

John 3:22-36

Our Ever-Increasing Christ!

Introduction

The world-famous composer Leonard Bernstein was once asked a question by an admiring reporter:

Mr Bernstein what is the hardest instrument to play?

Without any hesitation – Bernstein looked at the reporter and said:

The hardest instrument is second fiddle...

He said:

*I can always get plenty of first violinists, but to find one who plays second violin with as much enthusiasm, or second French horn, or second flute, now that's a problem...and yet **if no one plays second** then we have no harmony in the music...*

The point Mr Bernstein was making is obvious:

It's always a challenge for us as humans, to fade into the back, and let others take the stage!

And yet that's the very thing we see in our passage here this morning!

In fact, **if you've been paying attention** to John's Gospel – you would know that this is a lesson John has been **drilling into our hearts** ever since we met him Baptist back chapter 1 verse 19...

John the Baptist is that happy humble preacher who is willing to play second fiddle!

And so this week's text **repeats much of what has already been said** about him & **the themes we've seen** already developed in John's Gospel – for instance:

- The statement from John is repeated here: *I am not the Christ!*
- We're gonna see a discussion on baptism & purification between a Jew and John's disciples!

- We're gonna see the humility of John the Baptist pointing to Jesus!
- We're gonna see the divine nature of Jesus once again revealed!

And so, **in many ways** this is John the Author's way of telling us:

Allow me recap the story before we move on!

And this is always the way that **a really good story teller** will draw their readers in – they will repeat the story and emphasize the main portions – so that we get it into our hearts!

Main Point

And so **lest we forget** the fundamental reality of what John's Gospel is about – and what our duty as Christians is about...

Allow me to remind us **one last time** of these 3 things:

1. The Supremacy of Christ!
2. The Humility of John!
3. And the task of the Christian life!

The main point we're gonna see as we come to our passage of Scripture today – is that:

We must decrease and Christ must increase because Jesus stands as King above all!

An Ever-Decreasing Disciple (22-30)

An Ever-Increasing Christ (31-36)

John 3

So John chapter 3 beginning at verse 22 – John writes:

After this (that is after His encounter with Nicodemus in Jerusalem), Jesus and His disciples went to the Judean countryside, where He spent time with them and baptized. ²³ John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there. People were coming and being baptized, ²⁴ since John had not yet been thrown into prison...

Opening Gambit

When most Christians think of John chapter 3 – they **almost inevitably think of** John 3:16 – now this is for good reason!

John 3:16:

- Clarifies Gospel Urgency!
- It magnifies Gospel Potency!
- It signifies Gospel Clarity!
- And solidifies Gospel Simplicity!

It is in fact **the mountainous peak** of John's third chapter!

No doubt many of us have come to John 3 and simply stopped at verse 16 – but I wonder if you've ever thought about **verses 22 to 36!**

We are beginning to **descend back down** the theological mountain as it were...

Jesus and His disciples have left Nicodemus in Jerusalem... they are now heading East (North-East) to the Judean countryside...

Time With Them

And the first thing John tells us here, is that **Jesus made a concerted effort** to spend time with His disciples, **simply just to be with them** – verse 22:

*After this, Jesus and His disciples went to the Judean countryside, **where He spent time with them!***

Now I love the simplicity of this verse – I love the power of it – because **it just so reveals** the heart of Jesus!

Often, we think of Jesus as the solo pastor and preacher!

He was the pastor who sort of did His own thing and these guys just followed Him around like a bad smell – but that's simply not true!

John says that Jesus **was a master teacher** because Jesus loved spending time with His disciples!

And if we're honest – this is really the way that **any true & authentic, discipleship** takes place in the Christian life!

Spending time with those we love – simply because we want to see them grow in their knowledge of God!

We read for instance in Mark chapter 3 that:

*Jesus called to Himself those whom He desired, and they came to Him, and He appointed twelve (whom He also named Apostles) **so that they might be with Him...***

Paul often took **Barnabas, or Silas, or Timothy** when he did ministry!

Moses took Joshua!

Elija took Elisha!

Barnabas took Mark!

Because that's the way **authentic discipleship** occurs in the Christian life – we invest our time into other people – so that they may also make disciples and be obedient to the commands of Christ!

I'm always amazed at what John writes in 3rd John chapter 1 when he is talking to his friend Gaius and he says:

I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in the truth...

I mean that's just **not a natural reaction** that we often have in the Christian life – when we hear reports of others **who are doing better than us** – our natural reaction is in NOT to rejoice but to reject!

