

Remnant Life Church
December 15, 2019
Whatever it Takes: John the Baptist
(Fourth Sunday of Advent)
Matthew 3:1-6

The participants in the Christmas Story have remained the same down through the ages:

- Joseph, Mary, and of course Jesus
- The shepherds, wise men, Gabriel and the angelic host
- Herod, Cesar Augustus, and Quirinius
- But there is another who is seldom mentioned this time of year, but he was vitally important to the life and ministry of Jesus

John the Baptist

- Son of a priest, Zechariah and a woman named Elizabeth who had a young relative living in the next village over, a young woman by the name of Mary
- The birth of John is recorded in Luke the first chapter while Jesus, as we read this evening, is in the 2nd chapter.
- The fact that Elizabeth and Mary were related meant that Jesus and John were cousins

John and Jesus grew up together

- He was about 4 months older than Jesus
 - They would have played together
 - Done all of things boys did in that time
 - They were very likely together at the age of 12 as they all went to Jerusalem and Jesus remained behind in the temple to talk with the teachers and priests
- Their ministries would have begun at almost the same time at the age of 30
 - The age of 30 in that time was the point of maturity or coming into adulthood for a man
 - Birth-12 – you were considered a child under the supervision of the women of the family
 - 13-20 – school or training for your vocation
 - 20-30 – apprenticeship; Jesus would have worked in the carpentry shop with his father and brothers
 - 30 + - authority and wisdom for work, teaching, or leadership
- Jesus did not begin his ministry until the age of 30 so that those who heard Him would listen to Him as a mature man.
- John's job was to proclaim His coming in the 4 months leading up to Jesus' coming to be baptized

John was an unusual man to say the least

READ - John 3:1-6

- He lived in the desert until he began his ministry (**Luke 1:80**)
- He ate locust and wild honey (**Matt 3:4**)

- He wore clothes made of camel hair and leather ([Matt 3:4](#))
- He spoke boldly and harshly to the religious leaders of the day ([Matt 3:7-10](#))

Because the call and purpose of John's life was a very simple, but all-encompassing one

- Alert the people to the coming of the Messiah
- Preach to the people for the repentance and forgiveness of their sins because of the great love of God
- He performed his duties well
 - Jesus called him the greatest man born to a woman ([Matt 11:11](#))
 - He was so unwilling to compromise his message, that he was martyred at the hands of Herod ([Matt 14:1-12](#))

This evening we celebrate the birth of Jesus but like John, we too, have been given a job to do

Until He comes again, we are to tell others about Jesus and who He is

- But I want to encourage you to replace the word "tell" with the word "show"
- Talking about Jesus and then acting in a way that does not reflect Jesus is to not represent Him at all
- A quote attributed by many to the 12th century monk St. Francis of Assisi – *"Share the Gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words."*
- What do people know about you and who Jesus is in your life by your actions?
 - Peace?
 - Kindness?
 - Wisdom?
 - Self-control?
 - Joy?
 - Humility?
- What are you willing to do in order for that to be seen in your life every day?
 - Can you change those things that should be changed?
 - Can you give up what should not be a part of your life?
 - Can you begin to do things in a different way that may not be easy?
 - What are you willing to do?

In the 1983 Major League Baseball season, the Philadelphia Phillies had an improbable year that led them to the WS

- Their team was comprised primarily of cast-offs, those in the twilight of their career, and unproven players
- They were picked by the experts prior to the season to finish dead last in the NL East division which, at that time, was comprised of 6 teams with 6 also in the NL West
- But instead, they finished with the second-best record in the entire National League finishing the season with a six-game lead over the second place Pirates

- They famously lost the WS when Joe Carter of the Toronto Blue Jays hit a walk-off 3 run homerun off of Mitch Williams in the bottom of the 9th inning of the 6th game to give the Blue Jays the championship
- Only the second time in the history of baseball that the World Series was ended on a homerun
- The Phillies motto that year was “Whatever it Takes” and that attitude served them well

John certainly lived that way, doing whatever it took to complete the call God had given him to tell people that Jesus was coming

So again, what are you willing to do in this new year to come to tell, better yet, to show people who Jesus is in your life?