

Do We Look for Another?

by Chip Brogden

The sermon explores the doubts of John the Baptist and emphasizes the sufficiency of Jesus in our lives.

Topics: "Faith Crisis", "Christ Centrality"

Description

Chip Brogden delves into the story of John the Baptist, highlighting his unwavering faith in proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God, yet facing moments of doubt and crisis of faith while in prison. Brogden emphasizes the importance of truly knowing Jesus and surrendering to His preeminence, questioning if we seek Jesus for who He is or for what He can give us. He challenges believers to examine if Jesus is truly enough for them, urging them to strip away distractions and focus solely on the simplicity of Christ.

Transcript

"Now when John heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto [Jesus], 'Are you the One that should come, or do we look for another?'" (Matthew 11:2,3).

You will recall that John the Baptist was the one sent by God to be a voice in the wilderness, the prophet who went before Jesus to prepare His way and announce the coming Kingdom. John pointed out that the One coming after him was the One Who would be preferred above himself. It was John who revealed to us that great mystery of God's Purpose in seven simple words: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

John's ministry reached its height when Jesus came down to the river Jordan to be baptized. There John saw the heavens opened, saw the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus like a dove, and heard a Voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." With evidence like this it is difficult to doubt; and so, with great authority and conviction, John said, "I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

John knew his purpose had been fulfilled, and with great eagerness he handed the reins over to the One he had so faithfully proclaimed. He had prepared the way, and now the One he had been preparing everyone for had arrived.

Shortly thereafter, John was arrested and put into prison. His work was complete, his sun was setting, and just as he had said, Jesus was increasing and John was decreasing. But oh, what a decrease! The ministry was finished, the crowds were gone, and John was left alone in prison with only a few disciples

who came to visit him.

When everything is stripped away you are soon left with little but your own thoughts. In prison, John had a lot of time to think. And the essence of his thoughts were along these lines: Did I make a mistake? Is Jesus the Son of God, or not? If He is the Messiah then where is His Kingdom? Why doesn't Jesus do something? Did I really see the Spirit and hear the Voice, or was that just my imagination? And if He isn't the One, do we need to start looking for another?

We can all take comfort in the knowledge that even the greatest prophet who ever lived (Luke 7:28) can have troubling thoughts, moments of doubt, and crises of faith. We all experience times when the darkness mocks us and circumstances try to convince us that the best course is to "curse God and die" (as Job's wife so eloquently put it). We can afford to be philosophical and detached about Jesus increasing and us decreasing while we are still ministering out by the Jordan, but in prison the truth of what we have been proclaiming is put to the test. Sadly, many of us fail the test. Jesus simply does not do what we expect - and this upsets us!

The real crisis of faith is along the lines of this Man. We can all disagree over Bible doctrine and interpretations of Scripture. But what will you do about Jesus? He will not change Who He is to accommodate Who we think He is. He is Who He is. We either have to come to grips with Jesus as He in fact is, or we have to settle for something less or something else. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). So the question we all have to answer is this: Is Jesus enough? Is He enough, just as He is? Or do we still need Him to do something else in order to satisfy us? Intellectually we can say, "Yes, Jesus is enough. Amen to that. I believe it." But I am surprised at the growing number of people who are openly suggesting that Jesus really is not enough for them! We need fellowship, they say. Or we need God's blessings. Or we need spiritual gifts and more powerful anointings. To believe that Jesus is Enough (they say) is simply too mystical, too simplistic, too out-of-touch with the real world - no matter what Colossians 2:10 says.

