

John 3 (Part 3) :22-36 • He must increase and I must decrease

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John chapter 3 verse 22. Follow along with me as I read now through the end of the chapter.

“ After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. ²³John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized ²⁴(for John had not yet been put in prison).

²⁵ Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification. ²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” ²⁷ John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ ²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.”

³¹ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. ³³ Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. ³⁴ For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” (ESV)

Stop there. Let's pray. Father, as we approach this study of this final portion of John chapter 3. Our hearts lean into you that we might be given wisdom, grace, and insight to not just lay hold of the meaning of these verses, but to apply them to our lives.

Father, help us to be doers of the word we pray. Speak to us. Speak to every person for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our savior, amen. Amen.

Verse 22 of this section that we're starting here today begins by telling us that Jesus and his disciples had been spending time baptizing people.

Now you need to know something, this isn't Christian baptism that we're talking about here. Christian baptism didn't get started until after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. This is the same baptism that John had been doing. It was a baptism unto repentance to prepare the people's hearts for what Messiah came to do and came to say.

By the way, we're told in the next chapter, that Jesus didn't actually do any of the baptizing. It was his disciples that were actually doing the work, He was just looking on.

But It goes on here in verse 23 to tell us that there was this overlap going on in John the Baptist ministry and that of Jesus as He just began. Because 23 tells us John was also baptizing at a place near Salim. We're told that water was plentiful there and he had not yet been put into prison. You'll remember what that is all about.

Now, we're told in verse 25 that the ESV tells us a discussion arose. I think the ESV translators are being kind here because the NIV says an argument arose. And if you have a new King James Bible, yours says, a dispute arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew. Some Bibles actually say, Jews, plural, over purification.

And we don't know really what their conversation entailed. We just know that it was something about Jewish purification rites. They were really big on all that. And so there was some kind of a dispute, argument slash conversation going on related to this and whatever that has to do with what they're about to say, they finally come to Jesus, excuse me, to John.

In verse 26, and they say to him, *“Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness...”* You'll remember John had a couple of times said, *“behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29) And they're saying, *“ the one that you spoke about (to whom you bore witness-look), he is baptizing (and this is important) and all are going to Him.”*

So it seems what's going on here is that the crowds that John had been amassing for quite some time are now beginning to dwindle. You got to remember something about what was going on in Israel at the time. People were expecting

the Messiah to come. There was an expectation that the Messiah was like on the verge, on the doorstep.

In fact, even the Samaritans were expecting a Messiah. When we get into chapter 4, the very next chapter. You'll remember, Jesus is going to have this conversation with the woman at the well, and what she's going to say to Him is, I know that Messiah is coming. And that was the general expectation of the people.

And so when John went out and began to baptize people, there were these enormous crowds that were gathering and listening to his message and being baptized and repenting of their sin. But now those crowds are beginning to dwindle and the people are going over to where Jesus is and being baptized by His disciples.

And so, the disciples of John, the followers of John, are telling John this, "Hey, things are kind of drying up here. The crowds are getting small." And so John answered saying, "Well, I guess we need to up our advertising budget. Maybe we should get that smoke machine we've been talking about. And how about a new sound system?" No, John said nothing of the sort.

What he did say is worth our time this morning to ponder. Because John, what a guy, I can't wait to meet him, his heart was so humble about these things. I mean what he shares in these few verses between chapter or verses 27 and 30 are so beautiful and there's so much we can learn from it. And that's what we're going to spend our time this morning really kind of doing is just focusing mostly on these verses because we hear in them the wisdom of heaven and it's something that we need to all take note of.

So I'm going to read through verses 27 through 30 again. And then we'll kind of unpack them together.

Verse 27, John answered, *"A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. ²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."*

Oh, some of what John is saying here actually takes a little familiarity with some traditional Jewish wedding understanding, but we'll get to that in just a moment.

But I want to focus first on this initial statement that John makes in response to his disciples when he simply says to them, “²⁷*A person cannot receive even one thing, unless it is given him from heaven.*”

You'll notice the ESV kind of frames this in a negative tense whereas the NIV puts it in a positive tense. Let me show you on the screen.

John 3:27 (NIV84)

To this John replied, “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.”