I mean when was the last time you had genuine joy over someone else's faith that was flourishing in Christ?!?!?

When was the last time **you wanted someone else to flourish** and exercise their gifts **over and above your own** in the Christian church?!?!?

See it's **all well and good** to come to Church on a Sunday morning and **sing a few songs** – but to actually do life in the trenches together – now that is another challenge friends!

But see part of what it means **for us to be Christians in Christ** means that we are teaching others how to follow Jesus, as we ourselves walk **in obedience with Him...**

Jesus loved spending time with His disciples!

Baptising Others

And what was Jesus doing with His disciples in Judea – well John tells us:

They were **baptising people into the name & ministry of Jesus Christ**:

After this, Jesus and His disciples went to the Judean countryside, where He spent time with them and baptized.

They were doing ministry **together!**

They were making disciples **together!**

So apparently **this discipleship model** that Jesus had established, **was beginning to spill over** into other people being drawn into the ministry, & the Person, & work of Christ!

When we are doing discipleship well – others will want to join as well!

Baptising Others

Now it's an interesting turn of phrase John uses here in verse 22: *He spent time there **and baptized*** – Chapter 4 verse 2 goes on to say – Jesus **didn't actually baptise anyone!**

John chapter 4 verse 1:

When Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard He was making and baptizing more disciples than John ² (though Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), ³ He left Judea and went again to Galilee...

So, I think **the point John is making** is that; people are coming out to Jesus to be baptised, but **it was only His disciples**, who were doing the baptising!

Now this is probably for good reason...I mean can you imagine **the hype people would claim** when they say to their friends that I was baptised NOT by John, NOT by Peter, NOT by James, NOT by Phillip – but I was baptised **by the very Messiah Himself!**

So it's probably a wise move for Jesus to stick to the teaching here – and for His disciples to be doing the baptizing!

John's Baptism

And speaking of baptisms – John the Baptist was also baptising **several miles North** in a place called Aenon – Verse 23:

John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there (Literally many springs in that place). and people were coming and being baptized, ²⁴ since John had not yet been thrown into prison...

Now the geography of this scene is really important!

Think about where all of this is taking place, **and think about** where John **first met Jesus** back in chapter 1 of this Gospel...

John says in chapter 1 verse 28:

*Now all this took place in Bethany **across the Jordan**, where John was baptizing...*

So presumably John had first met Jesus **on the East side** of the Jordan – looking into the promised land... and Jesus shows up **in John's space** and John says: *Behold the Lamb of God!*

But now says John **in chapter 3 verse 23**:

John has moved to **the West side** of the Jordan & **guess who decides to show up on the West side?!?!?**

It's Jesus again!

And what is Jesus doing on this side of the Jordan – He is **not just showing up** – but He is actually stealing disciples from John and performing the same ministry of baptism that John was doing:

A Baptism of Repentance!

The message is clear friends:

When Jesus becomes Lord of your life...He demands all of it!

He **does not just become** King of **this little corner of your life** over here – but when it comes to **family or finance** – that's off limits for Jesus!

God – I want you to give me a good paying job – but when it comes to Church **every single Sunday**, well I certainly can't give up my double time once a month right?!?!?

God – I know that you desire for me to get married and have children – but surely **this non-Christian girl** is a viable option for me!

I know you want me to pray with my church family more often – but Saturdays **really are the only day** I can afford to spend with my children!

See we often **like the idea** of Jesus being Lord...**until it actually comes** time for Him to be Lord of our space!

But that's NOT how John the Baptist testifies is it?!?!

Jesus is either Lord of everything – or He is Lord of nothing!

There is no middle ground when it comes to King Jesus friends!

When Jesus becomes Lord of your life...He demands:

All of your time!

All of your talents!

All of your efforts!

All of your money!

All of your children!

All of your leisure!

All of your life!

Purification Dispute

And see **this was a lesson** that **John's disciples** still hadn't figured out yet...

And so we read in verse 25:

Then a dispute arose between John's disciples and a Jew [over the matter of] purification. ²⁶ So they came to John and told him, Rabbi, the one you testified about, and who was with you across the Jordan, is baptizing—and everyone is going to Him...

So John is not just losing space – he is also losing significance!

John's disciples are starting to get a bit agitated here – and **even a little envious** of Jesus, and **it's starting to come out** in the way they talk about Him!

Now we've all met Christians like this – **people who get jealous** over another man's ministry or talent in the Church!

We know that if you get enough Christians in a room for long enough – they will **inevitably find something** to argue over:

How many angels can dance on the head of a pin!

