

It's Not About Me  
John 1:19-34  
August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025

1. John \_\_\_\_\_ his job. (1:19-23)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. John \_\_\_\_\_ his job. (1:24-34)
  - a. He described the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. (1:24-28)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. He stated the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. (1:29)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. He verified the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. (1:30-34)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Applying the Word
  - a. Our mindset should be: "It's not about \_\_\_\_\_.  
It's about \_\_\_\_\_."

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 1:19-34

1. Read about John the Baptist's ministry in Luke 3:1-9. What were his primary points of emphasis? What role did baptism play?
  - a. Read Luke 3:15-17. What were the people wondering about his identity? How is that similar to the delegation in John 1? What similarities and differences do you notice in John's response?
2. Why would they ask if he was Elijah? (see Malachi 4:5-6) Why might he answer "no" when Jesus appears to say the answer is "yes"? (Matt. 11:14; if time, read Matt. 11:1-14 for context)
3. In verse 23 John the Baptist identifies himself with the prophet Isaiah's words. Read Isaiah 40:1-5. What is John the Baptist saying about who he is and who Jesus is?
4. In John 1:29 John the Baptist declares who Jesus is and what Jesus does. Read Exodus 12:1-14. What connections do you see between this description of Jesus and the grace God showed his people in instituting the Passover ritual? What does John 1:29 say about the primary mission of Jesus? What are some ways that people might downplay that mission and focus on other aspects of His life and work?
5. How would you explain the difference between the baptism performed by John and the baptizing Jesus came to do?
6. How do we see John's humility on display throughout this passage?
7. What are some practical ways that we can cultivate the mindset: "It's not about me. It's about Jesus"? How would that mindset affect the way we interact with people and even the problems of life?

Note: Some questions partially adapted from *Knowing the Bible: John* by Crossway.

## It's Not About Me

John 1:19-34

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Big idea: Jesus is everything. And our job, like John, is to point to Jesus and get out of the way.

### Intro

Few things are as awkward or frustrating as someone who thinks someone else's party should really be about them.

Most often see it in the child who throws a tantrum at their sibling's party because they want to blow out the candles and open presents.

Adults aren't usually as transparent in their jealous rivalry as children, although it may show up in more subtle ways.

I think more common and more damaging is the Christian who postures as the hero of the story.

We can become more concerned about what people think about us than what they think about Jesus.

We can look for humble bragging opportunities to make ourselves look a little better around others, to make our family look a little better, our lives a little more put together, rather than giving all glory to Jesus for any good work that has been done.

We can glory and take pride in our own feeble efforts at morality rather than rejoicing in the finished work of Jesus in his life and death on our behalf.

To quote the 25 year old country song by Toby Keith, I wanna talk about me, wanna talk about I, wanna talk about number one.

John the Baptist is the model for us as one whose mission was to prepare people for Jesus and point people to Jesus. He knew the party wasn't about him. He knew he wasn't the hero of the story.

1. John knew his job. (1:19-23)
  - a. As is typical, John does not give us the backstory that we can read about in the other gospels.
    - i. Luke 1 is 80 verses long and mostly about John the Baptist's parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, a surprising prediction about their upcoming pregnancy in their old age, Zacharias' role as a priest, and then John's birth.
    - ii. Luke 3 gives a lengthy description about John's ministry in the wilderness as he baptized people and called them to repentance.
    - iii. (Hughes) In John 1, John had been preaching for over a year. His ministry had thrown the Palestinian world into convulsions. Large multitudes, according to the Gospels, had come to hear him and be baptized
  - b. A delegation was sent from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to find out who this guy is that the crowds have been coming out to see and hear from and be baptized by.
  - c. They asked five or six questions, some of which might seem strange to us but they grew out of Old Testament expectations and misunderstandings. It's a reminder that we can't understand the NT without understanding the OT.
    - i. Who are you? Not the Christ.
      1. V. 8 – not the light but came to testify about the light
      2. For him to respond this way it's obvious that he must have known that some were wondering about this.

