

# John's Testimony of Christ: Part A

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[ 0 : 00 ] I would like you to turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 1, and you follow as I read a portion of the passage that we're going to study together.

John chapter 1, picking up in verse 19. And this is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? He confessed and did not deny, but confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? He said, I'm not. Are you the prophet? And he answered, No. And Seth said to him, Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us.

What do you say about yourself? He said, I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said.

Holy Father, we are humbled to stop and consider that we, mere created beings, have been given the blessing and the joy of knowing you as our God and our Savior, of having communion with you through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 12 ] And that you and your loving kindness have revealed yourself to us through your word. And it is your express intention this morning that we who are your children would be blessed by your word, by the enabling of the Spirit of God.

And Father, it is our prayer that this morning your word would have free course. There are some of us here this morning that are snared deeply by sin and desperately need the work of the Spirit to relieve.

Some caught in bitterness. Some in unforgiveness. Some in secret sins that only you know about, Lord, but those who are your children have not received the blessing of salvation to be in bondage ever again.

There are some here that desperately need to know Christ as their Savior. And so, as the word is taught, we who are your children will labor in prayer that your word would produce fruit first in our own lives and in the lives of others that you care about so deeply.

And it is our desire that the Lord Jesus Christ would be honored this morning here among us as He is in heaven.

[ 3 : 50 ] We ask this in your precious name. Amen. Well, we are finished with the prologue. Prologue means kind of the introduction.

And the characteristic of John, it's a little different from some of the other books that you will find in the Scriptures, in that John's prologue does something that's atypical.

It lays out for us in the first 18 verses everything that you're going to find in the remainder of the book of John. It gives us, in just little snippets, all the pieces that later on are going to be expanded and fleshed out so you can understand them more completely.

I think many of you can remember when you were in either in high school or whatever, in college, and in the first day or two of your class, the professor or the teacher would come in and in broad terms kind of tell you, well, here's what I'm going to teach you and also talk about, and here's what I expect from you.

And good students generally pay quite a bit of attention at the very beginning because it fleshes out. You know up front what's coming. John has finished his introduction.

[ 5 : 12 ] And actually, as we look at this passage, we are going to take verse 19 through 28 this morning and look at this little statement about John the Baptist, and we understand that really what we're looking at in one sense is an expansion of what we found over in verse 7.

Take a minute. Put your finger on verse 7. It says, speaking about John the Baptist, he came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him.

And again, in verse 15, it says, John bore witness about him and cried out, this was he of whom I said, he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me.

And so we know, as I pointed out earlier, that John's introduction kind of gives us all the details, and then we're going to expand them. We're going to see them in greater depth in the weeks and months to come.

And so as we look at this first part, we're going to find in the verses that we look at today, John the Apostle is going to explain John the Baptist, the witness.

[ 6 : 21 ] And as we get started on this, one of the things that I want you to know from the very, very beginning is what the application is. Now let me explain what application is. Obvious, I would think.

But there are two different parts to a sermon in some ways. There's the exposition, that means explaining what the text has to say. And then there is the application.

If you were following or reading one of the Puritans, you would probably notice that in Puritan preaching, and I'm not a Puritan, I'm far removed from that in terms of age, et cetera, but in Puritan preaching, there was probably about one-third that had to do with the exposition of the text.

Here's what God says. And then there's probably two-thirds of it that had to do with use. That's the way they referred to it. So how do we use this? What is its application in our lives?

And so I'm going to tell you up front what the application is. This morning, as we study the passage of Scripture, what I want to have happen in your life is not just understand the historical details of John the Baptist as the witness.

[ 7 : 32 ] I want you to be sitting there thinking to yourself, so how does this fit me? What should I do if I am going to be faithful to the calling and appointment that I have received, very similar to John the Baptist's?

And so as we think about this, let me begin by making this point and having it stick in your mind. We are all witnesses. Get that clear. We are all witnesses. Now, some of you are sitting out there thinking to yourself, well, that's not my nature or my temperament.

I'm one of those kind of reserved, cautious persons who really, if you drop me in the middle of a large room filled with people, I would be the person who would naturally gravitate towards the very distant wall and pin myself up against there and just try being quiet.

Now, there are others who, guess what? You put them on the wall and guess what they naturally do? They move towards the center and they end up, they know all different kinds of details about who and what and how and when and where.

