

John Ch1v19-42 - Life - What's It All About?

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[0 : 00] where we started a new series just last week. If you missed it, you can follow along on the website. All our talks are recorded there. And to help us in our studies on the table, there's lots to collect this morning. If you didn't get one last week, the Gospel According to John is just a little outline of what the Gospel is all about. It gives you the big, big picture and it'll help you as you go along in the studies to return to week by week. We're going to read this morning from verse 19 to verse 36. John chapter 1 verse 19.

Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, I am not the Messiah. They asked him, then who are you? Are you Elijah? No. Are you the prophet? No. Finally, they said, who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness. Make straight the way for the Lord. Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him.

Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, and nor the prophet? Well, I baptize with water, John replied. But among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. This all happened at Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day, John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[2 : 48] This is the one I meant when I said, a man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. I myself did not know him.

But the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel. Then John gave this testimony.

I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him. But the one who sent me to baptize with water told me.

The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is God's chosen one.

The next day, John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, look, the Lamb of God.

[3 : 52] Well, we'll leave the reading there and we'll pray and ask for God's help. Father, may we see Jesus clearly through your word today.

and may it cause us to rejoice in you, to humbly submit to you and gladly follow you.

Please give us understanding and application to our hearts and change us for good. Amen.

Well, finish this sentence for me. Life is all about what? Life is all about doing the best I can, finding happiness, being successful.

Well, think about what your answer is because ultimately, life, let's face it, is all about me. We do have a Ronaldo inside of us.

[5 : 21] You see, we are naturally self-centered people who spend our days thinking about me, what I want and where I'd like to be and what I want to do.

We are obsessed with self. Every waking moment and every thought has a little bit of me inside of it.

But there is another way to think about life and we're going to see that in our study here now from John. You'll notice if you just use the big headings or the big titles that there are three days.

So verses 19 to 28 is one day and then we read in verse 29 the next day and then in verse 35 we read the next day which are three days which are going to be the three things we're going to look about look at today together.

So first, the first day we're going to learn that it's not about me. It's not about me. Social media was abuzz.

[6 : 37] Word had been travelling fast and it had reached all the way to the religious elite back in Jerusalem. Look at verse 19. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask who he was.

You see, John had been attracting quite a lot of attention and the rumour that was going around was John was the Messiah. God's promised king who had come to restore and renew all things. And all of this, verse 28, was happening at a place called Bethany which was about 30 kilometres east of Jerusalem on the other side of the Jordan River where John was baptising.

So the religious leaders sent out their experts, their lawyers, their best people to check out what was going on in Bethany down at the river. All the crowds had been gathering there.

So, Mr. Baptist, who are you? Verse 20, Well, John did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, I am not the Messiah.

[8 : 02] Rather than say who he is, he answers by saying who he is not. In other words, it's not about me.

Verse 21, Then who are you? Would you be Elijah? There was thought that Elijah, the prophet of old, would come back to life before the coming of Messiah.

No, I'm not Elijah. Are you the prophet? Not just any prophet, but are you the prophet? The one that God had promised that was going to come?

No, I'm not the prophet. Seems a little bit like a game of guess who, doesn't it? Finally, they said, who are you?

Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. We have to tell our supervisors something, so please will you say who you are? Just tell us something about yourself.

[9 : 05] Well, they've really set it up for John now, haven't they? Now's his chance to get a few more likes on Facebook, an opportunity to increase his following on Instagram.

Let me tell you just a moment who I am. I'm John and I'm a very important person. Maybe we could organise an interview sometime.

No, John is not interested in fame or prestige or status. He's not looking for thumbs up or emoji clapping hands.

It's not about me. Well, how different is that to how we operate? We strive to be someone.

We desire greatness. We all want a little bit of glory. We want that little taste of being a celebrity.

But when John says who he is, he gives attention to someone else.

[10 : 14] Look at verse 22, the end of verse 22. Who do you say or what do you say about yourself? John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness.

Make straight the way for the Lord. Isaiah the prophet of the past had written that a prophet would come who would be an announcer making the way for Messiah.

And John is saying that's who I am. I am preparing the way not for me but for Jesus. That's why he was baptizing people in the Jordan.

Not a baptism like what we do now but a baptism of a sign that they were ready to meet the Messiah, God's rescuing king. No, says John, I am not looking for people to follow me.

I am not trying to build a name for myself. It's not about me. I loved watching the Olympics this summer and the Paralympics that are on at the minute, especially the big races, the hundred metres.