3. If someone asked who I was I wouldn't say, "I'm not the president! I'm not Michael Jordan!" Why? Because no one is wondering that.
4. If I meet someone at UBC I might say, "I'm one of the pastors here" because that is relevant and they might be wondering.
5. **Luke 3:15** Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ,
6. "Christ" comes from the Greek equivalent word for Messiah – so they were asking whether He was the long awaited, long promised Messiah.
  - a. The promised descendant of king David who would rule and reign.

ii. Are you Elijah? No

1. Seems like an odd question to us, maybe. Elijah had been dead for centuries.
2. Matthew 3 tells us that John the Baptist, "had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist" (Matt 3:4) and was out in the wilderness. 2 Kings 1:8 describes Elijah as "A hairy man with a leather belt around his waist."
  - a. Both were prophets of God who preached openly against sin, particularly in the lives of those who were supposed to be leading God's people, and they both called people to repent of their sin.
  - b. Its helpful to see John the Baptist as the last and greatest of the OT prophets.
3. But even more, the last book of the OT ended with a promise about an Elijah to come:
  - a. **Malachi 4:5** "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.
4. Jesus even says John is the fulfillment of that.
  - a. **Matthew 11:14** "And if you are willing to accept *it*, John himself is Elijah who was to come.
5. Why does John say he's not Elijah but Jesus says he is?
  - a. Could be that they are meaning that in different ways and answering different questions.
  - b. Is he a literal return of Elijah? No
  - c. Is he the fulfillment of an Elijah-type prophet to prepare the way? Yes

iii. Are you THE prophet? No

1. **Deuteronomy 18:15** "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.
2. Repeat of the Christ question because the Prophet to come was the Messiah, according to Peter in his sermon in Acts 3.

iv. So, who are you? Tell us yourself!

1. They give up and ask for his own explanation.
2. John quotes from Isaiah 40

- a. It is the point of Isaiah where it turns the corner from warning and correction to comfort
- b. In the original context, God was going to return His people from exile in Babylon and he called for the roads to be prepared metaphorically – valleys lifted up, mountains flattened – it is preparation language.
- c. Borrowing this imagery from the OT to say, I'm just a road builder, preparing the way for God's deliverance.
- d. John knows his job – prepare people for Jesus, point people to Jesus.

2. John **did** his job. (1:24-34)

a. He described the **worth** of Christ. (1:24-28)

- i. Asked why he baptizes, his response points to Jesus.
- ii. You don't realize who it is among you. I'm not even worthy to untie his shoes.
  - 1. Extraordinary humility rooted in an understanding of the immense gap between who he is and who Jesus is.
  - 2. A student at the time was expected to do for his teacher everything a slave would do, except take off his teachers' shoes.
    - a. Imagine if an ISU student was expected to wash his professors car, drive him around, cook dinner, clean his house, organize his office, wash his clothes...but the line was drawn at untying his shoes and taking them off – that is too demeaning.
    - b. John the Baptist doesn't even make that exception for himself, except to say, I don't even deserve to do that.

iii. If you struggle with humility, take a better look at Jesus.

- 1. The greatest of men is nothing compared to Jesus,
  - a. the eternal creator who upholds all things by the Word of His power
  - b. the one who never sinned, never failed, never disobeyed
  - c. never shied away from confronting the corrupt and powerful, never too busy for the hurting, neglected, weak, or sick.
- 2. If we take a subtle pride in our generosity of giving, can we outgive Jesus who gave His very life?
- 3. If we take pride in our selfless service, can we out-serve Jesus who left the glory of the Father's side to take the very form of a servant?

iv. John the Baptist will say in chapter 3

- 1. **John 3:30-31** "He must increase, but I must decrease. <sup>31</sup> "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

v. Paul echoes this sentiment and it should be our perspective as well:

- 1. **1 Corinthians 4:1** Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2. **2 Corinthians 4:5** For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

b. He stated the **mission** of Christ. (1:29)

i. "The next day" – these events take place over 4 successive days

1. One day – the delegation that comes to see John
2. The next day – vv. 29-34
3. The next day – vv. 35-42
4. The next day – vv. 43-51

ii. Jesus is the Christ – the promised Messiah, the prophet that Moses promised, and now we see that He is the Lamb of God.