The fact of the matter is is that we are all witnesses. And as we read what we are going to look at here in John chapter one, I think it's very, very important that we don't get caught up in the historicity or the historical details of what John did and miss the fact that what we are going to discover here has application in our own lives.

[ 9 : 02 ] I want you to understand this and make it clear in your own heart. Every genuine believer is a witness. Every genuine believer is a witness.

And I could probably get off on a little side tangent here and remind myself of the parable.

Remember, Jesus told the parable about the talents.

One man received five. One man received three. One man received one. And the one who received one, what did he do? He just kind of hit it in the ground. He didn't do anything with it. I don't want to go off on a sidebar there, but I do want to encourage you to recognize all of us have received all that we need to be effective in the appointment that God has given to us.

And so keep it in your mind, every believer, I, you, we are all witnesses if we are a genuine believer. In relationship to that, it follows, and it's intelligent, that you should be sitting out there saying, oh yeah, well can you prove that?

Well, have just a second and let's take a look at a couple different passages in relationship to that. You're in John, and so we're going to play forward a little bit, but turn in your Bible to John chapter 15, verse 16.

[ 10 : 16 ] Jesus is speaking, and he makes this statement. He says, you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.

He says, I chose you. I called you. I put my hand on you. The reason that I am a believer and that you are a believer is not because we kind of in the midst of a moment of intellectual apprehension to, Jesus is a good idea, I'll give it a shot.

No. He and his grace called us, and we, by his grace, came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me have you look at another passage that I think is just an absolute, very, very pointed statement in relationship to this.

Turn your Bible to John 17, verse 18. John 17, verse 18. It says this, as you, remember we're dealing with the question, every genuine believer is a witness.

It's not my personality. Stop. Every genuine believer is a witness. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

[ 11 : 32 ] In my Bible, I put a little note for myself to remind me of the significance of this verse, and that little word, as. You don't need to know all the Greek on it, but here's what it is saying.

That word, as, is making this statement in the same manner that God the Father sent Jesus into the world, I have been sent to do the same thing and to accomplish the same purpose.

I am sent like Jesus was sent. And so I want you to keep that in mind as you think about that this morning, and we come to grips with the fact that as we look at John the Baptist, it says there in John chapter 1, verse 19, and this is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?

It is evident that what he had been doing is witnessing. I want you to recognize I had an interesting conversation not too long ago with an individual who was, we were discussing the matter of the evangelical church today being involved in witnessing.

And as a broad term, we'd have to say that there are far more people that profess to be evangelical, to be orthodox in their thinking, to care a lot about Jesus, but the truth of the matter is that it has been weeks, it's been months, it's been years since they really have shared their faith about the Lord Jesus Christ with anybody.

[ 13 : 13 ] And we were having a conversation and the issue came up, why is it that more people don't share about Jesus? Do you know what one of the natural and normal answers is? Is they lack information.

Did you hear that? And one of the things that goes along with that is so that many, many churches are involved in regular instruction in how to share the gospel.

And that's important. But are you tracking me? I don't think the problem is the lack of information. And the reason I would say that is let me give you a couple examples of it.

Remember the woman at the well? Remember that? John chapter 4, there's the Samaritan woman and she's at the well and Jesus comes to her and he says, give me a drink of water and she says, blah, blah, blah, blah, you know, and all that ends up, she is convicted of her sin and once she's convicted of her sin, she then takes a basic course in EE before she goes into town.

Is that what happened? She scampers into town and she says, come meet the man. And everybody shows up to hear, what is this?

[ 14 : 27 ] Let me give you another one. I like this one too. You remember the man who was born blind? You remember that story? And there is the Sanhedrin, all the Jews are kind of, tell us about this man and he cuts down to the chase.

He says, you know, who he is, I don't know but I will tell you what, I was blind and now I see. You got that? The best one. A low, trained, evangelistic, impact person.

And I think you ought to look at it because it's a good one. Luke chapter 8, verse 39. Luke chapter 8. Here's my argument. You don't need more information.

You need something to happen to your heart. Luke chapter 7 is all about the demoniac. Do you follow that? The demoniac is the one who Jesus delivered from all those demons and after, I love it, when the townspeople come out to find out what had happened to their pigs and they found the demoniac sitting clothed and in his right mind.

It's one of my favorite little lines in the Bible. Clothed and in your right mind. You know, it's like, ah, this guy had been radically transformed by the power of Christ.