[11 : 39] One by one the athletes are announced and as their name is heard they run out of a tunnel and into the stadium and take their place at the starting light. There's flashing lights, bursts of sparkling flames, the roar of the crowd.

Well, John is not like the guy running into the stadium who everybody cheers for. No, John is like the voice of the announcer.

You don't need to remember me. You don't need to know my name. I don't want you to know me. I want you to know him. Verse 27, he is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

He deserves the attention and praise. I'm not worthy. It's not about me.

You see, that's so upside down and back to front compared to how we live and how society operates. We spend our lives trying to make a name for ourselves.

[12 : 55] We wake up in the morning and what's the first thing we do? Switch on our phones to see if anybody liked my Instagram post. We go to the gym and lift our weights.

We spend ages applying to our makeup, plucking our eyebrows, doing all sorts of things in the hope that as I go out the door somebody will notice me and somebody will say something nice about me. Why? Because it's all about me. We lie awake at night worried. What do people think about me? We rehearse yesterday's conversations so that I come out on top. And none of us are immune from this me centred thinking.

I'll let you into a little secret. When I go home every Sunday and I mean every Sunday I wonder to myself did anybody like my sermon?

[14 : 03] You see I crave praise. I need people secretly deep down. I want people to come up and say Johnny you're a great pastor.

Why? Because it's all about me. and it can be like that for all of us in the ministries we're involved in. Whether it's the music the set up the tea or coffee.

But guess what folks? It's not about me. What people say or don't say is not the issue. It's not about how many likes we get.

It's not about me. So if life is not about me then what's it all about?

Well we go on to our day two. Verse 29. The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and he said look it's all about Jesus.

[15 : 14] John's role is not to draw attention to himself but to deflect from himself and draw attention to Jesus. He's a walking talking living signpost.

Did you see that in verse 31? He says I myself did not know him as in he didn't know all that Jesus would be but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel. He doesn't want people to know about him he wants everybody to know about Jesus. Well what does he have us know about Jesus?

Well there's two big things that I think the text points to. First Jesus is our sufficient or perfect saviour.

Look at verse 29 again. The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said look the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[16 : 26] It's a strange phrase isn't it for somebody to be called a lamb. If we hear lamb we think cute and cuddly but for those who are listening lamb meant something entirely different.

You see all the crowds that were gathering and coming to John was because have a look at chapter 2 verse 13 chapter 2 verse 13 it was almost time for the Jewish Passover so they were all coming into that area they were all heading to Jerusalem because Passover was about to take place.

This was the big annual event in the year the big pilgrimage that all families and everybody travelled up to Jerusalem to remember Passover.

Passover celebrated the exodus of God's people from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt and central to these celebrations you guessed right was a lamb a lamb that would die God had said to the people when they were back in Egypt I will pass through Egypt and I will bring my judgment and to ensure that God's people would not be judged they were commanded to take a lamb then they were to kill it and take some of the blood of the lamb and paint it on the door frames of their houses up the sides and on the top and then God said this the blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood I will pass over you and no destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt well the message was clear wasn't it to everybody that they had to take a lamb and if the lamb didn't die they would die of course the big Passover celebration was a picture of a much greater judgment to come on the whole world because all sin must be judged including mine and yours death is the penalty because we are enslaved to sin we are under a harsher and more brutal master Satan we are slaves to ourselves always putting me first listening to the voice that says you can be like God so when John sees Jesus he says look look the lamb who takes away the sin of the world well everybody would know what he's talking about

[19 : 35] Jesus the Messiah he's the one who's going to take the judgment for our sins he's going to die in your place and that's what happened on the cross the judgment of God fell on Jesus so that the people could be set free that we can be set free from our selfish selves and he would open up a new way a new exodus giving us a fresh start forgiveness of all of our sin freedom from all of our guilt and shame look look at Jesus it's not about me the other big thing that he wants us to notice about Jesus is that he is God's chosen servant John tells us what he saw when Jesus had

been baptized go to verse 32

John is referring here to the baptism of Jesus John gave this testimony he said I saw the spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him what does he mean what's this dove coming down on Jesus what did it mean well God had revealed it to him look at the middle of verse 33 the man on whom you see the spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit I have seen says John and I testify that this is God's chosen one you see once again these are not empty words God had promised that his chosen servant would come and the sign that God's servant had come would be the spirit of God coming down and resting upon him we're told something about what this chosen one would be like go back with me please to Isaiah chapter 42 Isaiah 42 here is the promise of God's chosen servant and Jesus is the one who fulfills this promise Isaiah 42 verse 1 God says here is my servant whom I uphold my chosen one in whom I delight and I will put my spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations you see Jesus is saying I am God's spirit filled chosen servant who's come to renew and restore our broken and disordered lives he's going to put everything right again and look how he's going to come verse 2 he will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets he won't be harsh with you he's not going to shout you down verse 3 a bruised reed he will not break a smoldering wick he will not snuff out he's not going to crush you he's gentle and kind towards you he sees your weakness he sees your brokenness and he comes with the hope that we all desperately need look at the end of verse 4 in his teaching all that

