The Mission
John 1:19-28

ETS: John the Baptist knew who he was and his mission
ESS: Knowing who you are and why you are here gives you purpose, mission, and strength
OSS: I want people to know who they are and why they are here
PQ: Do you know who you are?
UW: Mission

ME

What is YOUR mission in life?

Watched a lot of videos about IU football this week.

- Common theme: IU has been executing flawlessly

Sports Illustrated Headline: Indiana is Mistake-Free and College Football's Best Team. Curt Cignetti's Standard is Why.

- Indiana football never beats itself. To beat the Hoosiers requires 60 minutes of perfection. Nobody's proven up for the challenge — all the way to the national title game. The Hoosiers are college football's last unbeaten, and they're chasing the first 16–0 season since Yale in 1894. It's the ultimate

mark of perfection — and the ultimate reflection of Cignetti's mentality trickling down to his team.

Tomorrow night, we will see if Indiana can be the first 16-0 team since 1884!

Indiana's mission: To Win the Game!

I must admit that one of my favorite movie series has been the Mission Impossible series

- Every movie (and television show) begins with a tape
  - On the tape, Ethan Hunt hears the details of the mission, and the message ends with "This is your mission, should you choose to accept it. As always, should you or any of your I.M. Force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions. This tape will self-destruct in five seconds."

The rest of the movie is Ethan carrying out his mission despite all obstacles.

Michael Hyatt: "Clarity about your mission brings power to your actions."
David Starr Jordan: "The world stands aside to let anyone pass who knows where they are going."

Arnold H. Glasgow: "Make your life a mission - not an intermission."

What is YOUR mission in life?

WE

What happens when a person or organization KNOWS their mission?

- **Enhanced Clarity & Decision-Making**: A clear mission **simplifies choices**, as you know what aligns with your purpose and what doesn't.
- **Stronger Motivation & Energy:** It provides an **inspiring reason to work**, leading to **greater engagement** and **perseverance**.
- **Direction & Focus**: You understand your **destination**, allowing you to **plan strategically** and avoid getting lost in irrelevant activities.
- **Resilience**: **Short-term difficulties** have **less impact** because your focus remains on the long-term goal.
- **Holistic Impact:** Purpose often influences all life areas—health, family, work, and relationships—creating deeper satisfaction.
- **Authenticity**: Actions feel more meaningful and less hollow when aligned with an internal, genuine purpose rather than external expectations.

What is YOUR mission in life?

GOD

John 1:6-9 "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world."

The Believer's Mission:
Testify about Christ

John = John the Baptist

- Who was John the Baptist?
  - Son of an elderly couple.
    - The priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth
- His birth: Announced by the Angel Gabriel!

John's Mission: **Luke 1:15-17** "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and will never drink wine or beer. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. 16 He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the understanding

of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people."

- **He will** be filled with the Holy
- **He will** turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.
- **He will** go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah
- [**He will**] turn the hearts of fathers to their children
- [**He will turn**] the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous
- [**He will**] make ready for the Lord a prepared people
    - Related to Jesus

According to John, John the Baptist was…

- a man sent from God
- [Sent] for a witness
- [Sent] to bear witness of the Light

John had a **mission**—His **mission** was to **point people to Jesus**!

John 1:15 ("John testified concerning him and exclaimed, "This was the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.'")

WHAT did John the Baptist do to ACCOMPLISH His Mission?

- He came as a witness to **testify** about the light
- John **testified** concerning him

John states

- **verse 31**, "I didn't know him"
- **Verse 33,** "I didn't know him"

So, if John "didn't know Jesus", then

- **WHY** was He sent to "testify concerning him"
- **WHO** sent John to "testify concerning" Jesus
- **HOW** did John know where to go?
- **HOW** did John know when to start?

Answer: John had been "filled with the Holy Spirit" since his conception!

What did John the Baptist "Testify" about Jesus?

- Testified that Jesus "existed before me"

According to Luke's gospel, John's mother, Elizabeth, was six months pregnant when the angel Gabriel came to Mary to tell her that she was going to have Jesus!