But regardless of how you say it, it is a biblical principle. It is seen throughout the Bible. In fact, you're going to see it repeated here in the gospel of John as well. And the Apostle Paul wrote about it. One of the churches that needed the most correction, as you well know, was the church in Corinth. And some of the people in Corinth were starting to kinda become boastful about their giftings, their abilities, their talents, that they had gotten from the Lord. And so he wrote to them in one Corinthians chapter 4 on the screen.

1 Corinthians 4:6-7 (ESV)

I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

He says, “*I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you?*” Here's the question. “*What do you have that you did not receive?*” Meaning from God? “*And if you did receive it (he says), why do you boast like you didn't?*” He says this, it all comes from God. So forget this boasting, forget this thing where you've got this gift, he's got this.

Paul had to go on and talk about gifts and he had to talk about the fact that gifts, all the gifts, all the positions that we have in the body of Christ we need each other. Right? One part of the body can't say to another part of the body, “I don't need you,” because we all need each other. In fact, the parts that seem to be the least important are actually very important.

And so this is what was going on in Corinth and that people needed to be reminded that a person can receive only what has been given him from heaven. So stop boasting, like you came up with this idea to be who you are or what you

are in the body of Christ. You didn't, God gave it to you and you have nothing to boast about. You can only boast in the Lord.

You'll remember this principle was also echoed when Jesus was having His interview, I call it that, with Pontius Pilate. And you'll remember Pilate was getting kind of annoyed at Jesus because He wasn't responding to any of the accusations that were being leveled at Him. So here's what happened.

John 19:10-11a (ESV)

So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."

"So Pilate said to him, you'll not speak to me?" He says, *"Do you not know that I have authority (I have authority to either release you or authority) to crucify you?"* And Jesus calmly said, *"You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."* And that is the same principle, the same idea that what you have has been given from God.

And it's one that has impacted me, this principle. This understanding that what we've been given has been given by God. It has impacted me as a pastor over the years, I'm sure it has impacted you.

Thirty-two years ago, when Sue and I came and started this fellowship, there were about 12 adults who were coming for, on Sunday morning. And I was happy for those 12 adults to be there, I mean you know. But I sometimes wonder how I would feel, if 32 years later we still just had 12 adults. What would my attitude be about what God had given me?

Obviously, we've grown as a fellowship. We had a little bit of help from a global pandemic here a while back to kind of go beyond our walls and to minister to people that I'll probably never meet face to face, many of whom I've talked to, shared with.

But what if all that didn't happen? What if Life Bible Ministry, was that still that small little church at the end of Alameda Drive with about 12 adults coming? I think about that. I think about whether or not I would still be faithful to get up every Sunday morning and every Wednesday night and teach God's Word. I have to ask myself because I think those are important questions to ask. If it didn't go the way I wanted it to go, would I still be faithful?

Because regardless of whether your ministry seems to be growing or not, the principle that we're talking about here is a moderating referee. And by a referee I mean, it kind of calls us on what's really going on in our heart concerning what we think ought to be happening?

If the ministry, and you can think about it in your own terms? Let's say you started a bible study in your home or something like that, and two years later it's the same size that it was, when you started. Well, you can't get upset about it.

And the reason you can't get upset is because a man can only receive what has been given him from above. Right? But let's look at the other side of it. You start a Bible study in your home and you started with like 3 people, and in 6 months you've got 20 people coming. After a year, you've got 50 people and you have to go find another place to have your Bible study because it's growing so wildly. Well, you can't become prideful. Because a man can only receive what is given him from above. You get it?

So either way, you see this principle helps you to understand that this is not about me, regardless of what's going on. It's not me who did it, God is orchestrating and overseeing these sorts of things.

I have to be honest with you and tell you, sometimes when I'm here on this campus by myself, I'll walk around here and I'll kind of marvel at what the Lord has done in 32 years. But I've learned to say, "Lord, look what you've done. Look what you did." Because I believe in this principle, it's in my heart, and you can't receive anything that the Lord hasn't given you.

So it doesn't matter whether your ministry remains small or whether it gets big. It's really going to be ultimately a test of faithfulness to you. If it stays small, are you going to be faithful and just keep plugging along?

We've had people start bible studies and it's like "I got two people coming. It's been six months now. I've got two people coming. Pastor, I think I need to quit because we are in 6 months and only 2 people are coming."

