

Sermon 11 July 2021

Good Morning Friends

What a wonderful day it is to praise and serve our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a privileged just to have opened our eyes this morning. So many due to Covid have not had that privilege. Please pray for Iven as he has contracted Covid. Please keep praying against this virus. Our town has been hit very badly with this third wave.

Are we living or dying for Jesus.

Mark 6:14-29

Leonardo De Vinci once said, "While I thought I was learning to live, I have been learning to die." Everyone of us will die. The question we have to ask ourselves is, "What am I living for and what am I dying for?" And is what I am living for worth Christ dying for?

Today we will be focussing on John the Baptist, from his life we see several characteristics and qualities, that we need to imitate in our lives, if we want a life that lives and dies for God's Kingdom.

1.Boldness - Confronting Sin

The first characteristic we see in John is his boldness in confronting sin. Sometimes we need to confront someone about their sinful ways that are harmful to them and to others. This is exactly what John did when he told Herod it was against the law of God to marry his brothers wife.

Herod and his wife had visited Philip and Herodias in Rome. While there an adulterous relationship began between Herod and Herodias. They decided to leave their respective spouses. For each other. What made matters worse was Herodias was not only his sister-in-law but also his niece. Herod didn't only break the marriage contract but also violated the Jewish law. The bottom line was Herod committed adultery,incest and violated the marriage contract.

When John was preaching to the crowd he mentioned this sinful situation regarding Herod and Herodias. This angered them both so John was put into jail.

John was bold and confronted and addressed sin wherever he found it. It did not matter to him, who and what they were.

There are going to be times when we have to address the sin -say of your children, spouse or friend. God gives us some guidance of how to do it. In Galatians 6 :1 we read "If a person is caught in wrong doing, you who are spiritual are to restore him gently." Don't be argumentative. In Ephesians 4:5 It tells us to "Speak the truth in love." They

need to hear love compassion and understanding from you. In 2 Timothy, “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.”

John was bold and we need to be bold in Christ as well.

2. Goodness - Doing what benefits others.

Another characteristic we need to look at is goodness. Goodness is doing what is right in attitude and action to the benefit of others. According to verse 20, Herod knew John “was a good and holy man.” A good person thinks about and is concerned about others. A good person will sacrifice their time, money and resources for someone else. A good person wants to help and be a blessing to others people.

God uses good people. Goodness is a key component of who God want us to be. Let us see what God's word says about goodness. In Galatians 5:22 “The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness...” The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives to produce goodness. God wants his people to be good. In Galatians 6:10 it says “ Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone. Romans 15:14 says “I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness.” We want to be those people who are full of good and not be bad. There are plenty of people who are rude, unkind, cruel, impatient, evil and immoral. God wants us to be known for our goodness. Romans 12:21 says “Do not be overcome by evil but conquer evil, but overcome evil with good.” There is power in goodness.

John had this goodness quality about him. God was able to use John in public ministry or in prison where a certain leader would visit him regularly to talk about the Kingdom of God.

3. Holiness – Being set apart

Another quality we see in John and need to look at is holiness. In verse 20 Herod knew John “was a good and holy man.” the word holy means different, set apart for God and by God for a special and divine purpose. Herod knew John was from God and so was different.

Let us see what the word of God says about holiness. In 1 Peter 15 it says, “But just as he who called you to be holy, so be holy in all you do.” Scripture says “You must be holy because I am holy.” Everything we do must be set apart for God's glory. Holiness is about living a life for the glory of God. In 1 Peter we read, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” As a result we can show others the goodness of God, for He has called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. God is able to take a holy life and display His goodness through it. 1 Thessalonians 4:7 says, “For God did not call us to be impure but to love a holy life.”

God has called every believer to live a life that is different from that which is of the world. He places a desire in us to live for God Him.

4.Approachable.

Another quality we see in John and we need to consider is approachability. In Mark 6: verse 20 tells us “...because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled (disturbed), yet he liked to listen to him.” Even though Herod was greatly disturbed he still liked to listen to him.

I would like to think that John was approachable and that you could have a conversation with him.. I believe as Herod liked to listen to him that he would return from time to time to listen to him.

We have people in our lives that are willing to listen to us. They may not listen to me, but they will listen to you. The way we talk, the way we listen, the way we respond, the sound of our voice, our body language, and how we communicate is perfect for them.

When our approachability is backed up by holiness, goodness and boldness we are in a position to impact and influence others and it doesn't matter where you are, it matters who you are.

5.Sacrifice – Surrendering your life for a greater purpose.

This brings us to our final observation. To follow Jesus we will experience sacrifice. Some time that sacrifice is voluntary and other times that sacrificed is forced on us. There is no following Jesus if you never sacrifice. For John he sacrificed his life. “The man went, beheaded John in prison.” Being beheaded for Christ is not going to happen to every believer, but some level of sacrifice will happen. Just because you're holy, filled with goodness, and approach life with boldness does not mean sacrifice is removed from our lives.

In Romans 1:12 says, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – This is your spiritual act of worship.”

Jesus said in Luke 9:23,24. “Then he said to them all: “ If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”

God has a great purpose for us. It will take sacrifice. It will take dying to self. You will have to give up your way. Sometimes it feels like your life is being crucified on a daily basis. We will be tempted to hang on to our lives, to do what we want, to be

selfish and to make life all about ourselves. Give up your life for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom. This is easier said than done.

God works through people every day. You don't have to be perfect. Be bold, do good, live holy lives, be approachable and willing to sacrifice. God can use you where you are. He used John the Baptist while still in prison. Where ever you are He can use you.

Amen.