- Technically, John existed BEFORE Jesus
    - Why does John say Jesus existed before him?

Because as John noted in **John 1:1-2,** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning."

- Although Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, He has always existed!
    - He existed before His human birth
- John states that since Jesus "existed before him," then he "ranked ahead of him"?

<u>What did John the Baptist mean by that statement?</u>

- He meant Jesus was **more than a man**!
    - In **verse 26**, John states, "I'm not worthy to untie his sandal strap!".

John's mission was to testify about the Messiah!

<u>Isn't that OUR Mission too?</u>

OUR Mission:

- To **share** the Gospel
- To **point** people to Christ
- To let **Christ live** through you
- To **work** for the **glory** of God
- To **love** the **Lord your God** with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength
- To **love** your **neighbor** as yourself

- To use your **talents**, **abilities**, and **gifts** to bring glory to God
- To be a good citizen

OUR mission is NOT….

- To become rich and famous
- To indulge your flesh
- To bring attention to yourself
- To be a source of division in the church

Our Mission as a **Church** is to "Testify about Jesus"

- Preach through the Word of God, *pointing people to Jesus*
- Teach small groups, *pointing people to Jesus*
- Support missionaries to tell *people about Jesus*
- Tithe 10% as a church to support our six seminaries to train people who will go out and *point people to Jesus*
- Summer outreach activities to *point people to Jesus*
- Social Media improvements to better *point people to Jesus*

OUR Church's mission is NOT….

- To be an entertainment venue
- A hub for the arts

- To become a mega church
- To become a social services agency

Our Mission is to point people to Jesus

- YOUR Mission/MY Mission is to point people to Jesus

How was John testifying?

Luke 3:3 He went into all the vicinity of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins

- John was calling people to REPENT and to show their repentance by being baptized!

What is baptism?

  - Lit. To immerse

- Christians **did not** invent baptism!
- John the **Baptist did not** invent baptism

The **Jews** practiced **baptism *before*** John the Baptist!

- However, there was **only one group** the Jews would baptize: **Gentiles**!
  - *Part of the conversion ceremony* of a Gentile to Judaism included baptism of the Gentile.

What John was doing was NOT considered normal!

- John was challenging the **Jews** *<u>and</u>* **Gentiles** to take a step out of their **comfort zone** by **challenging** them to be baptized!
    - For a **Jew** to submit to baptism was to say something like, "I'm as bad as a heathen Gentile."[1]—This would have been a huge act of **humility**!
    - For a **Gentile** to submit to baptism by a Jew (John the Baptist) would have been a huge act of **humility** too!

But this wasn't just a NEW RITUAL-this was a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"

- Remember, *Jesus has* not yet appeared *on the scene*
    - This is ***NOT*** *the* ***same baptism*** a ***believer*** in Jesus is asked to partake in.

Remember, John the Baptist was to "make ready for the Lord a prepared people."

- <u>How is a person prepared for the Lord's work?</u>
    - To respond to God for salvation, you must be **convicted** of your **rebellion** against God!

We NATURALLY do not **seek after God**!

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[1] https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-3/

- We NATURALLY do not **love** God!
    - Because God first loved us, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit into the world and that is one of the ministries of God the Holy Spirit—the "Convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement" (**John 16:8**)

John the Baptist is **preaching** to the **people** and **exposing** their **need** to **repent**—like the **Holy Spirit** does in all hearts today!

- John the Baptist was calling **ALL** the people (Jews and Gentiles) to REPENT of their rebellion against God and to ILLUSTRATE their recognition for REPENTANCE by being baptized.
    - Repentance is NOT just about a feeling of being "**sorry**"
    - Repentance is an ACTION word!
        - John's challenge is to TAKE ACTION

- John the Baptist was "preparing the people" by challenging them to see their need for the Messiah and to take action!

John was carrying out his mission!

Your Mission for God Will Be Challenged

John attracted attention from the religious leaders in Jerusalem!

- Luke tells us that John had a harsh reaction when these religious leaders came out to see him.

