

You & John the Baptist: How Passionate Are You For Jesus? Mark 1.1-8, 9.6.15

Introduction

1. The Scripture.
2. What is it that drives people to make a difference, to change a culture, to put their life on the line for a belief or others, compels Dave & Jessie Winniford to live in China to reach students for Jesus? Passion.
3. **Pic of wild looking John the Baptist.** What images, thoughts come to mind as you think about John the Baptist?
4. What we know about John the Baptist: He was passionate for Jesus the Messiah. He came from a priestly line from both his mother's and father's side of the family (Luke 1). He was raised in the wilderness and some suggest that due to his parent's age that probably died and he was raised among the Essenes. The Essenes were one of the most radically committed groups to God of its day. The word Baptist was attached to him b/c that's what he did. He baptized.

Passion for Jesus = A Wholehearted, Sustained, Committed Love to Jesus & His Kingdom.

Please note that nothing is said about emotions. They do play a part, but passion keeps forward momentum even when the emotional meter is low.

Big Idea: Your passion for Jesus will effect change... (environment, home, work, school, community, government, cul).

Pic of Icebreaker. Passion is like an icebreaker. It plows through hard places tears apart and makes a path for progress and growth. Passion for Jesus pushes his agenda and desires without compromise. Passion for Jesus will change an environment.

If Jesus had begun his ministry without John doing the preparation (1.3) his effectiveness would have been limited. In John 3, he says that he is the "friend of the bridegroom" or "best man." He was sent to announce that the groom was coming. He was awakening the people to the reality that the Savior of the World was among them.

He was the warning siren that alerted the people that something significant was about to happen. He awakened the spiritually sleeping so they would have an opportunity to respond to Jesus. Without John, people would have responded to Jesus, but they would not understand how serious and important a

time it was. Without John, Jesus is a miracle worker and great teacher, but b/c of John they were aware of a greater reality that Jesus was the Messiah, the Chosen One, the Savior of the World. Their hearts were prepared to follow Jesus because they had turned from their sins and they were looking for the One who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

To be passionate for Jesus means:

There is a burning commitment to Him – John 1.19-23, 29-30; 3.28-36.

He understood what His role was. He did not want to draw the focus to himself, but to the one he was committed to announcing. His followers were discouraged (3.26) because people were leaving John and following Jesus. John said, “People don’t need to be committed to me; they need to be committed to Him. They don’t need to be looking to me; they need to be looking to Him. It’s my joy to see Him increase and me decrease.”

Appl – Is there a burning commitment to see Jesus exalted in and through your life? It will look different for each person. For some it’s a humble acknowledgement of the gifts he has given you; for others it’s a drive to make a difference for Him in the community or work place (Images of TTLM, Food Basket, ROH & the Dream Center logos). For others, you want to take a stand on an issue or others want to help people who are broken or children in need with the love and power of God. It’s passion that drives you. **At the end of the day, do you want people pointing to you or Him?** We should excel at whatever we’re trying to do, but it should all point back to Jesus.

Ill – Movement – like you’re receiving a package from above and then you’re giving it to another and then pointing upwards. You move from vertical to horizontal and point to the vertical. It’s a heart desire to be used by God for His purposes. It’s all fame goes to His name. Prayer: Use me to make a difference for You!

There are clear lifestyle decisions that set you apart – Mark 1.4-6.

John: Lived in the wilderness, baptized people, had strange clothes and eating habits. His lifestyle set him apart. He wasn’t a conventional follower of Jesus. He lived a uniquely different type of life. His focus was getting people prepared to meet the Messiah and he didn’t really care about anything else. He didn’t care what people thought. His passion shaped his lifestyle.

Appl – I am not suggesting that you move out to the woods and start eating toads and roaches. You will make a name for yourself and part of that name will have “Crazy” in it. What I am saying is that our passion for Christ will effect how we live and the priorities of life.

Your passion shapes your lifestyle.

When you tithe and give above it, you're making a statement about your priorities. For some of you, your passion for Jesus led you to decide to homeschool a child b/c you wanted to have more Christian influence in their education. It set you apart. Even attending church today, set you apart. How many of your neighbors loaded up their families and came to church today?

Your lifestyle is the outward expression of your inward convictions.

Can people see in your lifestyle a difference? How you live and interact? What you watch and spend your money on? How you deal with people and what your values are?

How does your passion shape your lifestyle? **Your passion always touches three areas in your life: time, money and attention/focus.**

Appl – **Can people tell by your lifestyle choices that you have a passion for Jesus?**

There are courageous things you have to say with both words and actions - Luke 3.3, 7-14.

Wow. He did not hesitate when he spoke to the crowds, the military, the religious establishment, the governor (Mk.6.14-20) and even his followers. He told all to get right with God and to follow Jesus. He was not concerned about being politically correct or nice. He told the truth. He didn't care what the conventional wisdom was, i.e., "we are Abraham's descendants." He made it clear that Jesus was the only way to be made right with God. He didn't care if his following was dwindling b/c he wanted people following Jesus.

Appl – I'm not suggesting you have to carry yourself the same way as John the Baptist in your conversations. You do have to speak the truth in love. It's the emphasis from last week – candor with kindness. People who are passionate for Jesus will say the right things in the right way. Our culture is trying harder and harder to squelch the voice of Christians in public and the work place. "Don't bring your Christianity to work or school" is the motto of our time. We can no more do that than leave our eyeballs at home. It's who I am. The passionate follower of Christ fears no one.

Ill – The county clerk who refused to issue a marriage license to a gay couple b/c of religious convictions. She has the right according to the 1st Amendment to practice her religious convictions.

Ill - Mike Coleman's niece and the opportunity to share her faith for two hours with Orthodox Jews in an airplane.

Ill – **Image of Center for Medical Progress** videos and their expose video interviews with Planned Parenthood representatives and their contractors who take the body parts of aborted children and sell them for medical experimentation. At times, the conversations sound like something straight out of the

mouths of German doctors Nazi concentration camps on their experimentation with Jews. What drives the CMP is a passion for the righteous standards of Jesus to be extended to the unborn.

The courageous things you need to say or do may not be heard or seen on the world's stage, but they will be known in courts of Heaven. Let your passion for Jesus be heard by the fearless things you do for him. We are all called to be that voice that is calling in this world's wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord's Return!

Conclusion

Passion for Jesus = A Wholehearted, Sustained, Committed Love to Jesus & His Kingdom.

Big Idea: Your passion for Jesus will effect change... .

At the end of the day, do you want people pointing to you or Him?

Can people tell by your lifestyle choices that you have a passion for Jesus?

Are you speaking up for Jesus and His righteous standards?

In the bulletin.

For Further Study:

- Read Luke 3.8-14. If you asked John, "What should I do?", what might he say to you?
- Read John 3.26-30. What character traits are revealed about John and what is the application to your life?
- Read John 3.31-36. What grips you about John's assessment of Jesus and why?

Growing Your Passion for Jesus

- Concentrate on Him all the time
- Wilderness Wandering
- A Simple Lifestyle
- Likeminded Friends & Followers