

Voice of an Old Baptist

Matt 3:1-12

Introduction:

1. Our heritage is being lost
 - a. If we don't do something, a whole new generation will grow up who do not know which way to go
 - b. If we don't do something, then a whole generation will grow up not knowing how Baptists are different
 - c. If we don't do something, then a whole generation will grow up not knowing where Baptists came from
2. What has happened in the past does effect us
 - a. What happened in the Garden of Eden still effects us
 - b. The effects of sin effect each one of us daily
3. A rising star had come on the scene and his name was not found in the "Who's Who" of his day
 - a. He didn't have the right connections
 - b. He bypassed the traditional rungs of the celebrity ladder
 - c. Virtually overnight, John the Baptist emerged out of nowhere to become the hottest young communicator in the entire region
 - d. It was obvious that he had not hired a PR firm because he didn't fit anyone's notion of what was "acceptable"
 - e. He was a rugged outdoorsman with a blunt, forthright message
 - f. He wasn't concerned about ratings and popularity
4. In his commentary on Luke, G. Campbell Morgan said, "I wonder whether we do not need a ministry of this kind right now. I sometimes wonder whether Christ does not still need John the Baptist to prepare His way... I wonder whether the message of the Christ can ever prevail until the message of John has gone before it."
5. Let's examine some of the distinctives of this man's life and ministry

I. A Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

A. Isaiah Prophesied a Forerunner

1. This forerunner would prepare the way for the Messiah
2. It was common for the emperor or king to have someone go before him to prepare the way
 - a) *Remove obstacles from the road*
 - b) *Fill the potholes*
 - c) *Make the arrangements*
3. John the Baptist was forerunner for the King of Kings

B. John's Day was a Day of Religion

1. John found himself in a religious world
2. The Jewish religion was widespread in John's world
3. The Pharisees were very strict religionists
 - a) *They fasted and prayed regularly*
 - b) *They went to synagogue weekly*
 - c) *They observed the sabbath day carefully*
4. They were lost – like Nicodemus
5. Our day is a day of religion
 - a) *There is no shortage of religion today*
 - b) *Rolf Barnard – Church members <==*

C. There Were Many Voices in John's Day

1. Roman -- Jewish – Zealots
2. We have many voices in our day
 - a) *The ecumenical movement*
 - b) *The modernists and liberals*
 - c) *The contemporary church, emerging church movem't*
 - d) *The Chrislam movement*
3. John's voice was a fresh, exciting voice
4. Our church is to be a voice in the wilderness
 - a) *Beware of the ecumenical movement*
 - b) *Beware of the modernists and liberals*
 - c) *Beware of the contemporary church movement*
 - d) *Beware of the emerging church movement*
 - e) *Stay away from the Chrislam movement*

D. It May Get a Little Lonely

1. In the end, see John languishing in prison
2. The crowds were gone
3. But we will be standing with God
4. We will be standing with the Bible

II. An Independent Voice – vs 1

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

A. John Came Out of the Wilderness

1. John cried out with an independent voice
2. He came out of the wilderness
3. He was not part of the Pharisees or Sadducees
4. He was different from what people were used to
5. He did not have an earthly headquarters
 - a) *John didn't have to check with the high priest of his day to get permission to preach his message*
 - b) *He didn't get permission from some convention or conference before he could preach*

B. We are Independent Baptists

1. We are not part of some convention or association
2. No one, but God, tells us what to do
3. If we want to buy property, we buy it, we don't have to ask permission from some headquarters
4. You choose your own pastor
5. Aren't you glad that some bishop does not knock on our door and say, "Bro. Day has been here 3 yrs now and it is time to move him. We need him in Charlotte so we are going to transfer him immediately and we will send you a pastor."
6. In the book of Acts there was no convention and no conference and no synod and no diocese
7. The churches that Paul started were independent of each other.

III. An Authoritative Voice – vs 5-6

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

A. John Had God's Authority

1. John Was Sent from God – Jn 1:6

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

1. He was sent with authority to baptize – Jn 1:33

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

a) *No one else had authority from God to baptize*

b) *When Jesus desired baptism he walked 70 miles to receive baptism from the one who had authority*

2. John preached God's Word and had God's authority

B. Jesus Passed That Authority to His Church

1. Only His church has divine authority to baptize

2. Matt 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

IV. A Preaching Voice – vs 1

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

A. His Was a Preaching Voice

1. He didn't come with a puppet program

2. He didn't come with Christian drama

3. He didn't rap or dialog with the people

4. He didn't come with some Christian movie

5. God has chosen to use the foolishness of preaching to save the lost – 1Cor 1:21

B. God Has Ordained Preaching

1. It may seem foolish to some people
2. Nothing is going to replacing preaching here
3. We are not getting rid of the preaching of God's word
4. John didn't mince any words – everyone knew where he stood
5. He preached the message of God
6. He preached whether it was popular or not

V. A Baptist Voice – vs 1

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

A. John's Voice was a Baptist Voice

1. He wasn't John the Methodist
2. He wasn't John the Catholic
3. He wasn't John the Presbyterian
4. He wasn't John the Nazarene
5. I don't think it was a denominational name then
6. John was sent by God to prepare things for Jesus
 - a) *John's followers left him and followed Jesus*
 - b) *When a replacement for Judas was to be selected - Acts 1:22 says that they looked for someone who had the baptism of John*

B. We Are Baptists

1. Jesus came to start a church and I believe it is was a Baptist church
2. Spurgeon's mother was a Methodist and she was so happy when Charles got saved. But he joined with the Baptists and became a Baptist preacher and she said one time. "Charles, I prayed for you to be saved. Charles, I even prayed for you to be a preacher. But, Charles, I never thought you'd be a Baptist preacher." He said, "Mamma, isn't that just like our dear Lord? He always gives us more than we ask for."
3. Baptists are not Protestants
 - a) *Protestants separated from the Catholic Church*
 - b) *Baptists were never in the Catholic Church*
4. Three preachers were talking ... <==

VI. A Separate Voice

A. John Dressed Differently – vs 4a

4a And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins...

