

Receiving John's Sermon

Message Notes

I have a question. Have you ever received a word from God?

- You **opened your Bible** and there it was. (My grandfather and Ephesians 4)
- You **were praying and you heard** a gentle whisper. (My calling to pastor)
- You **were in a discussion with a friend** and God spoke. (Kingdom conversations that made my heart burn within me like two men towards Emmaus)
- You **were in a service and a preacher said** something and God used it. (A sermon in Texas God used)

Growing up in church, people were always giving out tapes. "You have to hear this sermon!"

- God has used sermons throughout history to shape society.

Thank God for preachers and sermons from people like:

- **Billy Graham** - "God has given us two hands, one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing."
- **Mother Teresa** - "I know God won't give me anything I can't handle. I just wish he didn't trust me so much."
- **Reinhard Bonnke** - "The one seeking the will of God is always overrun by the one doing the will of God"
- **John Wesley** - "Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not whether they be clergymen or laymen, they alone will shake the gates of Hell and set up the kingdom of Heaven upon Earth.
- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** - "The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children."
- **John Chrysostom** - "If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door, you will not find Him in the chalice."

I would have loved to hear Jesus preach a sermon

There is a preacher that I want to talk about today. He preaches a sermon that every one of us needs to hear! The preacher's name is John the Baptist.

Luke 3:1–2 (NLT) — **1** It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Tracoenitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. **2** Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. At this

time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness.

- Context
 - This was a very specific time
 - John also was a miracle baby
 - He was loner in the wilderness
 - He was a wild man, camel hair clothes, leather belt, locust eater
- John's Sermon was PURSUE
 - "Come out of the world"
 - "Show hunger and pursuit of God"
 - "Come back to where it started"

Luke 3:3–6 (NLT) — 3 Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 4 Isaiah had spoken of John when he said, "He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming! Clear the road for him! 5 The valleys will be filled, and the mountains and hills made level. The curves will be straightened, and the rough places made smooth. 6 And then all people will see the salvation sent from God.' "

- John's Sermon was PREPARE
 - Clear the road
 - Fill the valleys
 - Level the mountains
 - Straighten the curves
 - Make the rough places smooth
- What John had in mind
 - Get phony religion out of the way!
 - Let justice come to those in the valley
 - Let humility come to those high and mighty
 - Let truth come where there is confusion
 - Let holiness come where there is compromise
- How it can apply to us
 - Get hindrances and obstructions out of the way
 - **Confront the shame and insecurity** keeping us from receiving
 - **Confront the pride and self-righteousness** keeping us from receiving
 - **Confront the crooked and wayward lifestyles** keeping us from receiving
 - **Confront the mind and heart issues** keeping us from receiving

Luke 3:7–14 (NLT) — 7 When the crowds came to John for baptism, he said, "You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? 8 Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 9 Even now the ax of

God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire." 10 The crowds asked, "What should we do?" 11 John replied, "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry." 12 Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?" 13 He replied, "Collect no more taxes than the government requires." 14 "What should we do?" asked some soldiers. John replied, "Don't extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay."

- John was tough - You have to be OK with a confronting word from God
- John's Sermon was PROVE
 - Don't assume safety by affiliation
 - Don't assume God won't chop the tree
 - Don't hoard possessions
 - Don't cheat for possessions
 - Don't strive for possessions

Luke 3:15–18 (NLT) — 15 Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah. 16 John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 17 He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire." 18 John used many such warnings as he announced the Good News to the people.

Luke 3:21–22 (NLT) — 21 One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy."

- John's sermon was a PERSON

Conclusion:

- As we begin this year, I want you to receive the sermon of John.
 - Let's PURSUE God this year
 - Let's PREPARE our hearts for a move of God
 - Let's PROVE our faith by our actions
 - Let's focus on a PERSON, Jesus.
- I'd like to return to the imagery of valleys, hills, crooked, and stoney
 - He can lift the needy
 - He can level the mountain of sin
 - He can straighten out the crooked character
 - He can purify your heart