Luke 3:7 He then said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

- Why such a harsh greeting?
  - Was John trying to scare them off? Was he testing the resolve of their desire to be baptized?
  - Was he being honest with what was in their (our) hearts?

Vipers are brutal!

- With a few exceptions, vipers are found all over the world.
  - **Theologically**: Vipers are everywhere!
- Vipers like to **blend** in with their **environment**
  - The word translated as "viper" is **Echidna**.
    - Echidna referred to **small poisonous snakes** that lived primarily in the desert regions of Palestine and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean.

        - Because they looked like a dried twig when they were still, a person collecting wood for a fire would often pick one up inadvertently and be bitten, as happened to Paul on the island of Malta.
- Vipers are **brutal**!
    - When they mate, the male inserts his head into the mouth of the female and impregnates her. The female then bites off his head and kills him!
    - When her baby vipers are about to be born, they literally eat their way out of her killing her in the process.
        - Thus, the children are born with no parents!
            - When John called the people a "brood" of vipers, he was equating them with the children of vipers, which is even a nastier statement.
- Vipers are **brutal**-they care only about their survival.
- Vipers had a **reputation** for being both **deadly** and **deceitful**.

John called the **people** "vipers"!

- **Matthew** (Mt. 3:7) states that John the Baptist was **looking specifically** at the **religious** leaders who were coming out to be baptized by John the Baptist.

You'd think John the Baptist would be **HAPPY** people-especially **Jewish religious leaders, who were** coming to be baptized in the Jordan.

- **Remember**, it was not **NORMAL** for a Jew to be baptized!
- **Remember**, **VIPERS** are **DECEPTIVE**
    - John the Baptist called them "vipers" to make them take a **gut check** on their motive for being baptized!
        - Was their **motive** just to have another **"religious rite"** under their belt?
        - Was their **motive** just to "**be safe"?**

Two Groups of People in the Crowd: **Jews and Gentiles**

- **Problem**: The **religious Jews** (and **Leaders**) who were viewing this as a **new ritual** to undergo
- **Problem**: The **Gentiles** who were **curious** about this message of repentance.

BIG PROBLEM: Both groups DID NOT UNDERSTAND what TRUE REPENTANCE looked like!

Then John the Baptist asks an interesting question: "Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

- John the Baptist's question was meant to get them to question WHY they were coming to be baptized.
    - Were they coming to be baptized because they were convicted of sin OR where they coming to be baptized to check off a new box of religious ritual?

The reality was NO ONE warned them of the coming wrath!

- John asked the question to give them pause—to show them that this was something SERIOUS they were being CHALLENGED to do!
- This Baptism of Repentance was not to be taken lightly!

John 1:19 "This was John's testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?"

- These priests and Levites respond to John by asking, "Who are You"?

WHY do we need to KNOW our mission?

- Your **mission** will be **challenged**

Obviously, John baptizing people is causing a "buzz", which is reaching Jerusalem!

- The priests and Levites were logical choices for the delegation:
    - They were temple servants (Levites assisted priests), religiously educated, and carried authority.
        - Don't forget, John's father was a priest, so some of these people may have known John since he was a child.

John 1:20 "He didn't deny it but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."

- "Didn't deny" what?
    - That he was there to "testify" about the LIGHT that was coming into the world!
    - That the One he was testifying about was "eternal."

The first thing John wanted them to know was "I am not the Messiah"

- The people were expecting the Messiah—Just like we are now!
    - There was probably "talk" that John was the Messiah, and he wanted to IMMEDIATELY dispel that talk!

John 1:21 "What then?" they asked him. "Are you Elijah?" "I am not,"

Why **Elijah**?

Matthew 3:4 "Now John had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey."

- The prophet **Elijah** was "a hairy man with a leather belt around his waist." (2 Ki. 1:8)
    - **Malachi 4:5-6** "Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse."

John 1:21b "Are you the Prophet?" "No," he answered.

Why "the **Prophet**"?

- **Deuteronomy 18:15, 18**: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him….18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him."