What is the nature of communion?

Is it a means of grace is it a memorial?

But most of the time it's over the issue of baptism!

I don't know why it's baptism – it's just always baptism!

Island Church Split

You've all heard the story about the man who lived on a remote desert island after being shipwrecked at sea?!?!

He was a Baptist pastor who was once shipwrecked on an island – and he stayed there for several years **until he was finally rescued** by a helicopter who picked him up!

And as he was being winched up onto this helicopter the pilot of the bird looked to the crest of the hill (where the pastor was staying) and he noticed there were **3 large buildings on the island...**

The pilot looked at the man and he said: *Are you sure you're the only here on this island?*

The man said: *Yeah, I'm definitely **the only one on this island...***

He said: *Well why are there 3 different buildings on the hill?*

The man said: *Oh... well **the building on the left**, that's been my home for the last several years...*

***The building in the middle**, that's the church I currently attend!*

***And the building on the right**, that's the church **I used to attend**, before the church split!*

You get the point!

There's only 1 guy on the Island!

But there are people like this in this world – people will argue **with their own shadow!**

3 Signs of Jealousy

And I imagine some of John's disciples may have been like that – apparently, **as a result of these 2 competing ministries**, a dispute arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over the matter of purification, possibly over baptism, most likely over ritual cleansing!

Now we don't have all the details here – we don't know who started the argument – we **don't even know the specifics** of the argument!

Possibly this Jew **had been baptised by Jesus** and he came up to argue over Jewish customs now being obsolete in the ministry of Jesus!

We don't actually know...

All we know is that John's disciples are starting to get jealous of Jesus – and **it's starting to come out** in the way that they talk about Jesus...

No Name

1. Firstly notice, **they don't even bother** to mention the name of Jesus verse 26:

*Rabbi **the one** you testified about, who was with you across the Jordan is baptizing— and everyone is going to **Him**.*

Rabbi you know that guy; whatever His name is... the one you said was the Saviour of the world, yeah that guy, He's now baptising more people than you!

*Who does **He** think **He** is!*

So they can't even bring themselves to say the name of Jesus – even though they know who Jesus is because John has been testifying about Him!

It's a reflection of the reality of their hearts – **they are so jealous of Jesus** that they **don't want to** say His name!

We've all experienced this kind of jealousy before – when you are so jealous of a person, even saying their name stings your heart!

All Credit to John

2. Secondly (this jealousy comes out) in the fact that they give **all credit to John** and no attention to Jesus:

*Rabbi the one **you testified about**, the one who was **with you** across the Jordan!*

*I mean **let's not forget** Rabbi **who it was** that gave Jesus His ministerial beginning!*

You baptised Him!

You testified of Him!

You gave Him His start!

You were the first on the scene!

You were the superior witness!

And see this is what sinful jealousy does – it disproportionately focuses upon **the greatness of man** – and decreases **the greatness of God!**

So they are forgetting the very fact of **what John had said about Jesus:**

This is the one I told you about: ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because He existed before me – John 1:30!

Over-Exaggeration

3. And lastly we see **a third stroke of jealousy:** a total & irrational **over-exaggeration** of the truth!

*Rabbi the one you testified about, who was with you is baptizing— and **everyone is going out to Him...***

Everyone is leaving us, and everyone is going out to Jesus!

But verse 23 just told us that **John had to find more water** because people **were still coming out to be baptized by John!**

So clearly – their perceptive jealousy is causing them **not only to be foolish** but downright stupid – because sin makes people irrational!

It causes us to lose sight of the beauty & the glory of Jesus!

Glory Thieves

So, irrational does sin us – that it actually causes us **to become jealous of Jesus!**

Now we read that, and we think:

How in the world does someone become jealous of Jesus – He’s God in the flesh!

*I mean **isn't that the whole point** of Jesus' ministry – to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!*

That was what He was doing in eternity past anyway...

Why would anyone become Jealous of God...

But friends that is the very question!

See let's NOT forget the fact that you & I are Sons and daughters of Adam who love to become **glory thieves** when it comes to Jesus – we too become irrational people seeking the glory of man over and approve the approval of Christ!

It's the very sin we see present in Genesis 3!

Wanting to be like God and seeking to be in the place of God!

The Antidote

And so **what's so amazing** to see, is **the response we get**, from John the Baptist and his ability to kill the sin of envy!

4 things we see John say that we remember in times of Christian jealousy & sin in our lives!

