

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 7, Issue 4

September 2010

The Kind of Preachers We Need  
and the Kind of Preacher I Want To Be (Part 1)

Luke 1:13-17

As the Gospel of Luke begins, we are given an inspired account of the birth of John the Baptist. It is this man that I am interested in for this message. As we will see over the next few months, John was an amazing and exciting man. He had a unique and incomparable life and message. He is a man that we all have heard about, but I am not sure that many have taken the time to study his life. Though his ministry was very important and had an immense impact, it was very brief.

In accordance with his brief ministry, the accounts about him are very brief as well. Matthew devotes three chapters—3, 11, and 14—that could be considered an extended discussion about John. In those three chapters, he is mentioned by name sixteen times. He is mentioned by name in seven other verses in the rest of Matthew. Totalling these verses, John the Baptist is mentioned by name in Matthew in twenty-three verses.

Mark also mentions John mainly in two chapters. Chapter 1 calls him by name four times; chapter 6 calls him by name seven times. He is mentioned in the rest of Mark only four times—a total of fifteen.

Luke spreads out the usage of the name of John more than the other books. In chapter 7, the name is found eight times. The name is recorded in the following amounts in these chapters: chapter 1—three times; chapter 3—four times; chapter 5— one time; chapter 9—three times; chapter 11—two times; and chapter 20—two times. Counting them all, John the Baptist is mentioned by name in Luke in twenty-three verses.

-2-

John's practice is similar to Matthew and Mark—mentioning John the Baptist mostly in two chapters. Chapter 1 records the Baptist's name nine times; chapter 3 records the name five times. The name is found one time in chapter 4 and twice each in chapters 5 and 10 for a total of 19 times.

John the Baptist is mentioned in nine verses in the book of Acts. Counting all of the verses in the Gospels and Acts, John the Baptist is mentioned in a total of eighty-nine verses. I mention all of these numbers just to call our attention to the fact that very little of John's life is covered in the Bible. Considering that several of the accounts in the Gospels cover the same events, we come to an even greater realization of the small knowledge that we have about John the Baptist.

Consider these facts. Moses is mentioned by name 784 times in the Bible. Abraham is mentioned 230 times, Isaac 123 times, and Jacob 346 times. Elijah's ministry covers six chapters; John's ministry amounts to about two chapters—one chapter if you leave out the repeated events. Isaiah wrote 66 chapters; Jeremiah wrote two books—57 chapters total; Ezekiel wrote 48 chapters; Daniel wrote 12 chapters. Twelve other men wrote what we call the Minor Prophets. How many books and chapters did John write? None. John the Baptist wrote none of the books of the Bible. Yet Jesus said about him in Matthew 11:11a—*“Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.”* Considering the number of times that he is mentioned and the amount of the content of his life, John the Baptist is not mentioned much. His writing ministry was nonexistent. But Jesus said that none of the other prophets were greater. Moses was not greater than John. Abraham was not greater than John. Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., were not greater than John. How could Jesus say that? Because Jesus was not looking at the quantity of work. Jesus was looking at the quality of work. What made John as great as the other men? His faithfulness. It was not the amount of work or the accomplishments that John had that made Jesus say that statement. It was his faithfulness. John had a

duty to do—prepare the way for Christ—and he did that duty with complete and absolute faithfulness.

There is much from the life of John the Baptist that we can learn and even imitate, and we will get to that in a little bit, but the most obvious characteristic of John, as of all the men listed above, is faithfulness. At the end of Matthew 11:11, Jesus said, “*Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*” As great as John was, you and I, in the mind of Christ, are greater than he. How is that possible and how can that be? Because Jesus is not talking about results and accomplishments. He is talking about faithfulness. Jesus equated John with all of the other men in spite of the little record about John in Scripture. Jesus equated John with Abraham, Moses, etc., because their faithfulness was equal. Jesus said that New Testament believers are greater than John—not because of results, but because of faithfulness.

Can I say something that will astound many people and would send a shock wave through most of the religious newspapers? Jesus does not care how successful you are, or how many you run in church, or how many souls you have seen saved this year? That is all we want to talk about. “How many are you running? How many have you led to the Lord?” What does Jesus think about your numbers? JESUS DOES NOT CARE ONE BIT ABOUT HOW MANY YOU HAVE! He does not care how big your church is, so stop telling everybody else how many you have.

Why do I say this, and do I have any proof that Jesus does not care about numbers? The proof is found in I Corinthians 4:2—“*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*” There it is; that is all the proof you need. The Holy Ghost inspired Paul to let everyone know what the Father and the Son think is the most important qualification for the servants of God, both preachers and non-preachers—FAITHFULNESS. It is not the biggest church, biggest Sunday School class, biggest religious paper, etc. It is faithfulness. Jesus is not interested in the results. He is interested in

how you are laboring to get those results. If you are lazy, Jesus is not pleased. But if you are as faithful as the other preacher, Jesus is pleased.

Consider another passage, just one chapter earlier—I Corinthians 3:12-15. In this picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ, Scripture tells us what will be judged. It is **not** the amount of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. It is the presence of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. The testing by fire in these verses refers to the quality of work, not the quantity of work. Paul does not say if one has twenty pounds of gold or silver or precious stones. The quantity does not matter. If one’s work, no matter how small others may see it to be, is of substance—gold, silver, precious stones—then Jesus is pleased. If my work is of no substance—wood, hay, stubble—no matter how much it is, Jesus is not pleased. I may have a lot of wood, but it does not compare to even a little bit of gold. Again, it is the quality of work that matters. Now for some, they will be able to have good quality and a good quantity. But it is not the quantity that matters; it is the quality. One who is faithful to Jesus even though they may have a small ministry in the eyes of most people, is as precious to Jesus as one who has a large ministry. It is faithfulness that matters, not results.

I want to give one other proof about faithfulness being most important. It comes from the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. In this parable the master gives one servant five talents, another servant two talents, and the final servant one talent. When the master returns, the servant with five talents has gained five other talents. The servant with two talents has gained two other talents. The servant with one talent does nothing and gains nothing. It is the master’s reaction to the first two servants that I want us to pay special attention to. The first one gains five more; the second one gains two more. The first one accomplishes more than the second, but they both receive the same commendation. The master does not care about the quantity; he cares about the quality. He says to both, “*Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things,*

*I will make thee ruler over many things*” (Matthew 25:21,23). What is the master concerned about? Faithfulness. What is Jesus and the Father concerned about? Faithfulness. I have shown you three passages. Two explicitly state the words faithful or faithfulness. The other shows a picture of quality contrasting gold, silver, precious stones and wood, hay, stubble. None of these three passages ever mention quantity. If Jesus is not concerned about quantity, then why is that all we are ever concerned about?

If I am faithful to Jesus, then in the eyes and esteem of Jesus, I am as great as John the Baptist, Moses, Abraham, or anyone else. Quantity and results do not matter. Faithfulness does!

Preacher, church member—you may not accomplish what Paul did. You may not be as “successful” as Charles Spurgeon or Fanny Crosby or anyone else that we often mention. But Jesus does not want you to mimic them in their accomplishments. He wants you to be faithful. You may not accomplish what they did, but you can be like them in your faithfulness, and that is what Jesus wants. Be faithful! We have much to consider about the life of John. We will continue next month.