



October 22-23, 2022

Ice Breaker Questions

- Today's text opens with a description of two different baptism scenes.
 - Have you been baptized? If so, where were you baptized? Do you remember any specific details or events associated with your baptism? If not, are you comfortable sharing why you haven't been baptized?

Understand Their Story

John 3:22-36 completes John the Baptist's witness about Jesus. In John 1 we saw him deflect attention from himself and point people towards Jesus, and in this text we read his final words¹.

1. Read John 3:22-30. What is the difference between how John the Baptist's disciples view Jesus, and how John the Baptist views Jesus? How does John the Baptist's attitude towards Jesus challenge or convict you?
2. Read John 3:31-36. There is debate over who is 'speaking' in this section, but it seems likely that these six verses are the words of John the apostle (the author of this gospel). He is adding to what John the Baptist has said in verses 22-30 about Jesus' supremacy.
 - a. What are all the different reasons that "Jesus is Greater" than John the Baptist (or anyone else who is 'of the earth' - to use the wording in verse 31)?

Connect to His Story.

3. If we investigate cross references to John 3:27, there seem to be two different things which John may be referring to as he says: "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given to him from heaven." What are the two options?
 - a. Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-7 (and then focus on v 7), Hebrews 5:1-4 (focus on v 4) and Matthew 21:23-27 (focus on v 25). What are people receiving from God in these texts?
 - b. Read John 6:60-65 (and then focus on v 65). What are people receiving from God in this text?
 - i. Were both options, or one of the options presented in the sermon which you heard? (Note: each campus has live preaching this weekend!)

¹ Other gospel writers indicate that John the Baptist's disciples relayed messages between John and Jesus while John the Baptist was in prison, but John's gospel doesn't include this dialogue.

Apply to Our Story

John 3:22-36 can be applied to us in two distinct ways. First, there is much to learn from the humility of John the Baptist. Secondly, there is much to learn about the greatness of Jesus and the natural state of people (verses 31, 32 and 36).

- What has impacted you the most from these verses as you have read and talked about them as a community group?
- What was/were the main application point(s) made by the pastor you heard this weekend? What did you take away from the sermon?

Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus is the Christ, the bridegroom, the one who has come from heavens and speaks the truth, and gives the Spirit without measure!*
- *Pray in Confession: Are there times when you have confused your role with Jesus' role? Do you like people to rely on you and come to you?*
- *Pray in Supplication for a right perspective of your role in bearing witness to Jesus. Pray for people to receive him.*

God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 3:22-36

In John 3:22-36 John the Baptist demonstrates that his identity is not rooted in the fame and notoriety which surrounded the role which God gave him, but it is rooted in God's pleasure and purposes. When his work is finished, John states that his joy is complete (John 3:29) and seems to have no subsequent identity crisis. This idea is counter-cultural in our society, where people are caught up in "workism": "the belief that work is not only necessary to economic production, but the centerpiece of one's identity and life's purpose."²

As Katherine Leary Alsdor reflects:

"Work was never meant to shoulder the burden of establishing our identity and meaning of life.... Scripture tells us in Genesis that God made us as human beings in his image... Our work is for his glory; he calls us to join his project of redemption. Our identity is more secure and far-reaching than whatever can be attained from any job or career—we are his adopted sons and daughters. His work is our paid work, homework, creative hobbies, neighborly work, civic work, church work—every endeavor we undertake using our gifts and his resources for the benefit of others in this world. Furthermore, our sense of meaning is derived from understanding our part in his good story and seeing glimpses of the Holy Spirit working with us—in and through us and in and through others. Put simply, our work is a way to love our neighbor."³

- Is your personal identity tied to your work? If you have experienced sudden job loss or change, how did this affect you? If not, how do you think your sense of personal identity would be affected if your work ended?

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/02/religion-workism-making-americans-miserable/583441/>

³ <https://learn.redeemercityocity.com/library/faith-and-work-immersion-an-intermediate-faith-work-course-165222/427243/path/step/135793555/>

- How could you see your work as a means toward an end, rather than an end in itself? How would it change your day to day life if you engaged in your paid or volunteer workplace with the goal of glorifying God and loving your neighbour?