

The Gospel of John

3:28-36

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John. This week we will finish chapter three.

✠ **John 3:28-36** *"You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

Last week we started with John the Baptist and the religious leaders questioning him again. John the Baptist was being tempted, because Jesus' ministry was increasing and his was decreasing.

And John's reply was:

✠ **John 3:27** *John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven."*

John knew that whatever was going on, God was in control. John wasn't worried about his ministry or the fact that Jesus' ministry was increasing but rather that God was being glorified.

I get e-mails telling me of how people are using these studies all over the world to teach others about Jesus. Some of these ministries may be pretty big, and may reach thousands for Jesus and bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Now, I can get upset and tell God that this isn't fair, after all the hard work I do, now someone else is using it and they are receiving rewards for their efforts as they reach others around the world.

But I don't, in fact I rejoice every time I hear of someone using these studies, and I pray for them as soon as I hear this. The reason why is because God is being gloried, not me.

Maybe you have done some things and others have taken off with it and have become successful with a ministry you have started. Do you get mad or upset over this? Do you just want to give up and throw in the towel?

You shouldn't because as John the Baptist said once again.

✠ **John 3:27** *John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven."*

What I do, no matter how big or small, I am doing because the Lord has given me this ministry. What others do, God has given it to them, because it's their ministry given to them by God.

It may be bigger or smaller than mine, but the size does not matter. What matters is God has given us all something to do.

The question is, are you going to do it, or will you allow others to intimidate you and make you feel that you are insignificant? God doesn't think so, if He did, He wouldn't have given you the ministry in the first place.

Remember, we can't all be Billy Graham's or Chuck Smith's or whomever you think is a big speaker or teacher or evangelist. They all started out small and it took years of trials and testing and studying God's word for them to be where they are today.

If you read through the bible, everyone started off small, and God allowed their ministry to increase as the years went on.

Some even gave up and they still do today. It makes you think where they could be right now if they hadn't have given up.

Where will you be five years from now, still serving the Lord, or back to the world because you weren't happy with what the Lord gave you to do?

We should always rejoice in Jesus Christ and what He did for us, everything else is just an added bonus.

So John the Baptist makes sure he gets one thing straight with these guys.

✠ **John 3:28** *You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'*

I told you before that I am not the Christ or the Messiah, so stop thinking that I should be anyone great. But rather I am the one who was sent before Him to prepare the way as the prophet Isaiah said.

✠ **Isaiah 40:3** *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God."*

Which we studied in chapter one.

John the Baptist goes on to say.

✠ **John 3:29** *He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*

Or as it says in the NLT.

✠ **John 3:29 (NLT)** *The bride will go where the bridegroom is. A bridegroom's friend rejoices with him. I am the bridegroom's friend, and I am filled with joy at his success.*

So what is this reference to the bride and bridegroom?

We are the bride of Christ and he is our bridegroom.

✠ **2 Cor 11:2** *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

In these times when a man was to marry a woman, the man would ask the woman to marry her and get her father's approval, then he would leave to go build their house. Only when the father of the bridegroom said that it was time to get his bride did they marry. It wasn't like today where we send out invitations saying that Mr. Smith will marry Miss Jones on September 21st 2016.

No, the father of the groom would make sure that his son was ready to be a husband and care for his wife and their children.

At that point the father would give his son the ok, and the Best Man or friend of the bridegroom would run off ahead of him yelling out and announcing his arrival for his bride.

That's what John the Baptist was doing in a sense, he was yelling out (crying out in the wilderness) preparing the way for the bridegroom. But the sad thing was, the bride refused to listen and accept her bridegroom.

Sad to say the same is true today. People will hear of the wonderful things that Jesus did and how He died for them. They hear of God's love every Christmas and Jesus' love every Easter, yet they will still refuse Him.

We are all little John the Baptists preparing the way of the Lord for His return for His church, and we want everyone to be there, so we tell them about Jesus. But they still refuse Him.