4 ways to kill the green-eyed monster of pride – John says to look to:

John's **Perspective** (verse 27)

John's **Pattern** (verse 28)

John's **Pleasure** (verse 29)

John's **Purpose** (verse 30)

4 P's of John's ministry to kill our sinful jealousy & find satisfaction in the supremacy of Jesus!

John's Perspective

Notice the first P in the list:

John's Gospel Centred Perspective

Verse 27:

John responded: No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven...

Now you wanna talk about getting the proper perspective on life – putting on the glasses of grace, and seeing life **through the lens** of the Gospel:

This is John's take:

Everything you currently have has been given to you **from God, by God and for God** – because God is a God of infinite grace!

So, this is a claim **NOT just** to the goodness – but to the greatness of God –the sovereignty of God **IN ALL THINGS!**

God's handiwork has been painted on every good and heavenly gift we have!

Everything we have (whether good or bad) in this life has been sovereignly given to us – extended to us – delivered to us **NOT because we deserve it – NOT because we're good people** – but because God is a GOD of infinite grace!

This is John's perspective:

God has extended His kind hand of generous grace – every gift you and I have has been given to us from heaven above!

And therefore **if you and I lose anything in this life** that is God's divine prerogative to do so!

We did nothing to receive God's gifts in the first place – and we can do nothing to maintain those gifts that God sovereignly bestows & takes away!!!

We **should not complain** when the sovereign God of heaven does what He so decides **to do with His own clay!**

James 1:17:

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...

1 Corinthians 15:10:

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. but rather I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me...

And so **one of the best things** that we can say in those times of life, when we feel **salty, sad, secluded, sour, and so hard done by** – is to say with John:

God is in debt to no one!

He gives according to His own Grace **when He sees fit!**

It's His world – His money – His gifts – His people – His creation!

No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven!

*I did nothing to get those people **coming out to me in the wilderness** says John – and so **who am I to complain** about the fact that **they are all going to Jesus** to be baptised...*

He gave all those people to me – He can take them all away!

And it's **the first thing** we need to see – when life seems unfair pick up the glasses of grace and see:

*John's Gospel centred, Christ exalted, **Gospel centred** perspective that kills ministerial jealousy and brings Holy Spirit Joy!*

The sovereignty of God, is a sweet pillow to rest our heads, in times of fear, in times of grief, in times of doubt...and especially in times of sin!

And dissatisfaction in the sovereignty of God, is not one of the marks of a sanctified Christian mind!

John's Pattern

Secondly says John – have a look at *John's Gospel centred pattern*

Verse 28:

You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I've been sent ahead of Him...

So he's reminding his disciples of the mission that he had and the pattern of his role!

I have been born to do one thing and one thing only – and that is to point others to the supremacy of Jesus, and my job is now coming to a close!

It's why he came testifying in the wilderness – and it's the same thing he needed to do!

Look to Jesus X3

He's like a broken record...

The guy in the Cannon

Now friends **I can kinda sympathise with John here** because in many ways – this is the job of every minister who proclaims the glory of the Gospel on a Sunday!

You know often I tell myself that **I feel like the guy** getting shot out of the canon at the circus...

Every single Sunday I get up here and say to myself:

*I've been telling these people the same thing every Sunday **for years now...** I'm gonna get up there and iv'e got nothing new to tell them...and I kinda feel stupid – I kinda feel dumb – but this is what God's called me to!*

And I get up and I say: *Look to Jesus!*

Martin Luther (the Protestant Reformer) once said that:

God made man out of nothing, and as long as we are nothing, He can make something out of us...

D.A Carson in his commentary on this verse says that:

Unlike many preachers for whom humility is little more than [a mere title] John actually meant it – He meant what he said. And both John and Jesus were given their roles by heaven, and John was entirely content with His!

It's the reality that the Bible constantly paints for us throughout every page of Scripture friends:

The more that life is about us – the more miserable we become!

But the more that we point others to Jesus the more that joy comes to the Christian life!

But **if we could just** get John's **pattern of ministry** into our hearts – then we would recognise our existence as one that should point others to Christ!

And one of the best ways to get over jealousy is to simply keep working!

Keep going – keep moving – keep preaching!

John's Pleasure

And that leads us into **the third P** of John's Gospel centred ministry:

Gospel-Centred Pleasure

Verse 29:

He who has the bride is the groom. But the groom's friend, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the groom's voice. So this joy of mine is complete.

Now you may not know this – but in the ancient world it was the role of the best to **bring the bride to the bridegroom** so that the wedding ceremony could take place!