[ 15 : 51 ] And there he is sitting, clothed and in his right mind and the neighbors all show up and say, Jesus, would you please leave? I mean, they were scared to death at the power of Christ to transform lives.

They said, would you leave, please? And Jesus does. But then the man says, hey, can I come with you? Can I come with you? Does anybody remember what Jesus said to him?

Verse 39, no, no, no. Why don't you go into town and tell him what great things I've done for you? How many weeks of evangelistic training do you think he had before he scampered on back to town

where he had been an absolute, disgusting, revolting individual and he begins talking about Jesus who could change life?

Everybody smile at me. so you know I'm talking to you. Everybody look. The thing that brings deficiency to witnessing is not a lack of information.

It is a lack of confidence in the transforming power of Christ that can take us from being the miserable, unhappy, unforgiving, just miserable people and we can turn our lives inside out and we can say to other people, come see the man who did this to me.

[ 17 : 22 ] Do you follow that? Hey, you're not going to witness when you're all scuzzed up about who you are or who other people are, you know, but when you get locked up on who Jesus is, guess what happens?

naturally. You don't need more education. You need to have a fresh touch of who Jesus is. Amen? Amen. Most of our failures to witness for Christ can really be tracked back to where our hearts are. You know what? people always witness. The sad thing is a lot of their witnesses are about themselves, their own interests, their own affections, their own petty issues, and not about Jesus. And as we study the scriptures this morning, what my prayer has been is that we who know Christ would get rid of some of this stupidity about ourselves and we would be locked in to the glory and the supremacy of Christ and he would dominate, dominate our affections because when he dominates our affections, he will control our conversations.

Well, let's learn about John. And as we learn about John, let's learn about witnessing. In principle, what we're going to find in verses 19 on down through to verse 24 is that a witness is not self-focused.

[ 19 : 22 ] A witness is not self-focused. We find there in John 1.19 that after John began his public ministry, he really did rattle the cages in Jerusalem and the Sanhedrin.

Now, the Sanhedrin were the 70 men that were kind of responsible for the leadership and the decision-making in the nation of Israel and when they heard that John the Baptist was preaching, after a period of time, he really began to have an impact and so they sent a delegation down to kind of do a little bit of study.

Who are you? That was their first question. Who are you? It's implied that they thought he might be the Christ, but there in verse 19, and this is a testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?

This is a formal delegation, do you follow that? on a fact-finding mission. Here's John the Baptist preaching without official recognition, and so they send an official delegation and they say, hey, who are you?

Now let me have you think with me just a little bit about the significance of John the Baptist and his ministry. Understand that for 400 years, the nation of Israel had heard no preaching prophet.

[ 20 : 43 ] That's pretty significant. When Malachi finished his revelation, the nation of Israel did not enjoy another preaching prophet for 400 years.

That is very significant to a people who had one after another received a prophet who would come. Now by the way, I want you to understand that every time a prophet showed up, the people weren't going, woohoo, we need this message.

That's not the way it usually went, but they still respected the fact God was communicating to them. 400 years of silence. And then out of the wilderness comes this guy, not endorsed by the priests in Jerusalem.

He didn't have any neatly printed brochures that explained how wonderful his ministry was. He didn't even dress sharply. Do you understand that? He came out in camel's hair. Now that was the blue jeans of the day.

Do you follow that? I'm not doing blue jeans this morning, but do understand this. I mean, the thing I want you to remember about a man who stands behind the pulpit is not what tie he wears, but whether or not he speaks with the authority of the word of God and the power of the spirit.

[ 21 : 59 ] spirit. And here was John the Baptist who walked out, and what were the scribes and Pharisees all about? Do you remember how they dressed? Oh, they were, I mean, hey, you could see a scribe and Pharisee and kind of know about their holiness by the way they dressed.

You know, they were really, they were into style, and you know, oh, you've got the big robe, and you've got the blue, and you've got the bells, and you are really hot, you know, and here is John the Baptist kind of strides out there, blue jeans and dungarees, and he's saying, hey, you guys need to

buck up because Jesus is coming.

Well, I want you to understand something. When this spirit-enabled preacher, John the Baptist, strode in down to the wilderness, he blew the doors off the shallow religion of the day.

Turn back, if you will, just for a moment to Luke chapter, well, you've got to turn back, that's right, go back. Luke chapter 1, verse 15 through 17. Do not miss the fact that John the Baptist's ministry was one that was characterized by the work of the spirit of God.