Even with everything that's going on in the world testifies that His word (the bible) is true and everything He said is coming to pass. The only thing left right now is Jesus' return for the church, then the seven years of tribulation, the thousand-year reign of Jesus on the earth, satan let loose for a season, the destruction of heaven and earth and the new heaven and earth.

But people refuse to see any of it, and with that refusal, sad to say, they will have to go through the seven-year tribulation, if they make it through the whole seven years.

John the Baptist goes on to say: ***He must increase, but I must decrease.*** **John 3:30**

How well we all know this verse. We quote it all the time appearing to be humble when we say it. When we do say it we usually really do mean it. But do you really understand what John the Baptist is saying here?

Think of it in the context of what's going on and why he said it.

John the Baptist's ministry was taking off, he had hundreds if not thousands coming to him to be baptized. Then Jesus comes along and everything he was doing was now going to Jesus. Less and less people would follow or even listen to John the Baptist, but instead would turn to Jesus.

All those years in the wilderness preparing for this, eating only locust and wild honey (crunchy but sweet), being clothed in camel hair (itchy).

✠ **Mark 1:6** *Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.*

And after all of this John the Baptist says:

✧ **John 3:30** *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

To say this is to say that you are willing to give up all your hard work after all of these years, give up everything you have worked for, including your home, your family, your car(s), your friends, your most prized possessions to follow Jesus. He may not take all of this, He may take some, and He may take everything you got. Are you willing for Him to do this so that He would increase in your life and you would decrease?

I have given Jesus my whole life and everything I got (At least in word and in my heart.) But there are still things that I have given over to Him that I seem to take back. Every day He takes it away and I take it back.

It's like when my daughter was a one-year-old. Every day she would try and touch the stereo, or DVD player and everyday (usually more than once a day) I would have to tell her no and slap her little hand when she doesn't listen to me.

She knows she's not supposed to touch it and if she doesn't stop after the first time I tell her, her little hand will get slapped. But she does it anyway.

We do the same thing with sin in our lives. God says no, and we will stop, but then turn right around and go right back to it, sometimes more than once a day.

Also to say, "***He must increase, but I must decrease.***" is a slow process, that doesn't all happen overnight.

Think of an hourglass, as the sand decreases in the top, it starts to increase in the bottom. It doesn't all happen at once but it takes time.

We are all like hourglasses sitting at the bottom. As the Lord pours into us, He starts to increase and with that increase, the things we put in "top" priority (usually ourselves) start to diminish.

As we take the things back that Jesus says is not good for us, it's like clogging the hourglass and slows down the process even more.

Eventually there will be nothing left on top, and full at the bottom.

I can hardly wait for that day, because it means that Jesus would finally be so evident in my life that no one would ever see me and give Him all the glory. We will all reach that state someday, but it will be in heaven when Jesus truly receives ALL the glory due Him! AMEN!!!

✠ **John 3:31-32** *He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.*

How can you tell if someone's ministry, or what they are teaching is truly from God or not?

✠ *He who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth.*

Those who are not from God will bring glory to themselves. Their teachings and so-called ministries do not glorify God, but rather makes men look to them. But there are some who do point to God and give God all the glory, but the problem is we put them on a pedestal. This happens a lot in the church were people will leave if they find the pastor is not there that Sunday, some even call in advance to make sure he is there, and if he's not they won't even go to church. They are worshipping the world and man, not God. I know of many other pastors I listen to every week who speak to me spiritually, not just my own pastor at the church I attend. I also know of times when he wasn't there or a guest speaker was speaking and how much I was ministered to by someone else. It's sad to think of how the Lord may have wanted to speak to others, but they refused to listen to anyone else teach but their own pastors.

There is even jealousy in the church for their pastors, but Moses had it right when he said:

✠ **Num 11:26-29** *But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"*

This is the true desire for all pastors and for me for all who come here to study God's word.

But there are many who do speak God's word in truth, once again even though it is truth, many will reject the message of salvation.

✠ ***He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.***

Pastors and teachers are not from heaven as Jesus was, but they have His testimony.

