

**BIOGRAPHICAL SERMON**  
**JOHN THE BAPTIST (THE GREATEST OF SERVANTS)**  
**John 3:30 – “He must increase, but I must decrease.”**

Thesis: To illustrate the servant attitude through the life of John the Baptist; so as to encourage those who seek to know, serve, teach and preach Christ; and to provoke their spirit even further into an even surer commitment to His service.

Introduction:

1. Late and former President John F. Kennedy, in his 1961 Inaugural Address, stated: “And so my fellow Americans, ask not what *your country* can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. This statement was meant to:
  - A. Help American citizens understand and appreciate their role and duty in the struggle for freedom, and the honor in such a role.
  - B. Provoke in them a spirit of responsibility and service for their fellow man.
2. We are American citizens, and even today we have roles and duties to our country; but as the word of God tells us, we also have “a citizenship in heaven” (Php. 3:20), from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - A. We, too, need to understand and appreciate our duty to Christ.
  - B. We, too, need to maintain a spirit of responsibility for His kingdom.
3. Our duty is not exemplified in the rich, elaborate and privileged lifestyle of a man who would become president; but is more so exemplified in the humility, message and service of John the Baptist, he who was a voice in the wilderness, stating: “Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. 40:3).

Discussion:

- I. The birth of John the Baptist:
  - A. John was the son of Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth.
    1. Both his parents were righteous before God (Lk. 1:6).
    2. He was born 6 months before Christ (Lk. 1:35-36).
    3. He was full of the Holy Spirit, even from his mother womb (v15).
  - B. He was already the subject of prophesy even before he was born.
    1. He was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy (Mat. 3:3; Isa 40:3).
    2. As he was of Malachi (Mal. 3:1), a “Messenger to prepare the way.
    3. His father, full of the Holy Spirit, prophesied of his mission (Lk. 1:76-79), that “He will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.” (John’s Commission)
- II. Characteristics of John the Baptist:
  - A. Even Herod knew that John was just and Holy (Mark 6:20).
  - B. He ate the food and wore the clothing of the common people.
    1. He did not eat bread nor drink wine (Lk. 7:33).
    2. His diet consisted of locusts and wild honey (Mat. 3:4).
    3. He was accused of having a demon (Mat. 11:18).
    4. He wore camel hair and a leather belt (Mat. 3:4).

- C. John was bold.
    - 1. He commanded sinners to repent (Mrk 1:4).
      - a. He preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
      - b. He commanded that sinners must ‘bear fruits worthy of repentance.’ (Luke 3:11-14).
        - 1). People...Share clothing and food (v11).
        - 2). Tax Collectors...Collect no more than is due (v13).
        - 3). Soldiers...do not intimidate or accuse falsely; and be content with wages (v14).
    - 2. He confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mat. 3:7-10), calling them all a “Brood of Vipers,” and warned of the coming judgment.
    - 3. He withstood Herod the Tetrarch (Mat. 14:3-4).
      - a. Told him it was not lawful to have his brother’s wife.
      - b. It was for this he was put in prison.
  - D. John was humble.
    - 1. He felt unworthy to carry Christ’s sandals (Mat. 3:11).
    - 2. He felt unworthy to baptize the Christ (Mat. 3:14).
    - 3. Even John needed reassurance (Lk. 7:19).
    - 4. He knew...Christ must increase, and he must decrease (John 3:30).
  - E. John would be considered “great” in the sight of the Lord (Lk. 1:15).
    - 1. Jesus, Himself, said that among those born of women, there were none greater than John the Baptist (Mat. 11:11).
    - 2. He came in the power and spirit of Elijah (Lk. 1:17).
- III. We, too, can achieve greatness.
- A. John never preached the gospel; we have the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20).
    - 1. We have been commissioned by the authority of Christ (v18).
    - 2. We are to make disciples of all nations (v19).
    - 3. We are to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
    - 4. We are to teach the observance of His commandments (v20).
  - B. As John we can be great because greatness comes through service.
    - 1. Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant (Mat. 20:26)...Not to lord...but an example (1 Pet. 5:3).
    - 2. Christ, Himself, came to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark. 10:45).

Conclusion:

- 1. John the Baptist set the standard for service through his character, his holiness, his discipline, his boldness, his humility, and through his desire to “increase Christ” and his willingness to decrease self.
- 2. Yet for all his greatness, like us, John was only human, in that he needed reassurance, and in that he can not raise from the dead without Christ.
- 3. It is time for all of us to ask for ourselves: “Not what our God can do for us—but what can we do for our God?”

(Invitation)