Luke chapter 1, verse 15 through 17. Here is the Holy Spirit speaking to Zechariah regarding his son. He says, for he will be great before the Lord, and he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

[ 23 : 45 ] And he will go before him in the spirit and the power of Elijah. And so what you understand is that here is someone who came onto the scene in Jerusalem and in the nation of Israel.

And by the way, listen to me carefully. John the Baptist never did a single miracle. Israel. Hmm? And yet, he turned the nation upside down.

Do you know how he did that? By preaching in the power of the Spirit of God that brought conviction to the hearts of broken-hearted, miserable sinners. sinners. I want you to understand something about John.

He was not caught up in self. Verse 19, who are you? The fact that they had to ask him sequential questions indicates that he didn't launch into, well, let me give you my business card, and here are all the details about who I am and how important I am.

Do you follow that? They had to keep on prodding, who are you? Look at the questions. Verse 20, he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, I'm not the Christ.

[ 25 : 12 ] I mean, that was a logical question that they were asking. Here, after having had all this insipid, worthless preaching that was characterized, or characterized the preaching of the scribes and Pharisees.

If you ever want to have a little interesting discussion on what Pharisaical preaching was like, just read Alfred Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus Messiah. I mean, hey, trying to think, who was the crystal cathedral?

I mean, not who was, who preached in the crystal, let's try this. If you want to know what the ancient Pharisees preached like, you can try Joel Osteen. Okay?

I mean, it was all about feeling good about yourself and all about, you know, well, you've got to do the right kind of things, and you've got to be, but you know what? God's all for you. And here is John the Baptist came thundering out, clothed in blue jeans, and he says, hey, you guys are in trouble.

Paul. And John was asked, are you the Christ? No? No? Well, okay, are you Elijah?

[ 26 : 23 ] And the reason they were asking him that is because if you return your Bible, you don't need to this morning, but in Malachi chapter 4, verse 7, the last thing that Malachi had to say is that before the great and terrible day of the Lord, Elijah's going to come, and what he's going to do is his preaching is going to turn the hearts of fathers back towards their children and the hearts of children back towards their fathers.

Stop. Do you know what that's saying? Everybody smile. It's saying that genuine conviction touches on the closest relationships we have.

Huh? Everybody said, yeah, that's right. If God is really at work in your heart, those who are closest know.

You can be really sweet in the lobby, but your kids know if you're a skunk at home. And here is what Malachi said.

He said, when revival comes under the ministry of the prophet Elijah, it's going to get a hold of those close relationships.

[ 27 : 50 ] A revival that does not reconcile the closest of relationships really has no spiritual zing. People that are persistently bristly, that are upset with one another spiritually, are really not in tune at all.

I want you to turn just for a moment. Let's kind of go on a sidebar here for a second. Just go over to James chapter 3, verse 14 through 18. Here's what I want you to do. Everybody look at me, brother.

Underline this and show it to your wife. Do you follow that? Now, what does that really mean? It means take it personally, don't apply it to somebody else.

Let me read it to you. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false about the truth. I'm not there, is what this is saying.

This is not the wisdom that comes from above, but is earthly, unspiritual. Now, nail the next one. Demoniactal. Well, I'm having a little bit of an attitude, but you know what?

[ 29 : 06 ] It's well-deserved because the people I deal with are just absolutely fruit cakes. No. This is a problem you have. Well, let's keep going.

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every evil practice. For the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. people came to John and said, Who are you?

I'm not the Christ. I'm not Elijah. Well, are you the prophet? Incidentally, and because of time, we're not going to get there, but that question, the prophet, is really a reference to Christ.

In Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 15 through 18, there Moses speaks of the fact that the day would come when there would be the prophet who would arrive.

[ 30 : 25 ] You're listening to him. What it's saying is that God would send his son who would be the complete and full revelation of the truth. They didn't connect the messianic role and office of Christ into that, but they said, are you the prophet?

No, I'm not. I love what John has to say about himself, though. Look, if you would, there at John chapter 1, verse 22.

So they said to him, who are you? We do need to give an answer. I mean, you know, we were sent as a delegation, and we've got to give some kind of answer to people when we show back up in the office.

Who are you? I'm nobody. I'm just the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.

So let me ask you a question. How faithful are you at being the witness you've been divinely appointed to be?

