



**“Jesus is Above All”**  
**John 3:22-36**  
**Sermon Date: December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

**Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon**

**Prayer**

As you begin your study this week, spend some time thanking the Lord that all who “believe in the Son have eternal life” (v. 36). Pray for those you know who currently do not believe and, therefore, remain objects of God’s wrath. Ask the Holy Spirit to change their hearts and minds as you thank Him for having changed yours. As you pray, make the following words your own before the Lord (prayer taken from Everyday Prayers by Scotty Smith).

*“Dear Jesus, I’m not sure about a wardrobe of camel’s hair clothing and a diet of locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4), but I am sure I want more of John the Baptist’s joy – the joy of you becoming greater while I become less. Indeed, John leaped for joy at the very thought of you even before he was born (Luke 1:39-41). Could you, would you do the same in my heart?”*

*Jesus, when I try to imagine this kind of joy and freedom, I get really excited...What would it be like to have a joy largely defined by people making much about you – so much, in fact, that I wouldn’t really notice them not making much about me? That would bring greater freedom from the insecurities of my pride and from my desire for the approval of others.*

*Jesus, what would it be like to want your name to be loved and vindicated a zillion times over mine? What would it be like to wait and listen for your voice a whole lot more than impatiently clamoring for my voice to be heard? That would bring more freedom from my need to be understood and to be in control of my reputation.*

*Jesus, what would it be like to experience greater grief when people don’t ‘get’ you than when they don’t ‘get’ me? What would it be like to say with John, ‘A person can receive only what is given them from heaven’ (John 3:27 NIV) and really, really mean it – to accept the giving and the taking away in life equally as sovereign appointments from your throne of grace? That would bring freedom to love and serve you no matter what.*

*Jesus, most kind and beautiful bridegroom, bring more of this joy and freedom to my expectant heart. I pray in your priceless and peerless name. Amen.”*

## **Scripture**

### **John 3:22–36 – (English Standard Version)**

*22 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).*

*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.’ 29 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. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.”*

*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. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. 36 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.*

## **Handling the Word**

1. There are several things recorded in our text this week that should sound familiar because they have already been mentioned in the early chapters of the book of John. Even though the language might be slightly different, what are some things that are repeated in this passage? What foundational truths are being established right away through this repetition?

## **Understanding and Applying**

1. In the opening verses of our passage, we are told that while Jesus and his disciples were conducting ministry in Judea, John the Baptist was busy preaching and baptizing in Aenon (verses 22-23). As long as John was alive, and up until the time of his imprisonment (v. 24), he was busy about the work of the kingdom and making Christ known. He seemed to have an unwavering commitment to being as useful as possible for the work of the Lord, wherever, whenever, and however the Lord should choose. Could the same be said of you as well? What are ways you feel you are being useful in the work of the Lord? What might be hindering you from being more useful?

2. Even though both Jesus and John the Baptist were busy about the same work, those who were sitting under the authority of John the Baptist's ministry wrongly viewed Jesus as a competing force against them (verses 25-26). Their allegiance to John led them to see Jesus as their competitor rather than their Savior. What are some things that you might be allowing to compete with Jesus for the rightful place of allegiance and preeminence in your life? What needs to be altered or changed in order for your allegiance to shift away from those things and to Christ alone?
  
3. John knew that Jesus must take center stage, and he had no problem turning the attention off himself and onto Jesus (also refer back to John 1:19-31). What does it look like when Jesus takes center stage in our church and in our lives personally? What happens when Jesus doesn't have center stage and we keep the attention on ourselves rather than on Him?
  
4. We see in John's response in verses 27-30 that he was not at all threatened by Jesus' popularity. In fact, it made his joy complete that Jesus was gaining such admiration. John wanted nothing more than to make much of Jesus—to have Jesus increase while he decreased. Why is it that John could take joy in fading to the background in order that Jesus might come to the foreground? Does making much of Jesus, even if it means making less of you, bring you joy? Why or why not?
  
5. In verses 27-35, John compares and contrasts who he is with who Jesus is. As you read these verses, make a list of what is true about Jesus, and contrast that with what is true of mankind. How does drawing an accurate contrast between us and Jesus help promote the kind of humility John displayed?
  
6. Take the truths about Jesus you listed out in the previous question (#5) and provide at least one reason why each of those truths matter in the lives of people. Do these truths effect the way you worship Him? Why or why not?

7. There is much that can be learned from the truths that John the Baptist spoke of in this passage, but there is also much that can be learned by looking at the example of his life. What do we learn about being an effective witness for Christ from John's example? How might you specifically apply what you have learned as you seek to be an effective witness for Christ?
  
8. Verse 36 provides us with yet another simple but deeply meaningful gospel summary. What is added to this brief gospel summary that has not been explicitly spoken of so far in the book of John? How does this verse further build upon the gospel truths laid out in John 1:6-13, 3:3-8, and 3:16-21?
  
9. Both realities - that our God is a God of love (v. 16) and also a God of wrath (v. 36) - are clearly revealed in John chapter 3. Where do we see both of these confirmed elsewhere in Scripture? Despite God clearly revealing both truths about Himself, why do some people struggle with holding them together as equally true?
  
10. As we come to the end of John chapter 3, hopefully you are reminded of just how powerful and profound this chapter is. In fact, C.H. Spurgeon wrote, "If you were called in to see a person who was dying, and wished to read a chapter from the Word of God, and you were afraid that the sick one did not know the way of salvation, you could not select a better portion than [John 3]." After reflecting upon the words of this entire chapter, do you agree or disagree with Spurgeon's comment? Explain the reason for your answer either way.

*"We can never make too much of Christ... We can never have too high thoughts about Christ... We can never love Him too much, trust Him too implicitly, lay too much weight upon Him, and speak too highly in His praise. He is worthy of all the honor that we can give Him. He will be all in heaven. Let us see to it, that He is all in our hearts on earth."*

*J.C. Ryle*