It was one of the main jobs of the best man:

To **guard and to protect** the groom's bride – until he heard the groom calling him from the other room!

And on top of this – John **would have been well aware** of the Old Testament language of Israel as a bride and God as her husband (Isaiah 54; Ezekiel 16; Hosea & Gomer – and others!

John had been caring for God's people (Israel) preparing the way, getting them ready, and protecting them from the vipers of Israel!

And so having faithfully prepared the way – John now says: *This joy of mine is complete, **and I am happy to fade into the back and to take up the second fiddle!***

And that's our goal in evangelism – in discipleship – in fellowship – in parenting – and in all the Christian life!

Our goal in discipleship friends is pointing people to Jesus!

Spurgeon said:

Our day-to-day joy, is knowing that we have to deal with lost souls who are not yet hopelessly lost...

Is this the joy & goal of your own ministry & life?

Leading others to Jesus and **having the joy** of serving Christ!

John's Purpose

Which leads us into our final P – John's **Gospel centred purpose**

Verse 30 – John summarises all of his life & ministry when he says:

He must increase, but I must decrease...

Whatever else is said about John the Baptist – this was his purpose in:

Jesus Christ must get bigger and I must get smaller!

Many have said this is now **the third MUST** that we have seen in John chapter 3:

1. John 3:7 – You **must** be born again!
2. John 3:14 – Christ **must** be lifted up!
3. And John 3:30 – He **must** increase!

And these **3 MUSTS aptly surmise** the entire Christian life: the new birth that inspires faith, that faith that brings about salvation, and the salvation that seals humility, for God's supremacy!

Spiritual See-Saws

I'm sure we've all been on a seesaw at the park, maybe as children – maybe as adults – some of you as parents!

We all know the **motion of a seesaw**– someone **MUST always** be increasing or decreasing!

If one person goes up the other **MUST** come down!

Because that's the nature of what seesaws do at a park:

Both people cannot be in the same location when sharing a see-saw!

And that's John's point!

That just as the motion of the Christian life is seen in the exaltation of Jesus – at the same time you are seen as decreasing!

He is either increasing... or you are – **but you can't both be preeminent!**

POINT 2

And the person who always plays first fiddle is JESUS CHRIST!

WHY?!?!?

Because that's the nature of who Christ is – **Christ is above all because He came from above!**

And that's exactly the point John is making in our second (and **much more shorter** point) – Verses 31 to 36!

So have a look with me at verse 31 – as we're going to **quickly summarise and conclude with this:**

The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth is earthly and speaks in earthly terms. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He testifies to what he has seen and heard, and yet no one accepts His testimony. ³³ The one who has accepted his testimony has affirmed that God is true. ³⁴ For the one whom God sent speaks God's words, since he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands. ³⁶ The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him.

It's a summary statement!

It is surmising **all that we have seen** in these first 3 chapters...

It's a little bit of a cryptic passage but – essentially John says the reason He must increase and we must decrease is because Jesus is the King above all!

The supremacy of Christ can be seen in 3 main ways:

1. Who Jesus is!
2. Where He is from!
3. And what He has said!

That's the essence of 31 to 36!

- The one who comes from above is Jesus Christ!
- The one who is from the earth is John the Baptist!
- The one who is supreme is **the one from heaven and above all** and yet no one accepts His testimony!
- But the one who is from the earth **isn't above all** and yet people are flocking out to hear his testimony (Chapter 1:19)!
- And so Jesus has authority to speak of things above **NOT only because** His Father has given Him all authority – but because the Father has given Him the Spirit without measure – that is Jesus perfectly displays the power of the Spirit in His earthly ministry!
- And so therefore (concluding verse) – the one who believes in the Son has eternal life because Jesus comes from the place that eternal life is granted!

Now I especially love that phrase at the end there:

*The Father loves the Son and has given **all things into His hands** – and therefore whoever receives the Son:*

RECEIVES EVERYTHING!

The Father's Estate

Let me see if I can illustrate this final point for us:

The story is told of a wealthy man and his son **who both loved to collect** rare works of art...

They had everything in their collection; from the works of *Raphael* down to *Picasso*, *Van Gough* and others...

And they **would often sit together** and admire the rare and great works that they had acquired over the years...

But one day when the Vietnam War had broken out **the son of the father** had to go and willingly go and serve the country that He loved!

His son was very courageous soldier, brave and strong of heart!

Much to the father's dismay however he had gotten word that his son had died at war serving those whom He loved – and that he had died, giving His life to rescue another soldier...

