

Home Group Leader's Notes
Week of February 21, 2021
John 3:22-36

LOOKING BACK

Have you ever been asked, 'Why follow Jesus?' What is it like for you when people ask about Jesus?

In our culture, people don't tend to ask this exact question, i.e., 'Why follow Jesus.' However, there are many ways to inquire. Our friends with internet ministries can tell you that many people wonder. In this week's passage, John the Baptizer summarizes why he "must decrease" and Jesus "must increase." In short, why follow Jesus.

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

For this week, we are going to focus on John 3:22-26. Earlier in chapter three, an expert in the Old Testament, Nicodemus, came to see Jesus because He and others saw that Jesus was doing and saying things that indicate that God is with Him. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be "born again" and "born from above." In this passage, we see John the Baptizer witness to Jesus as the One who is "from above."

Read John 3:22-36 and write a short summary of what happens.

- **John and his followers are baptizing. Jesus and followers are also baptizing. (see 4:2)**
- **John was asked about people turning to follow Jesus**
- **John explained why this was appropriate and gave witness to why people should turn to Jesus.**

What was the discussion that ensued? (25-30) Why might this have been significant to these people? What is John the Baptizer's witness statement? Why doesn't John see Jesus as a rival?

- 1) **Was John OK with people to now follow Jesus?**
- 2) **John was the first legit prophet on the scene of Israel in hundreds of years. Thousands were being baptized and reopening their hearts to God.**
- 3) **His witness revolved around a few key points:**
 - **God assigns the roles and direction. John's role was to pave the way and point to Jesus. He was here to prepare for and present the bride groom.**
 - **Jesus is from above – from heaven. He is the Son of God.**
 - **John is an earthly witness. Jesus is God come down from heaven to open the door for eternal life.**

What follows the discussion is a witness statement to Jesus' identity and purpose. If someone were to ask you, 'Why should I follow Jesus?' what could you say from this passage (31-36)? (Note: In verse 34, the Father "gives the Spirit" to Jesus "without measure." This is unlike the prophets who only received the Spirit as needed for their particular task.)

- **Jesus comes from above. This means that He alone knows about heaven, eternal life, God's master plan, etc. Therefore, He knows the truth about what we need, about how we can be with God.**
- **Jesus has all authority (all things are in His hand)**
- **Jesus speaks the words of God as the Spirit is in Him**
- **Jesus is the Son of God and loved by the Father**
- **Those who believe in Jesus have eternal life. Those who do not remain under the wrath of God**

The author, John the Apostle, is showing why Jesus is superior to any prior or current prophet or witness. How might we compare Jesus to John the Baptizer including their origin and authority?

Jesus

From heaven

The Christ

The bridegroom

Has seen and heard from God

Speaks the words of God

The Son of God

Can give eternal life

John

From earth

Sent ahead to make a path to Christ

Member of the bride

Never seen God

Speaks as God reveals

Person of earth

Recipient of eternal life

From this passage, what is Jesus' mission / purpose for coming?

From verse 36: To make it possible for us to have eternal life by taking on the wrath of God in our place.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

In "The Gospel of John," Jesus authority is repeatedly questioned. (2:18; 3:2, 26, etc.). Why do we often question someone's authority? What gives someone authority?

We chaff at the idea that someone has authority over us. Our sinful nature continually beckons us to be gods.

All authority is from God who is the final authority.

Some of John the Baptizer's followers were struggling with showing preference to him over Jesus. In current times, people regularly compare and criticize Christian leaders. How does this passage speak to this problem? How does this practice fragment God's family and hurt His servants? How might a full understanding of Jesus put this to rest?

This is a challenge for us Americans. Because we have access to so many churches and ministries, we see and hear many Christian leaders. Our desire is often to please ourselves, to get what we want, to show preference. Instead, the Scriptures say that it is God who empowers, inspires, and gifts leaders to be what and where he needs them. We forget that God's redeemed people belong to Him. When we criticize, we are criticizing God. We can show preference to a leader in another location that was never meant to be our shepherd. We pick and choose without them being in authority over our lives. If we understand Jesus life and role, we would understand that He came to serve, to give His life for others, and not to get what He wants. He is the final authority (all things) and yet lived a humble and gentle life.

What can we learn from John the Baptizer's attitude toward those who would compare or criticize?

John understood his identity in Christ, his role, and his love for God. He understood that all leadership and giftedness is from and for God. Rivalry is foolish and damaging to God's plans and people.

John the Baptizer began His explanation for "Why he must increase" with this statement: "He who comes from above is above all." Why is this the starting place for answering why we follow Jesus?

Humility is the starting place to believing and following Jesus. All glory belongs to God. All gifts are from above; His plans are the only plans that matter. Luke 9:23 "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Praise God that "He who believes in the Son has eternal life!"

**Love and grace to you,
Steve**