1. The people of Israel had been prepared for this for 35 generations over 1,400 years.
2. When God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, the final plague that he used to compel Pharaoh to let His people go, was the death of every firstborn child. But they were spared if they took the blood of the lamb and placed it on the doorposts of their homes. He instituted an annual reminder of the Passover in which they would sacrifice the Passover lamb and remember God's deliverance.
3. Carter - However, lambs were not just sacrificed at Passover. Every day two lambs were killed at the temple, one in the morning and one in the evening. John the Baptist's father was a priest who served at the temple. John would have been familiar with the sacrifices offered there. His father would have returned each day with blood-stained clothes from the slain lambs.
4. Isaiah 53 anticipated that the Messiah would be slain like a lamb.
  - a. **Isaiah 53:7** He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.
5. Year after year at the Passover all Israel would slaughter a lamb for their home and remember.
6. The people of Israel sacrificed lambs over and over, year after year, they may have wondered how this actually covered their sin, but in faithful obedience to the Lord by faith in Him, they did it – and then the true lamb of God comes onto the scenes – the one who truly takes away sin. And they were prepared to recognize and understand Him because of 35 generations of sacrificing the Passover lamb.
7. Let me use an analogy at the risk of trivializing this – my generation grew up with the Karate Kid movies – a teenage boy being bullied wants to learn to defend himself and an older Japanese man, Mr. Miyagi, agrees to train him. Much to his frustration, Danielson doing things like waxing a car, painting the fence – feels pointless but he does it over and over again – and then he learns it prepared him to block kicks and punches. Those repetitive motions prepared him for the real thing.
  - a. Likewise, the repetitive, annual motions of sacrificing the Passover lamb and the daily sacrifices in the temple prepared the people for the true Passover lamb, their Messiah the Lord Jesus.

iii. What does the lamb do? He takes away the sin of the world.

1. The Passover lamb was a substitute for the first born of the home.
  2. The daily animal sacrifices were substitutes for sinful Israelites who deserved the penalty of death for their sin.
  3. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is the substitute for us.
- iv. The writer of the Gospel of John wastes no time in getting to the main mission of Jesus.
1. He didn't come merely to tell parables, scold pharisees, hold children, and heal the sick.
  2. He came to die. Of John's 21 chapters, 9 are devoted to the last week of Jesus' life leading up to his death, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead. He leaves us with no doubt about what the most important thing is for us to know about Jesus.
- v. They are the sins of the world without distinction although not without exception as we have already seen in the prologue. Not all would believe, not all would receive, and so not all would have their sins "taken away."
- c. He verified the ***identity*** of Christ. (1:30-34)
- i. At His own baptism, Jesus was "manifested" or revealed or shown to be the Son of God.
  - ii. When He baptized Jesus, this is what happened:
    1. **Matthew 3:16-17** After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
    2. The Father revealed/manifested the nature and identity of the Son by affirming His relationship and approval.
  - iii. So, John says, I myself have seen this and have testified that this is the Son of God.
  - iv. Its like John is saying, "if there was a trial to figure out if this guy Jesus is crazy, if He is tricking people, or if He really is God in the flesh come down to save us – my testimonial evidence is that I heard the voice of God say, 'this is my beloved Son.'"

### 3. Applying the Word

- a. Our mindset should be: "It's not about ***me***. It's about ***Jesus***."
  - i. He is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world – so I don't need to figure out a way to get rid of my own sins. My response is to repent and believe.
  - ii. My aim in life should be to exalt Christ – to help others see how great Jesus is – not to exalt myself.
    1. "He must increase, I must decrease"
    2. **2 Corinthians 4:5** For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

*It's Not About Me*

JOHN 1:19-34

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