Moses predicted that a prophet like him would come from among the Jews

- Like Moses, this prophet would speak the word of God to the people
- Like Moses, this prophet would be a mediator for the people
- Like Moses, this prophet would perform signs and wonders
- Like Moses, this prophet would fast for 40 days
- Like Moses, this prophet would be the mediator of a covenant
- Like Moses, this prophet would be initially rejected by his own people
- Like Moses, this prophet would be miraculously preserved in infancy
- Like Moses, this prophet would be raised up by God to be a deliverer.

However, John makes it clear that he was not "The prophet" predicted by Moses!

Know Who You Are

John 1:22-23 "Who are you, then?" they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am a voice of

one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said."

- John knew he was *not* Elijah
- John knew he was *not* "the **Prophet.**"
- John knew he was *not* "the **Messiah.**"

John knew he was: "I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord."

- John's mission was to **prepare** the **people** for the **arrival of the Messiah**
  - How did he prepare them?
    - He preached about **sin** and the need to **repent**
    - He baptized them
- John's mission was to **announce** the **arrival of the Messiah**
  - "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world"

Because **John knew** WHO he was…

- He knew **WHERE** to be: in the wilderness around the Jordan River
- He knew **HOW** to dress: like the prophet Elijah
- He knew **WHAT** to preach: Repentance

WHO are You?

Identity is everything!

Properly identifying yourself **spiritually** will give you

- Power
- Confidence
- Boldness
- Strength
- Hope

<u>Who are You?</u>

- You are a **SAINT**

A SAINT is:

- **Holy**: Set Apart (You are NOT a sinner)
- **Blameless** b/c Jesus took your sin upon Himself
- **Adopted** into His family
- **Freed** from the Slavery of sin (Redeemed)
- **Forgiven** of sins both past, present, and future
- **Accepted** into His family—even if you are NOT a Jew by birth, God has accepted you.
- **Sealed by the Holy Spirit**

SATAN wants you to **forget** that YOU are a **SAINT**!

- SATAN wants you to believe that SAINTS are only those believers *who have died*—it is AFTER physical death you become a saint, but that's not biblical!
- SATAN wants you to believe that SAINTS are only biblical figures, Christian leaders, and martyrs of the faith.
- SATAN wants you to believe that SAINTS are persons who received **exceptional grace**, were **sustained** by **faith**, and whose good works are to be an **example** to the rest of the Christians.

The word "SAINTS" in the Bible is used to refer to ALL believers—even carnal believers!

- Addressing the most worldly church (Corinth), Paul calls them "SAINTS"!

SATAN wants you to forget the BENEFITS YOU have as a SAINT!

- **Adopted** into His family
    - **Reconciled to God!**
- **Freed** from the Slavery of sin (Redeemed)
- **Forgiven** of sins both past, present and future
- **Accepted** into His family
    - Gentiles and Jews are ONE in God's family!
- **Sealed by the Holy Spirit**

WHY do we need to know our mission?

- Your **mission** will be **challenged**
  - **John's mission** was NOT to *start a new religion*, BUT to point people to Christ.
  - **John's mission** was NOT to *exalt himself*; here to point to Jesus Christ!

WHY do we need to know WHO we are?

- You will be **challenged**!

John 1:24-25 "Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?"

- In other words, WHO gave you the **authority** to baptize?
  - Remember, John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit" BEFORE he was born!
    - **God** is the one who gave John the Baptist the **authority** to **baptize** people*, not an institution!*
      - If they had done their homework, they would have known he was the **son of Zechariah**, the priest.
        - They would have heard the story of **John's birth** to aging parents.

Know WHY You Are On Mission

John 1:26-27 "I baptize with water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know him. 27 He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie." 28 All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing."

- John knew WHY he was on a mission!
    - He knew WHO was coming!
    - He knew WHO was coming was far greater than he was!

Jesus told His disciples in **Matthew 28:19-20**, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Christ has been given "All Authority."

- WE have been given a Mission by Christ
    - **Our Mission:** To testify about Jesus!
        - make disciples of all nations,

- baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
- teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you

YOU

PQ: Are you "On Mission" for God?