

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

I. Not *me*, Him

- a. Until John the Baptist was arrested by King Herod, his ministry overlapped with Jesus's.
- b. John did not want any one to follow him. His ministry was purposed to point to the Lamb of God and urge people to trust Him.
- c. John's disciples started the argument about competition and comparison. Why is this dangerous for ministries to compare themselves or compete against one another?
- d. How did John handle this controversy?
 1. All ministry and blessings come from God (v.27). God alone must get the glory.
 2. John reminds the listeners of his purpose (v.28). *I was sent* (under orders), *but Jesus came* (by His own authority).
 3. The bridegroom gets the bride. The best man only serves to support the bridegroom (v.29).
- e. (illustration great preacher vs. little servant)
- f. We need to recall the words of John whenever we find ourselves sliding down the slippery slope of jealousy.
- g. Our humble service makes us great in the sight of God (Read 1 Peter 5:1-6). Be careful that you do not seek exaltation (praise) from man in the process of serving the Lord.

II. The *Must* of the Lord's Servant

- a. There are three significant "*must's*" mentioned in Chapter 3: The sinner *must be born again* (v.7)
 1. The Savior *must be lifted up* (v. 14). The servant *must decrease* (v.30).
 2. The word *decrease* (*elatto*) means to diminish in size and importance.
 3. A servant of God has tremendous kingdom value. You have spiritual gifts. You have the Holy Spirit, who empowers those gifts. You were ordained to complete a Holy mission.
 4. All that you have been ordained to do can only be achieved as you allow the greatness of God to work through you. (John 14:12; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 4:4)

III. John Testifies to the Greatness of Jesus

- a. Jesus is *from above* (heaven), from the very presence and heart of God. John is from the earth, originating from a human process. Therefore, Jesus is over all human ministers (v.31).
- b. Jesus is the primary witness of God, who testifies to what He is and what He has seen. Jesus speaks God's words and in Him exists the very expression of God, which is truth (vv. 32-34).
- c. God, the Father has made all things available to Jesus, the Son (v.35).
- d. God's wrath is not to be regarded as impersonal but as an active principle of God's holiness.

IV. Personal Application of the Good News

- a. Shouldn't we always point to Christ and decrease who we are before Him? We often say, Sunday is the Lord's day, but isn't every day the Lord's day?
- b. What advice would you give to a minister who is questioning their calling, because their ministry is not advancing like others?
- c. You are the senior pastor of a church, after returning from a mission trip you over hear one of your minister's, who preached in your absence, say to another minister, "I really brought down the house last week. I'm a better preacher than I thought. Did you see everyone telling me how good I was?" As the senior pastor, what action would you take and how would you counsel in this situation?