

A Voice in the Wilderness!

(Lessons from the ministry of John the Baptist)

Matthew 3:1-10

Isaiah 40:3 (KJV)³ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

I.) What made John special? Fulfillment of prophecy Luke 1:11-17

A). Who does John say he is: John 1:19-23

B). Who does Jesus say John is: Matthew 11:1-15 (10-Mal3:1)

II.) His irresistible desire to serve God

A. Not worried about luxuries – Clothes made from camel hair. A leather belt around his waist. These were the clothes worn by poor people. (OT permits Locusts as a food: Leviticus 11:21-23)

B. Not worried about Danger – The land adjacent to the Jordan river, covered with bushes and heavy undergrowth was inhabited by wild beasts.

C. What motivates your service for God? Do you worry about wealth and comfort or thirst to see souls getting saved for God's kingdom?

III.) Lessons for us from his ministry

He was anointed by God

A. Anointed even before his birth, (Luke 1:15)

B. Expressed in his influence (...people from Jerusalem, as well as all Judea and all the region around the Jordan, were going out to him...)

C. **Lesson for us:** A word of warning. What drives your ministry? if it is something less than the anointing of the Holy Spirit you will fail miserably. A ministry driven by pure personality, gifts, mere charisma, fame wont last longer.

3. A preacher of righteousness

A. Rebuked the top religious authorities of his day. Emphasized on repentance.

B. “The brood of vipers” – The Baby Vipers carry venom from their birth. A harsh statement John used to confront the wicked nature of Pharisees and Sadducee.

C. Confronted rulers of his day which cost him his life, (Mark 6:17-29).

D. **Lesson for us:** Ministers of God should confront and condemn sin boldly, regardless of the cost involved.

4. He respected God’s calling

A. Did not compromise, (Luke 1:15)

B. Lived a holy life.

C. **Lesson for us:** God demands that his servants be holy. It’s one of the many keys for a successful ministry. There are ministers who live sinful lives while leading successful ministries. But they are doomed (Matthew 7:21-23).

5. Prepared the way of the Lord

A. It was his top priority.

B. “...Make the crooked paths straight...” – means call sinners to repent.

C. Jesus is coming back. We are responsible for preparing the world for his second coming.

D. **Lesson for us:** The Gospel – is it a top priority in your ministry? You and I are the heralds of the Lord’s second coming? Do you teach and practice the great commission, (Acts 1:8)? Do you call sinners to repent!

6. Gave glory to God

A. Never claimed God’s glory to himself, (John 1:26-27)

B. Exalted Jesus, (John 1:29)

C. Possessed a humble attitude, (Matthew 3:14)

D. **Lesson for us:** There’s nothing wrong in entertaining a sense of achievement with what you are doing for the expansion of God’s kingdom, but the glory isn’t yours. People should exalt Jesus when they see your work. Possess a humble attitude so that spiritual pride will not overcome you.