in the water and he's either pointing the ones at the bank or he's pointing to the ones because the Jordan is low enough. He says, these stones, God is able to raise up these stones. Remember these stones.

Do you remember what these stones represent? Do you remember that because of unbelief, a whole generation died and they wouldn't accept that Joshua was going to lead them into the promised land? There is one greater than Moses.

And there's one greater than Joshua to lead the people into promise. And so John is saying, be prepared. Look at what God has done. Don't be like that generation.

How were they prepared? How was Israel prepared to go into that promised land? A voice led them out of the wilderness, through the water, and into the land. Guys, a voice has led us out of the wilderness, through the water, and into the land, and not just the waters of baptism.

[59 : 26] 1 Corinthians 12, 13 says, for by one spirit, are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles. I love that, that picture of baptism again, that the Jew and the Gentile come to the same place.

The same bank, spiritual bank, and the same spiritual river, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit. In Hebrews chapter four, we're told that Joshua could not ultimately give them rest.

The Joshua of the Old Testament, that there remains, therefore, a rest to the people of God. But we're told that, that there are those who could not enter in, because of unbelief.

And the writer says to us today, and to those he was writing to in Hebrews, he says, today, if you will hear, his voice, harden, not your hearts.

For the word of God is quick and powerful. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

[60 : 32] That verse comes right after, that no man should fall after the same example of unbelief. How do I keep from falling after that unbelief? How do I keep from having my heart hardened that I don't hear that voice in my life?

It's through the word. The word is quick. It's powerful. It's effective. We who will accept who God is, in idea, in truth, in fact, we then have the very real experience of having a very real God, receive us, and the promise of very real and ever existing life.

That's why Jesus came. And that's the voice John speaks. You and I can go out and speak the exact same voice, but we have a greater privilege than John.

It tells us that he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. And John, it tells us, is the greatest born among women. He's the greatest prophet. And yet we who are the least in the kingdom of God, we can go out and we can say not that there's one coming.

Well, yes, we can. We go out and say, Hey, be prepared because the one who came is coming again. Be ready. Be prepared. Repent. Confess your sins.

[61 : 53] And then do what? And be baptized. Baptized. Not with water. Water is great, but it represents the reality of what we've been baptized into, the life of the spirit. Amen? Amen. Father, thank you so much, Lord.

Thank you, Lord, that today you have spoken to us, Lord, with a voice, Lord, a voice that could rend the heavens, Lord, that could call down judgment, Lord, a voice that holds all things in existence.

But as Elijah, not John the Baptist, but the one he represented, as Elijah stood on the Mount of God, when he ran to Horeb, the Mount of God, when he in fear ran to the place where Moses received the law, the Ten Commandments, Moses wanted to, excuse me, see your face.

Elijah wanted to hear your voice. And it wasn't the voice that brought destruction, that showed power. It was the voice that was still and small. And what did it speak to him?

It spoke of the future and a hope. He said, Hey, Elijah, I'm not done with you. I've got so many that have not about their need to bail. And I've got a plan and a purpose and a future for you. And the voice speaks the same thing to us today, that we have a future in God, that we have a future where God wants to use us, that he has a plan and a purpose.

[63 : 09] And it speaks comfort because we're not alone. And again, going back all the way to that Psalm, we looked at in Psalm 119, we are glad when we look around and see others who fear the Lord.

Lord, I thank you for this body of believers. I pray you would equip them, Lord, not to try to be more than they are, but also not to diminish who they are. They are your workmanship. They've been given the privilege to speak forth the word of God with their voice.

What an amazing privilege. We love you. We thank you in Jesus name.