[ 31 : 46 ] Hmm? How faithful are you? Well, let's come to a second characteristic and try to wrap this up.

First is a faithful witness is not self-focused. All about Jesus. Second, a faithful witness really is convicting. Convicting.

And we understand that because immediately after him saying, well, I'm nobody special, then what we find there in verse 25, they say, well, then why are you baptizing?

Well, what are you doing baptizing people if you're not anybody special? At the heart of the question that was being asked to John was, okay, if you're not special, why are you calling people to repentance and working as you are to indict people of sin?

I want you to understand here, if you have friends that are into sprinkling or whatever else as a mode of baptism, I do want you to understand that underlying this question that was being asked in John is a very clear indication that baptism in the Jewish culture in which John stepped was one of immersion.

[ 33 : 11 ] The word baptism, actually baptizo, in the Greek means to immerse. How many of you know that the Jews baptize all the time?

Raise your hands if you know that the Jews, Joe Holloway, we have one who knows that Jews baptize all the time. And I went online Friday and I checked out where I could have a Jewish baptism here in town.

It's called a mikvah. And mikvahs are, in fact, you can, go ahead, you can Google it when you get home. Jewish baptism.

Where can I be baptized here in town? And there's a website. There's an email address. And there's a scheduling system where I can schedule to have a mikvah.

That, and the word, it's talking about entire immersion. Immersion. Do you know what immersion means? All wet. 100%. In fact, as a pastor, you know, when I'm involved in baptism, I want to be sure that they're down.

[ 34 : 19 ] Okay. All wet. It was a regular part of ancient Judaism. baptism. And it was part of, A, any Gentile who wanted to become a Jewish convert had to be, one, if he was male, circumcised.

Two, baptized. Three, sacrifice. Okay. And so baptism was just woven in to part of becoming a believer, a Jewish convert.

But there were other kinds of baptisms that took place that had to do in particular with a desire of purifying your heart from just all the nasty scuzzies of the sinfulness of life.

Do you follow that? And so periodically, you know, good, sincere Jews would go get mikvahed. And here was John the Baptist.

He had no endorsement. Well, right, do you have to baptize people? Were you, were you a graduate of, you know, Jerusalem Academy and baptismal skills?

[ 35 : 34 ] No. I never took any of those classes. Have you been endorsed by the Senate? No. I haven't had that either. Why are you baptizing? On top of that, if there was anybody in Israel that should have been involved in convicting people of sin, it should have been the, guess what?

The professional religious people, right? Scribes, Pharisees, the Levites, the priests, you guys are having a problem with sin. It's time to take care of it.

And nobody was doing that in Israel. And along comes John the Baptist and he rings the bell and he says, you guys are just a pack of sinners and the king is coming and when he shows up, you guys are in a heap of trouble.

And actually, there were people that believed his preaching. You got that? They started flocking to where they could be baptized for repentance.

Over Mark chapter 1 verse 4, we see this reference to the fact that baptism had to do with repentance.

[ 36 : 40 ] And so here come these people from Jerusalem, from the Sanhedrin saying, all right, you need to understand this. So you're not the Messiah.

No, no, no. You're not. And you're not Elijah. And you're not the prophet. Well, why are you convicted? I mean, what right do you have to convict people of being sinners?

And by the way, do you know what sin kind of was in the Jewish culture of the day? It was dragging a chair on the Sabbath. Those really important things, right? Remember what Jesus said? You guys tithe on the mint and the anise and you have completely collected the more weighty matters of the law.

And so they come stomping out to John the Baptist and say, well, what are you doing? Well, quite evidently, what was at work is as John the Baptist was preaching, the Spirit was at work convicting many of their sinful hearts and the judgment that they had to face under God.

The fact that people came to be baptized indicates that John's preaching identified sin and called people to repent of it.

[ 37 : 58 ] If you have any question about that, you can turn in your Bible for your own study and Liberty, go to Luke chapter 3 and remember when John the Baptist is preaching and he doesn't say, well, I am so glad all of you showed up here today to listen to my little talk about how you ought to feel better for yourself.

Remember what he says? How many remember that? He just blasted them. He says, you know, the axe is laid to the root of the tree. You know, what are you doing, you snakes in the grass kind of thing?

He says, bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. And then the soldiers said, well, what should we do? And the others said, well, what should we do? And he laid out what genuine repentance looked like.