✠ ***1 Cor 1:4-9 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

But you don't have to be a pastor or teacher to testify of Jesus, you just have to have a willing heart.

✠ ***John 3:33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.***

Notice it says "***His testimony***" not man's. Men can testify of themselves all day, but in this there is no salvation, only in testifying of Jesus Christ is there salvation. We are instructed to test what we are being taught whether it's from God or not.

✠ ***1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.***

I have said it before, and I will say it again. Please check ALL my teachings against the bible and make sure it's right on with the bible. If you find any errors according to God's word, let me know right away, so I can fix it or explain it in scripture. After all, your eternity may be based on it and that's not something to mess with.

✠ ***John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.***

Did you ever think about the fact that every word that Jesus spoke, God told Him to speak it or He gave Jesus instructions on what to speak? It's not that Jesus was God's puppet, but rather Jesus was obedient to God and His word because He knew God's word was truth and He only wanted to speak the truth.

✠ ***Psalms 119:160 The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.***

† **John 17:17** *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

But we too can all speak the same way. We all have access to the same Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus when He was baptized, and we serve the same God as Jesus did. King David said:

† **Psalms 119:172** *My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments are righteousness.*

Also in acts it says:

† **Acts 4:29 & 31** *Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,
And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

Ask the Lord to give you the boldness to speak His word; you may be surprised of what He will do through you. But in order to speak His word, you must read it first.

✠ **John 3:35** *The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.*

Jesus had it all, but He never took advantage of this, even though he was tempted with what God had given Him. We have all read of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

✠ **Matt 4:1-11** *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "**It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'**" Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "**It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'**" Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "**Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'**" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*

But did you realize that Jesus did have the power to turn the stones into bread, or to be saved if He had jumped off of the pinnacle of the temple, and to have the world bow down to Him.

But instead Jesus chooses to wait for God to provide at the right time for all of these things.

Jesus didn't starve because God sent angels to minister to Him.

Jesus never fell and God kept him from tripping by having angels watch over Him because he didn't tempt or test God and His word.

And the world will all bow down to Jesus one day and proclaim that He is King of kings and Lord of Lord's.

† **Phil 2:9-11** *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Have you done this? If you haven't I would encourage you to do it before it's too late. We will all bow down to Jesus in heaven, but we proclaim Jesus now as King of kings and Lord of lords. And it won't be a problem for us to do it in heaven. If you haven't and choose to wait until then, you will realize how much you really missed out on here on this earth by denying Him, and that you were wrong and His word was right.

To end this week's study, we will look at the final verse in chapter three, which spells it all out to you in one sentence.

✠ **John 3:36** *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

Do you believe in Jesus? If you said yes, are you still living like you are destined for hell?

What do I mean?

So many say they believe in Jesus, yet there is no change in their life. They still live with someone out of marriage; they still have sex before marriage or even commit adultery. Some continue to go out and party, getting drunk or using drugs. Some continue to look down on others gossiping and speaking evil of others. Some continue to steal and lie and cheat.

I have a warning from God's word for you.

† **1 Cor 6:8-11** *No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And*

such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Have you been washed and sanctified? If you have, then you have been wallowing in the filth of sin and it's all over you again. It's time to come home to the Father and ask Him to wash you of your sins by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. Just ask and He will, but you must ask first.

Maybe what you just read described you to a T and you are wondering what to do. You don't want to be rejected by God now or in heaven.

Jesus says:

† **John 6:37** *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

All you have to do is come to Him and you have His word on it that He will not reject you no matter how bad you have been. All it takes is telling Him in a simple prayer which is simply talking to God; Like this one.

Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I ask You to please forgive me for my sins. I believe that You died on the cross for all my sins and rose from the dead on the third day. Thank You for Your forgiveness and for loving me before I even loved You. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit and may I testify to others about You. I ask this in Your Name Jesus. AMEN!

Now that's to cool!!!

Isn't it great to be washed and cleansed of all that filth in your life!

Next week we start chapter four where we will read of Jesus and the woman at the well.

May God richly bless you in all that you do for His glory!