

12-1-24

His Name was John

John 1: 6 -7

Let's remember why this gospel was written. **John 20:31**, *"But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."*

So, my aim this morning, as a minister of these words, is that you would believe in Jesus as Son of God and that you would experience newness of life.

The reason I say newness of life is because in **John 10:10** Jesus said that the reason he came into the world was that his sheep might have overflowing life: *"I have come that they might have life and have it to the full - or abundantly."*

This Greek word (*perisson*) speaks of excess, overflow, surplus. The idea is that Jesus gives life that is more than ordinary life. **The life of a Christian is life upon life. Excess life. Life added to life.**

And the way to have this life from Jesus is to believe in him. **John 5:24**, *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

Notice: NOT just will have eternal life someday beyond the grave; BUT has crossed over from death to life **now** (by believing).

You can have new life this morning:

Life that is more than the life you have known before.

Life that is so wonderful that it is described by Jesus as a passing from death to life.

Even Christians who have weakened in faith and lost the full power of new life can find stronger faith and fuller life in these words this morning.

This is our goal: These things are written (in the Book of John) and in this message that is preached that you might believe in Jesus (like you have never believed before) and believing, have life (like you've never had before).

Our text today can be summed up in three statements:

1. God sent a man named John. (v. 6)
2. John came as a witness to testify concerning the light. (v. 7a)
3. The aim of his testimony was that all might believe. (v. 7b)

Let's take these one at a time and let them move us to the goal of the gospel, the goal of the message:

Belief in Jesus Christ leading to an overflowing life in His name.

1. God Sent a Human Witness

God sent a man named John.

John 1:6, "There came a man who was sent from God. His name was John."

Why does John, the writer of this gospel, introduce John the Baptist right here?

It seems abrupt. Verse 5 is talking about the light shining in the darkness and the darkness not overcoming it, and verse 9 goes on to talk about the light coming into the world. So verses 6–8 seem like an interruption.

Why not get Jesus all the way introduced, and then introduce John the Baptist later?

Well, John could have written it that way. But he didn't. And the effect of the way he did write it is to make crystal clear from the very outset that **God's way of letting the light of Christ shine in the world is by human witnesses.**

God's way of pushing back the darkness is by human witnesses.

It didn't have to be this way. God could have caused the light of Christ to spread in some other way.

He could have done it with angels.

He could have written the gospel in the sky with big puffy white letters made out of clouds.

He could have caused the wind to talk.

But instead, God chose to call and send human beings to bear witness to the light.

"There was a man [a human being] sent from God, whose name was John."

This general principle is even more clear because John was sent to testify to the light while the light was there.

As soon as the light was in the world—as soon as Jesus came—God prepared and sent a human being alongside the light to bear witness to the light.

Jesus did not need John the Baptist to make him known.

He could have managed by himself—he was the light of the world after all. But evidently God's wisdom dictates that his Son should be heralded, announced, proclaimed by people that he sends.

Evidently, God knows that this is the way to bring the greatest happiness to men and the greatest glory to his Son.

This truth has at least two implications for us:

One is that **we should be alert to the possible call of God in our lives.**

All Christians are to be the light of the world (**Matthew 5:16**).

All are called to witness to the light (**Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9**).

But God still calls some in a special way and for special tasks.

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest"
(**Matthew 9:38**).

"How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (**Romans 10:14–15**).

"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers" (**Acts 20:28**).

It may be a vocational sending to the ministry.

It may be a single or periodic sending for some special mission (across the ocean or across the street).

But it's God's way to speak to a person and send that person to testify to the light.

Be ready and open to hear that call and accept that commission.

Don't assume that what you are doing now is your only mission.

You may have a completely new mission in the future.

The other implication for us is that **we should be ready and open to hear the testimonies of others who are sent to us.**

God means to communicate to us not merely through your own private Bible reading, but also through other people.

He means to communicate to us through my preaching and through our Sunday School teachers and through godly parents.

We should be aware that it's God's way to communicate with us through those that he calls and sends.

Otherwise, why send them if he has nothing to say to us through them?

I pray that by the time my life is over on earth, hundreds if not thousands of people will have heard such a decisive, life-changing word from God through me that they will say ...

"There was a man sent from God whose name was Bill."

And will not many young women say, as they look back on their childhood, "There was a woman sent from God whose name was Shirley, Mandy, Llewellyn, Anna, and Nicole – you fill in the blank".

Be ready and open to God's call on your life to send you to bear witness to the light.

And be ready and open to recognize the word of God to you when it comes from others that God has sent to you.

This is the first step in our text: God sent a man named John (v. 6).

God's way of spreading the light of Christ is by human witnesses.

The second step in the text is the way God uses people to promote the light by their testimony.

John was a witness. A witness is a person with some experience and knowledge that can help establish the truth of some fact that is in dispute.

God had spoken to John in the wilderness about the coming Messiah, and his meeting with Jesus at the baptism gave him the experience he needed to be a bona fide witness.