I would suggest, brothers and sisters, that if Jesus is not Enough for us then we have not really met Him yet, or at the very least, we do not know Him very well. Corrie Ten Boom said, "You may never know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have." That is the purpose of all God's dealings with us in this area of being decreased (or as I like to say, being reduced to Christ). Jesus is not quite all we HAVE, and so we are reluctant to say that Jesus is all we NEED. The problem, dear friends, is not that we have too little, but that we have too much. It is not that we need more of the Lord; I believe we already have all of Him. We just need less of everything else. Like the Laodiceans, we consider ourselves to be rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing (Revelation 3:17). Like Martha, who was vexed over "many things", we have too many religious things, too many Christian things, too many spiritual things, too many church things, too many of the "many things" that distract us from the One Thing that is needed (Luke 10:42). No one is ever vexed over the One Thing. It is always the "many things" that vex us, all those "things" apart from Jesus that we think we just cannot live without, all those "things" we think we "need" simply because when it gets right down to it, we do not see Jesus as Enough.

Now we all face the same temptation John faced. What is the temptation? There in prison he began to think, and he came up with a question, and if you really look at this question I think you will see where the suggestion comes from, and you can still hear its echo from time to time. The question is this: "Are you the One, or do we look for another?" And notice this is not John's own personal dilemma. By using the word "we" he included himself and others who were equally puzzled and wondering within themselves as to

whether or not Jesus was the One.

The essence of the question is this: everything we are, everything we have, and everything we believe is based upon Jesus being the One; but Jesus has disappointed us, not so much by what He has done, but by what He has failed to do. We expected His Kingdom to be thus and so, we expected Him to be thus and so, and nothing is as we expected it would be. Now we can continue believing in this One Who frustrates us so, this One Who seems to be moving so slowly, or we can look for another, someone who can be depended upon, someone who makes sense, someone who always answers us according to our own thoughts, desires, needs, and schedule. Someone who does not require us to be decreased in order for him to be increased, someone who does not talk about denying ourselves and taking up a cross, but will just love us the way we are and let us be who we are. Are you the One, Jesus? Will you allow us to make You into what we want you to be, or do we look for another?

This "looking for another" is the entire object of our adversary, that spirit of Antichrist that is forever trying to corrupt us "from the simplicity of Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3), always trying to get us to leave "Him that called you" to follow after "another Gospel" (Galatians 1:6), which really is no other, Paul says, only the appearance of Another, Something Else, or Someone Else. At least Peter, for whatever faults he may have had, was smart enough to realize that there was no one else but Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). But this does not stop people, even Christians who should know better, from "looking for another." They look for another pastor, another preacher, another teacher, another prophet, another ministry, another sign or word or prophecy or teaching or manifestation or meeting or miracle. The simplicity of Christ, the reality of Who He is, cannot keep their attention for very long.

In another place Jesus asked, "Whom seek ye?" (John 18:4). In other words, who are you looking for? This particular crowd was pressing in to have Him arrested and put to death. The day before the crowds were pressing in to proclaim "Hosanna!", and before that they were pressing in to make Him their king by force (John 6:15). At other times the people pressed Him to hear the Word of God. Still other times the people pressed Him to be healed of their diseases. Have you ever noticed that everyone wants something, that there are more takers in this world than givers? Pressing Him, pushing Him, forever wanting more and never satisfied. Very few know how to sit at His feet just to hear His Word. Very few are willing to pour out the best ointment on Him, and when they do, they are severely criticized for such a "waste". Very few are content just "to be with Him" (Mark 3:14). Instead, this one wants a loaf of bread, this one wants a healing, this one wants a teaching, this one wants a sign, this one wants an answer to a question, this one wants proof of His divinity, this one wants something to accuse Him with. Does anyone seek Him for His sake? Does anyone press upon Him, not for what He can give, but for Who He is? Does anyone seek Him out, not to get some need met, but so they "may know Him" (Philippians 3:10)?

Whom seek ye? Have you discovered Him yet, and is He enough, or do you seek another? We do not proclaim the preeminence of Christ because it is a nice doctrine to believe in; for us, it is a matter of life and death, because everything hinges on whether or not Jesus is preeminent. If He is preeminent then He is Enough, and there is nothing else but Him, and there is nothing worth proclaiming except Him. To John in prison, and to us wherever we may happen to be, Jesus says, "No, you did not make a mistake. I am the One, but I am more than you can imagine, more than you dare to dream. Blessed are they who are not offended in Me."

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