

Life in His Name – Part 7

Jesus > Me – John 3:22-36

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – March 19th, 2023

Intro:

- This morning we are finishing out the remainder of John chapter three. Over and over and over again, John builds his case that Jesus is the Son of God and makes his point that everyone who believes in Him has life in His name.
- John makes the same point again today as we leave Jerusalem, return to the Judean countryside, and reencounter John the Baptist. The message today centers around two things: your identity and calling and Jesus's identity and calling. Then, how do these two things interact and interlock with each other so that you may be most satisfied in Him and He may be most glorified in you.
- Jesus completes His conversation with the most Reverend Doctor Nicodemus in Jerusalem, and the scene changes to the Judean countryside. Let's pick up the story in verse twenty-two of John chapter three.

John 3:22-24 ESV

After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized 24 (for John had not yet been put in prison).

- Since John the Baptist and Jesus last met, Jesus had been calling disciples to himself. The disciples of both Jesus and John were baptizing in close proximity. So, we have two baptizing bands of brothers, and people were streaming out to be baptized. This was done before John the Baptist had been put in prison for calling out King Herod to repent of his sin, and **spoiler alert** John the Baptist was beheaded in prison.
- The scene has been set, and in this first section, we will learn some things about your identity and calling.

Your identity and calling

John 3:25-28 ESV

25 Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." 27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'

- *You have been given an identity and calling*
 - Sometimes people, when hearing the news of someone's success, respond not with happiness for the person but with jealousy, accusations, and disparaging remarks. It is especially true in cases where someone's star ascending means yours shines less bright. Like a star in entertainment or sports being pushed off the stage by someone new. This is hard for us to deal with mentally and emotionally. This disciple brought news to John and

also with the commentary – “to whom you bore witness” – which means the one that you helped and set up. How would John reply to the reality of the rise of Christ and his now diminishing role and influence?

- John replied from his theological understanding and perception. John recognized that what was happening to, with, and around Jesus was the result of the will and gift of heaven. John cited a theological principle that “a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.” That statement gives us cause to stop and reflect on our own lives and the lives of others. Your identity and your calling and gifting are given to you by heaven. Everything that you or anyone else has that is “good” is from God (see James 1:17, Heb. 2:4, 1 Cor 4:7, John 19:30).
- John understood that what was happening to Jesus was from heaven and acknowledged it, supported it, and had joy over it (as we will see in a bit).
- John understood who he was and who Jesus was, stating, “I am not the Christ” – Jesus is the Christ, that is who He is, and that is who I am not – these things should be happening to him and for Him. John understood his identity and calling. “I have been sent before Him.” Recognizing God’s good gift in who you are, what you are called to do, and what your gifts are gives you the freedom to find joy in what you have been created and called to do, and it gives you joy in seeing what God is doing in and with others.
- Comparing your God-given role with others leads nowhere good. The destination of desiring what is not yours is dissatisfaction, discontent, despondency, disillusionment, despair, and discouragement. You and I have to recognize the good gifts and calling that God has given to us and live in and embrace them for God’s glory and our joy. Which raises the question, what *is* your calling from God, what *does* he have for you to do? Is there a humbling part of that calling—a lowliness—that you need to accept?
- John continues to describe his role and his response to what is happening in the life and ministry of Jesus.

John 3:29 ESV

The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

- *You receive joy by fulfilling your calling*
 - John the Baptist understood who Jesus was. He was the groom (which further points to the identity of Jesus). Recognizing the identity and calling of Christ gave John the freedom to embrace his calling as the friend of the groom, who wants the best for his friend and rejoices and celebrates with Him!
 - John knew his role and calling, which gave him the courage and confidence to fulfill it without insecurity and second-guessing. John was “the voice crying out in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord” (John 1:23). John was “the voice” whose role was to draw attention to the greater voice of his best friend, like a best man at a wedding. And when John heard Jesus’s voice, what He was saying, what He was doing, that He was near, it gave him great joy. He greatly rejoiced that Jesus was now on the scene and the attention had rightly shifted to Christ. Therefore, John’s joy had been made full.
 - You will only receive joy that is complete by fulfilling and not bemoaning your calling and pining for something different. The road to joy is embracing God’s identity and

gifting and calling in and on your life and then doing it with all your heart. This is the path that will end in and give you joy. There is joy in the completion of your mission. And there is discontentment in wanting another's calling. You will receive joy and peace in understanding and fulfilling your calling.