Several months later there was knock at the door from the young soldier who whose life **had been saved by the son**:

*Sir... (the soldier said) – **I know you don't know me** but I am the soldier for whom your son gave His life, He saved many soldiers that day.. and as he was carrying me to safety a bullet had struck His jacket and went **straight through to the center of His heart...***

The young man held out a package and said:

Here... I want you to have this...your son often spoke about your love for art and how much you two had in common...

*I know it isn't much **and I'm really not a great artist** but I think your son would have wanted you to have this...*

The father opened the package and with tears welling in his eyes he saw a beautiful painting of his son; his **one and only son** who had given His life saving those He loved!

The father thanked the young soldier for his work in capturing the son's personality, and offered to pay the young man some money... but the soldier replied:

Oh sir, I could never repay you for what your son has done for me, it's a gift, and I want you to have it...

The story goes that the father died not too long after that exchange between the soldier...and there was an auction to be had at the house selling **all of the father's wonderful and rare paintings...**

Many influential, and well-known people had gathered that day **and were excited to see** the rare works of art that were on offer **from so many well-known artists throughout history...**

The auction started **and would you believe** the painting of the son was the first on the stand...

But there was silence from the audience... no one wanted to purchase the Son!

No one wanted to bid for the son... and then people started to shout:

*Next...skip this one... get to the real art... we want to see Van-gough...
Michelangelo...Picasso...*

But the auctioneer persisted:

Frineds, let's start the bidding at \$100?

The shouts got louder:

We didn't come to see this painting... we came to see the greats, the real artists!

But the auctioneer persisted:

The son, the son, who will take the son!

Finally the **longtime family Gardner** stood up from the back of the room and said:

I will take the Son...Being myself a poor man...I don't have a lot of money... I only have \$10 to offer... but I would like to take that painting of the Son!

Do I hear \$20?...

Replied the auctioneer...

Silence filled the room as no one wanted the painting of the son...

So the auctioneer pronounced:

Going once... going twice... SOLD for \$10! To the long time family gardener...

Great, the crowd replied – now let's get on with it!

I'm sorry... said the man with the gavel... But the auction is over...

*See when I was called to conduct this auction I was told **a secret stipulation in the will** which was only to be revealed until this very time... Only the painting of the son would be auctioned today... **and whoever bought that painting** would inherit **the entire estate**...*

He who takes the Son – receives everything!

Conclusion

And Friends that is the message that John the Baptist had given his life for...

And it's the message that you & I are to proclaim every single day of our lives!

Friends how are you pointing others to Jesus in your day to day lives?!?!?

How are you showing that:

Jesus is supreme!

Do you & I have moments in life **where we want to be at the top of the seesaw** and take the first fiddle – Absolutely!

But it's the heart of those who truly love the Son, who will say in those moments of sin – He must increase I must decrease – why?!?!

Because He who receives the Son – receives everything!

And that is a message dear friends – that is worth giving up everything for...

Let's Pray.

John 3:22-36

Discussion Questions

[Read John 3:22-36].

Main Point: *We must decrease, and Christ must increase because Jesus stands as King above all.*

Q1. Think back over the first three chapters of John. What themes can you see repeated in 22-36? – Why do you think John is repeating himself here?

Q2. [Read verses 22-24]. What is Jesus doing with His disciples in Judea? – What does this show us about the heart of Jesus and His task in ministry? – How does this help clarify your goal in the Christian life?

Q3. What are some ways we can help others to grow in their relationship with God? – How often do you find joy in seeing others grow in their knowledge of the truth? – Why do you think we often struggle to allow others to take the stage?

Q4. [Read verses 25-26]. What is the emotion John's disciples are feeling here? – What is the cause of their issue? – In what ways do you see their jealousy coming out? – Has your heart reflected the heart of John's disciples this week, and how have you dealt with it?

Q5. [Read verses 27-30]. In what ways does John rebuke his disciples? – How do these verses help you to get a gospel-centred perspective on life? – How do these verses help you to kill your sin? – What will it mean for you this week specifically to decrease that Christ might increase? (in your home, marriage, job, school, church, etc.)

Q6. [Read verses 31-36]. In your own words, briefly summarise these verses? – Why do you think the supremacy of Christ is easy to state but difficult to accept? – What are some of the subtle (and not so subtle) ways that we try to make ourselves increase?

Q7. What are some of the things that we tend to think God owes us, or that we have a right to, instead of realising all is by grace and we deserve nothing (but Hell)?