Verses 33–34: *"I would not have known him, except that the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God."*

So, God had spoken to John earlier about the One who was coming, and then he gave him a sign to let him know that Jesus was this One.

From then on, John bore his testimony to Jesus faithfully until he was put to death for his witness.

On August 30, 1744, **Jonathan Edwards** preached an ordination sermon for Robert Abercrombie, and took as his text **John 5:35** where Jesus says of John's witness, *"John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light."*

Edwards developed the point that a faithful witness to the gospel burns and shines - that is, there is the warmth of zeal and the light of truth.

I'm sure that you know a person or two that had or still has the light of Christ shining through them. My mother – in – law Norma, was such a person. Her joy and love for the Lord exuded out of her. She was fun to be around, and you wanted to be around her because her relationship with her Savior was real.

John the Baptist had both of these qualities: a warmth of zeal and the light of truth, and he is a great example for us.

First, there was the light of truth in his witness:

God showed him many magnificent things about Jesus. Here are some of the things he said about Jesus:

1. **John 1:23**, he is *"the Lord."* John identifies himself as the voice crying in the wilderness, *"Make straight the way of the Lord."*

This is an amazing thing because in **Isaiah 40:3** "the Lord" was a reference to God himself. John applied it to Jesus.

2. **John 1:27**, Jesus is so great John was not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal. John speaks of Jesus as, *"He who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."*

3. **John 1:29**, Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. John says, *"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* John had probably discovered this while meditating on Isaiah 53.

4. **John 1:33**, Jesus is the one who is going to baptize his people with the Holy Spirit. John says, *"The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit."* He pours out the Spirit. He is the source of the Spirit.

5. **John 1:34**, Jesus is the Son of God. John testifies, *"I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God."* This fits well with Jesus being called "the Lord."

But not only was his witness a bright beacon of truth, it was also a burning zeal.

John's life as well as his message was a faithful testimony to the truth.

Consider at least three things that would make our testimony to Christ more credible too.

1. **John's simplicity.** He had lived in the wilderness for years.

He dressed in simple leather clothes (**Mark 1:6**). He ate honey and locust (**Mark 1:6**).

His whole life stood over against the luxuries of his day (**Luke 7:25–26**).

This gave a tremendous power to his prophetic message when he said to the multitudes, *"He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none"* (**Luke 3:10–14**).

2. **John's humility.** In a sense John's role was tragic—the last prophet before the Lord, and killed for it while the Christian movement he served was just getting started.

But John took his role without resentment. He said in 1:27, *"I am not worthy to untie Jesus sandals."* And when his disciples complained that Jesus was stealing the show (*"all are going to him,"* 3:26), John said in 3:29–30, *"The bride belongs to the bridegroom; the friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and his full of joy when he hears the bridegrooms voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less."*

John's testimony was burning with authenticity because he was a truly humble man.

3. **John's courage.** John held to his message of righteousness to the end, and it cost him his life. How many reasons we could think of why it would not be prudent to cry out against Herod's sin in taking his brother's wife!

John is a great example of one who acted on principle not prudence. And Jesus said there wasn't a greater man who ever lived (**Luke 7:28**). His testimony burned with reality because he was a man of tremendous courage.

So, the first step in our text (v. 6) was that God sent a man named John.

It's God's way to spread his light by using people.

The second step in our text is that *"John came as a witness to testify concerning that light"* (v. 7a).

The way God uses people to spread the light is by their testimony.

John was a burning and a shining lamp directed toward Jesus.

He was burning with zeal and shining with the light of truth.

And this is the way our witness should be too.

Finally, **the third step** in the text is that we would believe.

Verse 7: *"He came as a witness to testify concerning that light so that **through him** all men might believe.*

Notice: "through him," not on him. The aim of John's testimony was that we all believe on Jesus.

John's whole life pointed to the truth and worth of the One that was to come after him, Jesus.

God sent John so that we would believe in Jesus.

John witnessed to the truth so that we would believe in Jesus.

John burned with zeal so that we would believe in Jesus.

This gospel was written so that we would believe in Jesus.

And I would like to pray now for us all that we would believe in Jesus:

A Closing Prayer

Father, I pray now in Jesus' great name that you would incline the hearts of all of us to believe in Jesus. To believe . . .

- that he is the Lord,
- that he is so great that the greatest man was not worthy to untie his shoes,
- that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world: the sin of anyone in the world who believes (3:36),
- that he is the very Son of God,
- that he is the bridegroom and all who follow him are his beloved and cherished bride,
- that he baptizes with the Holy Spirit. He pours his Spirit out upon those who believe, swallows us up in the spirit of his love, and gives us life, abundant, overflowing, excessive life upon life.

And if something is hindering you from fully believing in Jesus, let me know or talk to another Christian who expresses the warmth and zeal of Christ so that we can show you more reasons to believe - and pray with you and for you for the grace to believe.

The Christmas season is the perfect time to believe and to partake in eternal life.