I do want you to understand that not everybody who heard John preach believed John or was baptized. How do I know that? Track with me. This is important. Matthew chapter 21, verse 25.

Jesus, he has now finished cleaning the temple. Remember cleaning the temple? One man walking in, just kind of imagine this, walking into the White House and turning it upside down.

[ 39 : 05 ] That takes some kind of power. And all they could do is come up to him. Well, what right do you have to do this?

I mean, that's what they were asking him. He says, well, hey, I got a question for you. What is it? Well, hmm, yeah, here it is, here it is.

It was John the Baptist baptism from man or from heaven? And they're sitting there thinking, well, if we say it was from man, we're going to get stoned because a lot of the people around us think that John really was a messenger from God, so we don't want to see that.

Well, but if we say it was from heaven, then Jesus is going to say, and then why weren't you repentant and baptized? Do you follow that? Had him on the hook. It's quite evident that the Pharisees, the scribes, the Levites, the priests, these guys didn't buy in at all to what John was selling.

You see, in their idea, their religion really consisted of superficial things, of showing up and doing up and whatever else, but it really didn't have to do with anything but the heart.

[ 40 : 25 ] John the Baptist came along and said, hey, listen, the King of Kings is coming, and it's time for you to repent. Now, I want to explain something about John the Baptist's baptism, just for a moment.

John the Baptist's baptism was not a baptism to salvation. It was a baptism that was, in some sense, a public recognition of the lostness of their condition and their desperate recognition of their state.

Broad terms. John the Baptist, when he was explaining this matter, he says, hey, listen, I baptize you with water, but there is one coming after me that will baptize you with the Spirit.

Oh, I like that. Do you know why? Because, not by might, nor by spirit, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. One of the things that Scripture makes clear is that there's nothing I can do to the outside of me or even to, well, let's think five positive thoughts in a row, and maybe I'll be spiritual.

You know, it doesn't work. It has to be the Spirit of God that transforms our life through the power of the cross. Isn't that right? And here is John saying, there's someone coming after me that is going to make all the difference in the world.

[ 41 : 54 ] He is the only one who can save you from the desperation of your sin. Let me come back. As John came out of the wilderness, his message was not about himself.

His message was convicting. And he summarized it by saying this as we find there in verse 23, make straight the way of the Lord.

Being a faithful witness, I don't want you to miss this. Being a faithful witness takes living the truth and then saying the truth.

I want you to write that down somewhere. Because you know what? My prayer this last couple weeks has been this. I have had the privilege of being away for vacation and I got to tell you, I come back and I look on your faces and you are people that I love, I care about.

And I want you to know the fullness of joy that comes with being all that God has called you to be. Do you understand that? And you can't be that when you're consumed with yourself.

[ 43 : 09 ] You can't be. To be in a spitting match with God is just profoundly stupid, right? And He is bent on helping you grow to be faithful as a witness to His glory.

It takes living the truth and then saying the truth. So let me put this together in closing. There are some of you here today that do not know Christ.

And John the Baptist's message from 2,000 years ago is applicable. Make straight the way of the Lord. The day is coming when the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Savior of the world will also be the judge of the world and He is going to call you to a task and to accounting and if you are standing there before Him and you are not clothed in His righteousness and you are not clothed in His finished work on the cross and you hope to lift up to Him the miserable pittance that your life is, you will not endure.

And one of the purposes of preaching is to bring you who are here today that desperately need the Lord Jesus Christ to the point of confessing, I am a sinner who stands justly condemned before a holy God and I need His help.

And there's some of you here today that know Christ. And truthfully, you're a heartbeat away from being in His presence.

[ 44 : 52 ] Do you understand that? We're all a heartbeat away. But you are living a life that is distant to that divine and holy purpose for which He redeemed you.

How do I know that? I've been there. I don't want to ever be there again.

I've called you, He says, to be my witness. You cannot be bent on yourself and bent on Jesus too. And if you are going to see His glory in your life, it will take humility and repentance and a pleading with Him to change the way you think.

Let's close in prayer. Father God, this morning, I am mindful that the purpose of preaching is to bring Your glorious people to the place of saying yes or no to the Holy Spirit.

[ 46 : 18 ] You've called us to be witnesses. We do not want to play with so awesome, so majestic an appointment.

We're frail, easily distracted, often discouraged. And yet, we have been given the gift of salvation and the enabling of the Spirit of God.

So help us in our divine call. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.