Jesus has to say the islands that is the nations will put their hope don't look at me says John listen to God's chosen servant it's all about him you see we spend so much time don't we thinking about me we promote ourselves with pictures in the hope that we're going to gain more friends we boast of our successes we don't seem to put up our failures on Facebook but just the good things that we achieve in the hope that we'll gain more followers we look to ourselves to be fulfilled we listen to that inner voice to gain happiness but no it's not about me it's all about Jesus and we need to repent and stop making me the centre of our lives instead we are to look to

Jesus the lamb who takes away our sin we are to listen to God's chosen servant who is gentle and tender so if life is all about Jesus what is our response how are we going to live life now well the encouragement day three let's go back to

[25 : 37] John's gospel is we need to make a choice about following look at verse 35 John chapter 1 verse 35 the next day John was there again with two of his disciples when he saw Jesus passing by he said look look at him it's the lamb of God you see John prepares the way for Jesus and then he gets out of the way he doesn't want to be a stumbling block verse 37 when the two disciples that is the disciples of John the Baptist heard him say this well they stopped being disciples of John the Baptist and they followed Jesus so what will it mean for us to follow well three things very simply by way of application what will it mean to follow

Jesus first it will mean a lifetime of learning look at verse 38 turning around Jesus saw them following and said what do you want what are you following after me for and they said Rabbi which means teacher where are you staying come he said and you will see you see this is not an invitation to come to Jesus house and see what his new kitchen is like or what his new patio is like no it's a call verse 39 to come and see come and see who Jesus is they go to where he stays so that they can learn about him and from him verse 39 so they went and saw where he was staying and they spent that day with him it was about four in the afternoon you see life is not about people knowing all about us it's about us and a commitment to learning more about

Jesus and that requires a change of heart on our part a change of heart that removes self from the centre and puts Jesus at the centre where we humbly sit at his feet and listen to his words his truth and through him we find life in all its fullness so following Jesus will mean a life of learning second it will mean a life filled with purpose I'm sure you may be asking yourself if you're younger what I'm going to do what's my career going to be well whatever we do this is what we do verse 41 one of those who were following Jesus was Andrew and we're told verse 41 the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him we found the

Messiah that is the Christ and he brought his brother to Jesus that's that's our purpose that's simple isn't it for us as believers that's our goal as we go to school or as we go to work or as we're at home we are to bring people to Jesus now granted we can't take Jesus physically or take people to see Jesus physically but we do bring people to God's word where we do meet Jesus our job is not to change or convert people only God can do that we simply show the greatness and glory of who

Jesus is and cause them to fix their gaze on him and to listen to what he has to say we bring people to Jesus we can invite them to church we can invite our friends to rooted or to a hope explored that's our purpose as we go about life we're a signpost a living walking talking signpost that points to

Jesus that's our purpose and there's one more what will it mean to follow it will mean a life transformed for good verse 42 and Andrew brought Simon to Jesus Jesus looked at him and said you are Simon son of John you will be called Cephas which when translated is Peter Jesus gave Simon a new name his name was going to be called Peter which means if you've got a little note in the bottom of your Bible it tells us that Peter means rock that was going to be his new name [31 : 17] Peter the rock it's certainly not what Peter is now but what he will become he will become a rock his new name tells us what God is going to do in his life and how he's going to be changed and transformed you see as Peter learns from Jesus so he's going to be changed by Jesus to become a faithful servant of God and that's true of us as we choose to follow Jesus as we look to him as we listen to him he changes us from the inside out he gives us a new perspective of life a life of one following him that change will be hard at times so so so what's life all about well it's not about me it's all about

Jesus and it's choosing to follow him let's pray father father we are sorry we repent we confess of making me the center of all things for seeking glory for ourselves for promoting ourselves father help us to see afresh that it's not about me but it's all about Jesus the one who came to give his life for us so that we can be forgiven and set free the one who comes gently alongside us restoring us being kind to us giving life in all its fullness us help us every day to follow you to look to Jesus afresh to listen to his word and to know him who loves us it's in Jesus name we pray amen well we're going to sing together it's not about me