- Then John gives us this incredible perspective that we should all embrace:

John 3:30 ESV

He must increase, but I must decrease.

- *The goal of your calling is to magnify Jesus*
 - This is the ultimate goal no matter what you are called and specifically asked to do. For all of us, our ultimate goal is to magnify Jesus in what we do (See I Cor. 10:31, Col. 3:17, Col. 3:23). The truth is that the less you are, the more you are. Think of it like a balance scale (which is our sermon object for today) the more you give credit to where it is due, the greater you are in the eyes of God. Let Him be the one that lifts you up, not giving credit to yourself and your greatness, and giftedness, etc. For all good things come from above, and even your desire and power to do the will of God comes from God (see John 3:37 and Phil. 2:13). Those who make it a habit of self-exaltation misunderstand their role, identity, and position in Christ.
 - He must become greater, I must become less – both of the verbs mean that He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. In this, you will find your right place and your greatest joy.
 - Now John then turns to focus on the identity and calling of Jesus, which is the main point of this entire book.

Jesus's identity and calling

John 3:31-34 ESV

31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. 33 Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

- *Jesus is above all things*
 - Jesus is indeed above all because He is before all. He is from heaven, He does not belong to this earth, nor does He come from this earth, and in Him, and by Him and for Him, all things hold together (see Col. 1:15-20, Phil. 2:9-11, Eph 1:21-23). Having right relationship with Jesus is understanding who He is and His place in the universe and then understanding our place in light of Him.
 - Jesus's calling was to bear witness to what he has seen and heard in and from heaven. Jesus's calling is to show people that God is true. Jesus's calling is to utter the words of God, and Jesus's calling is to give the Spirit without measure, to change the hearts and give eternal life to all who come to Him. This is who Jesus is, and this is what Jesus does. In addition:

John 3:35 ESV

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

- *Jesus has been given all things*
 - The Father loves the Son in a way that is unique to Jesus. At Jesus's baptism, the Father declared, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him!" (Matt 17:5). Jesus is one of us yet different than all of us.

Heb 1:1-4 ESV

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

- The Father has gladly and rightly given all things into the hands of His Son. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus (Matt. 28:18). Jesus is the Lord of both the dead and the living (Rom. 14:9), and He is the "Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13).
- And here again, John returns to His point:

John 3:36 ESV

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

- *Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life*
 - Notice that there is a connection between "believes" and "obeys," equating "believes" with obedience to the Son. Those that believe in the Son obey the Son. Our obedience is the proof of our belief. You cannot have one without the other. This is so important and why it is the first point of our mission statement. We exist to bring about the obedience of faith.
 - As we saw last week, we are condemned already, and the only way to be set free and saved from our sentence of God's wrath against sin is to be found in the Son of God, who took the wrath of God in our place.
 - Jesus is unique in who He is in His identity and the only one qualified to fulfill His calling. It is not about believing in God that gives you eternal life. It is believing in the Son. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life. Salvation is found in and from the Son. This is why the identity of Jesus is so important, and that by turning to Him, you may have life in His name.

Conclusion

- We are most satisfied in Him when He is most glorified in us. Or "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him" (John Piper). Recognize and embrace who Jesus is, His identity, His role, His place, and His calling. Recognize and embrace who you are, your identity,

role, place, and calling. In embracing and following these two things, you will find satisfaction, joy, and life.

- Transition to communion