

The title for today's message is: **Are You A Witness To The Son Of God?**

The apostle John said: ***There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Last Sunday, was the second Sunday of Advent and the message was from the Gospel of Mark chapter 1, the first 8 verses.

Verses proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Not about His birth, but about the ministry of a special man whose name was John, John the Baptist.

Now, the gospels of Mark, as well as Matthew, emphasized that John the Baptist was a pure prophet, that is, in the classic sense.

They both said that he dressed like Elijah, you know in a tunic, woven from camel's hair, and sporting a leather belt around his waist.

They also tell us that John set up shop, if you will, in the wilderness. Living off the land, eating only locust, and wild honey. Mumm, I think I'll have that for lunch today.

We were told that, John was preaching a message of repentance, Baptizing those who came to hear, preparing their hearts for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

This morning, our Gospel lesson is from the first chapter of John, and the verses selected here, also center on John the Baptist, and his ministry.

However here in John's gospel, were given another angle to consider in our journey of faith.

The one thing you will notice is that the author of our text this morning, isn't interested in how John the Baptist dressed, or what he ate.

Nor is he interested in how John's personality, and demeanor identified him with Israel's past prophets.

Which is evident, by the answers John the Baptist gave to those who wanted to know, by what authority he conducted his ministry.

Rather, the apostle John was more interested in the role that John the Baptist played as a witness to the Lord.

You know, pointing to Jesus, and proclaiming Him to be the Christ, the Messiah, the light of the world, the very Son of God.

He was much more interested in those things, than he was in John the Baptist character.

You see, the apostle John, was a theologian who wasn't as interested in having you and I know all of the intimate details of John the Baptist.

Nor is he interested in us knowing about the people surrounding the life of Jesus.

Instead he wants us to understand the significance of what Jesus' life means to us here today.

Now, in all honesty, this is another one of those times, that I wish that our text included the full context, in which it occurs in the Gospel.

For in the first chapter, right from the beginning, the apostle John, describes for us in theological terms, about a tremendous event that has taken place

So, I'm going to take some time, and summarize the context in which our Gospel lesson appears.

John begins his Gospel by saying: ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us***

This is the apostle John's way of describing what took place at the birth of Jesus Christ.

He was saying that the Word that was with God from the beginning of time, has now entered our human race, in the person of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, John's Gospel tells us that this Word that was with God from the beginning, is the same that took part in the creation of the universe.

In John's own words: ***Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***

But then John adds, that even though the Word had become flesh, and entered our human race, we didn't recognize Him for who He truly is.

Again in John's own words: ***He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.***

And finally, John's Gospel tells us that this Word that became flesh, possessed the gift of life for all people, which would illuminate the darkness of our sinful world.

Again, in John's own words: ***In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

Now we come to our text for this morning. The apostle John said: ***There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.***

That's right, here the apostle John was saying that the true light, (Jesus) which will enlighten everyone, was now coming into the world."

Now we can see why the apostle John wasn't so interested in describing the way John the baptist dressed.

Or what he ate for dinner, or even, how his demeanor might have identified him as a prophet from Israel's past?

The true message here is that the Word of God, is God, who created the universe, through whom we receive the gift of life, has come among us.

Again, the apostle John wants us to realize, right from the start, that in Jesus Christ, we behold the very incarnation of God.

He wants us to realize that in Jesus, we don't just see a human being who has been anointed by God to proclaim His word to the people, but that God Himself is present.

He wants us to realize that in Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the grace of God, able to redeem us from our sin, and offer us a new, and everlasting life.

As a result, the apostle John, portrays John the baptist, as a messenger anointed by God.

Who's only mission in life is to bear witness to the fact that in Jesus Christ, we behold the very presence of God.

This is no more evident, than in the verses that immediately follow our text for this morning, the apostle John said: ***The next day he*** (meaning John the Baptist) ***saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!***

This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’

I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me,

‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

I believe that the significance of our text for this morning is two-fold. First, in the context in which it appears in John’s Gospel.

It clearly reminds us that the person to whom John the baptizer came to bear witness to, was, and is, truly the Son of God.

As we move through this season of Advent, and prepare to celebrate anew the birth of Jesus Christ.

We need to remind ourselves that this is the most tremendous event that has ever taken place in the history of the human race.

As we put up, and trim our Christmas trees this year, and as we display our nativity scenes in our homes, and churches.

And as we picture this infant born of Mary, lying in a manger, its too easy to get caught up in the sentiment of the moment, that we miss it's significance.

As Christians, we have taken the picture of our Lord's birth, as described in Luke's Gospel, and made it a cherished symbol of the Christian faith.

We all love to celebrate the birth of a child. But the child that laid in the manger on that first Christmas morn, was, and is no ordinary child.

He is the actual and only Son of God, to whom the whole universe owes its existence, and to whom all of mankind owes its very life.

And He is the one to whom we owe our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

And to whom we cling in the hope of life eternal, through His death, and resurrection.

And secondly, as people who have been baptized into Christ death, and resurrection, we have a responsibility, to take up where John the baptist left off.

That's right, we have a responsibility to witness to those around us, saying that Jesus is indeed the Christ.

The true Son of God, who has taken away all the sin of the world. The same person who died on the cross, for you, me and all believers

So, let us all now walk in John the Baptist footsteps, proclaiming the message of repentance, and Baptism.

May God's Spirit so empower us, not only to rejoice in the gift that Christ gave to us all upon His death and resurrection, "Redemption."

But also empower us to proclaim to the world, that in this child, whose birth we celebrate every year at this time. Has indeed come among us.

Using us as He did with John the Baptist as witnesses to the Son of God, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ who won for us eternal life.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.