THE SPIRITUALITY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST’

Qualities of Godly People #17

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Matthew 11:11

ETS: In the eyes of Jesus, John was a spiritual giant

ESS: We need some spiritual giants today

“An army of a thousand is easy to find, but, ah, how difficult to find a general.” Chinese proverb

I say, “Finding a Christian is easy, but, ah, how difficult to find a great Christian.” When Jesus met John the Baptist, He found a great Christian! Dennis Deese

Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:11 A greater: 3187 meizon mide’-zone: Greater, larger, elder, honorable, stronger. Greater spiritual stature (Dennis Deese)

Although this was not his greatest hour, he was still known in heaven as a great man. Have you ever questioned God? His purpose? His reality? Even in his crisis of faith, he’s a great man of God. Don’t you find that encouraging? That even when we are not at our best, or feel like we’re doing our best, the Lord may still see us as spiritual giants.

He didn’t say he was the greatest. He said, “there hath not risen a greater” - thus, we too can be great. We can reach the same spiritual level as John. He was a spiritual giant and you can be one too. In fact, it says there has not (past tense - up to that point) risen a greater than John the Baptist. Thus, this intimates that it’s possible you could be even greater? Would you like to be? Well if so, then it behooves us to investigate how he became great!

What are the evidences of his spirituality?

I. HE WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Luke 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.

If you fill a clay pot with a gallon of water and carry it on your head it will soon grow heavy. However, when you swim underwater you have many gallons of water on top of your head and the weight is not nearly as burdensome. Why the difference? The environment that you are in. When you are in an environment of air water is hard to carry. When you are in the environment of water it is easier. So it is in the spirit. If you are in the environment of the flesh, then God's command are extremely burdensome. If you are in the environment of the Spirit they are much easier.
Notice three fruits he experienced:

A. He had the joy of the Holy Spirit

Luke 1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

Lu 1:44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

B. He had the power of the Holy Spirit

The Greeks had a race in their Olympic games that was unique. The winner was not the runner who finished first. It was the runner who finished with his torch still lit. I want to run all the way with the flame of my torch still lit for Him. Fan The Flame, J. Stowell, Moody, 1986, p. 32

Joh 10:41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

Joh 5:35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Eph 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Lu 1:16-17 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

John 10:42 And many believed on him there.

C. He had the revelation of the Holy Spirit

Joh 1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

Joh 1:19 Witness martureo mar-too-reh’-o : to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. To affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because he’s been taught by divine revelation or inspiration. To give (not to keep back) testimony to utter honourable testimony, give a good report.

Joh 1:32-33 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 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.

II. HE WAS A CHRISTLIKE IN NATURE

His Christlike nature is evident in his:

A. Action

Mark 6:19-20 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life

B. Attitude

John 3:30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.
John 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Joh 1:27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

John 1:23 He said, I [am] the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

C. Aspiration

John 3:30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.

John 1:23 He said, I [am] the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

III. HE WAS FAITHFUL TO HIS LORD

This man was faithful Regardless of:

A. Difficulties

1. Criticism

Joh 1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

Joh 1:24-25 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

2. His Assignment (who wants a wilderness assignment?)

a. To prepare the way

Mt 3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Joh 1:23 He said, I [am] the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

“The idea is taken from the practice of eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, or took a journey through a desert country, sent harbingers before them, to prepare all things for their passage; and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments. The officers appointed to superintend such preparations were called by the Latins, stratores.” (Adam Clarke’s Commentary)

Stratores denote a chosen body of soldiers sent in advance of an army to explore the country, to determine the proper line of march, to select the spots best fitted for encamping, and to make all the arrangements necessary for the safety and comfort of the troops when they halted

b. To preach the word

Mt 3:7 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?

Mt 14:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.
3. His losses

Mr 6:17-20 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

B. Doubt

Luke 7:19-20 And John calling [unto him] two of his disciples sent [them] to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

C. Death

Mark 6:27-28 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

“She may have had his head, but God had his heart!” Dennis Deese