1. John came out of the wilderness - did not have on a 3 piece suit
2. Wore a cheap coat of camel's hair – poor people wore this
3. He had a leather belt around his waist
4. His clothes were a rebuke to the religious leaders of his day who were addicted to the finery, and who in pride dressed sumptuously and ostentatiously to impress the people
5. We need some Baptists who will dress differently from the world.

B. John Ate Differently – vs 4b

4b ... and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

1. Israelites were allowed to eat locusts but they were the food of the poor people
2. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness and became a survivalist – he lived off the land
3. When I was in Cinti some time ago – everyone was focused on the 17 yr cicadas
4. You can eat them – put cicadas on pizza
5. John showed people that he cared nothing about the luxuries of the priests of his day

C. How Different Are We?

1. The TV preachers have the best cars, houses, clothes
2. Prosperity preachers tell us that God wants everyone to be rich
3. John was so focused on eternal things that he did not focus on food, shelter and clothing like everyone else did
4. We need those things, but there is more to life
5. God does not want us to live at the poverty level, but He does want us to be untangled from this world so we look for the world to come

VII. A Compassionate Voice – vs 7

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

1. John loved them enough to warn them
2. We are accused of not having love
3. Who loves you more
 - a) *The one who knows that the bridge is out and stands in the street warning people*
 - b) *The one who knows that the bridge is out but stays home and doesn't bother to tell anyone*
4. Anytime someone warns you he is showing compassion
5. We love people enough to warn them about the dangers of hell
6. John loved the people enough to ...
 - a) *Expect genuine results – “Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.”- vs*
 - b) *He did not just want the Pharisees to come forward and fill out a card – John wanted genuine salvation.*
 - c) *John wanted souls to be convicted of sin in the fear of God so they would turn to God*
7. We don't believe in a “repeat after me” easy believism

Conclusion:

1. John was a witness – we need to be witnesses
2. John magnified the work of Christ
3. John worshipped Christ
4. John was devoted to Christ and even died for Him

A little boy in Europe lived in the poor part of town. He admired the great mansion with its landscaped yards and the big fence around it. Living in the mansion was a master violinist. He was a middle-aged man and the little boy would listen near the open window to the practice of the violin master. The little boy loved the music and he found a way through the fence to get closer to the music. The gardener walked by and grabbed the little poor boy and took him to the master of the house.

The master asked the little boy, "What were you doing in my yard?"

The boy answered, "I just wanted to hear you practice. I just wanted to hear your music. I could not stay away from it."

The violin master saw something in the little boy and soon the little boy showed up every day to receive violin lessons from the master. Years went by and the old man retired. Those who heard the young man play the violin said that he was the best that they had ever heard. The young violinist went on tour performing in various cities. He came back to his own city for a concert and the music hall was packed. The young man got up and played music like it had never been played before. The crowd was in awe as they began to applaud. The young man just stood there. He did not bow. Some threw flowers onto the platform, some shouted, "Bravo, bravo!" The people noticed that the young violinist stood quietly staring up to the far corner of the concert hall. The crowd became quiet as they noticed an older man with a bent frame and grey hair sitting in the upper corner. Finally, the old man stood, he applauded and said, "Bravo!" When he did, the young man turned and bowed to his audience. To the young musician there was only one voice that mattered – the voice of his master. There is only one voice that counts for the believer, the voice of the Master.

1Co 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Almost everybody in America is a church member, but they don't think that God will punish sin. They sleep well at night, because they don't believe that God will punish sin. They don't let their church membership interfere with their daily living, because they don't believe that God will punish sin. Talk to them about Jesus dying on the cross and they are not interested, because they don't believe that God will punish sin. And, of course, nobody will be interested in whether Christ did anything for him on the cross until he believes that God will punish sin. There is no use to apply a remedy to this generation; this generation does not need its sins forgiven, for they don't think there is any punishment awaiting them. What they need to hear is the first message of that bloody cross of my Lord, "GOD WILL PUNISH SIN!" Every time they nailed those nails into the flesh of the Son of God, every stroke of the hammer was saying, "God will punish sin," "God will punish sin," "God will punish sin!" - Rolfe Barnard (1904-1969)

Three preachers were out somewhere talking – a Methodist, a Presbyterian and a Baptist. They got to talking about the Lord's coming and one of them said, "Well, if the Lord was to come back just to be around with us for awhile, I wonder which of our three churches He would join?"

The Methodist said, "He would join mine."

The Presbyterian said, "Oh, no. He would join mine."

The Baptist didn't say anything for awhile and they looked over and asked him, "What do you think?" He said, "I don't think He'd move His membership. He'd leave it where it is."