Rather than saying, "I am thankful for those two people. I'm thankful that God allows me to speak into the lives of those two people. Oh, He entrusted two people to me."

You see, we get these expectations, or if your Bible study gets big, are you going to be faithful to keep plugging along and not make it about you? And not

become prideful and think that, you did this because you know you were so cool, and become full of yourself and that sort of thing.

So you can kind of see how this principle keeps our feet on the ground. The next thing John says is in verse 28, look with me again in your Bible. He says, *“You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Messiah (Christ), but I have been sent before him.”* I want you to notice from that statement that John is telling you and me, he's telling his disciples obviously first, that he knew what his role was. He wasn't minimizing his role, he said, “Yeah, sure, I'm not the Messiah.” But he did know that he had a role to play. He said, *“I have been sent before him,”* that was his task. He knew what his task was and he was going to carry it out. But listen, John also knew something, he knew he wasn't the main attraction.

He knew from the very beginning, this is not about me. This is about me preparing for Him, I am not the, I am not the big draw. Right? Even though there may be crowds for a period of time, it's not about me, it's about Him. And he was content to do the thing that God had called him to do, even though he wasn't the main attraction. He was content.

And I have to tell you, I really like that and I have to ask the question, “Are we content with doing what is in front of us and what we've been given?”

People will ask me from time to time about their calling and they'll say, “Pastor Paul, I don't really know what my calling is.”

And I get that, I actually hear that quite a bit. But sometimes I have to tell you, I'm not sure, if they are simply telling me, without telling me that they don't really value what is right in front of them right now, or see it as a real true calling. Because you see, I think once again, we had these expectations and when we talk about “a calling” we tend to kind of make it seem a little or be a little bigger than maybe it ought to be in our own minds.

And my question to you as well, okay? You don't really know what your calling is. Well, let me ask you this, “Where does the Lord have you? Where are you right now? What's going on in your life right now?”

A young mother comes to me and says, Pastor Paul, “I don't know what my calling is.”

I, “Well, you're a mother.”

“I mean, what's in front of you right now are these beautiful children with whom God has entrusted you to raise these children, to know the Lord, to love His word, to know His word. And that's your ministry right now.”

“Yeah, I know, but I mean, other than that.”

Do you understand people that sometimes there isn't any other than that? It's just that, it's what's in front of you. And maybe God is waiting to see if you're going to be faithful with what's in front of you so that you can move on to other things.

There are parables about that, about people who are given abilities and so forth. And the parable is all about what you do with it. It might seem small, the question is, “what did you do with it? Did you just dig a hole and bury it or did you begin to take it and use it?”

It's like, “Well, I'm really not doing anything special.” That's not the point. Special is really in the eyes of the beholder. God is looking for you to be faithful wherever you are. Don't think about what you can't do, think about what you can do.

You know with the breakdown of the family over the years, it's been heartbreaking. There are people who will come to me, whether they're grandparents or sometimes even parents who have lost contact, but they've lost the ability to really influence their children or grandchildren on a regular basis because the family blew apart. And now the parents or whoever's in charge of the children is limiting the effect that parents or grandparents can have on the lives of those children.

And people will come and just, they're just broken-hearted about the fact that they can't do what they used to be able to do, “I used to go visit them, or I used to spend time with them every day and whatever, and they're like, I can't do that anymore.” And so I always have to say, “Well, what can you do?”

“Well, they let me send them gifts for their birthday and for Christmas and things like that.”

“Well, do what you can do and don't just send them candy, send them a Bible. Send them something to read about Jesus. Do what you can do. Do be faithful with what's in front of you right now. However, little it may seem, however insignificant it may appear at the moment. Be faithful and be content to walk in what God has given you right here, right now.”

See, that's where John was. He said, "This is what I've been given to do. This is all I can do and then I'm going to be faithful. I'm going to do it."

The next statement that John makes is the one where you need a little bit of an understanding related to Jewish wedding traditions. But he goes on here in verse 29 to say, "*The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.*"

John was giving a very familiar picture here to the people who were listening because they were Jews and they understood how Jewish wedding ceremonies kind of played out.

And he's talking here, he's making two statements. First of all he mentions, he speaks of a wedding illustration, but he refers to Jesus as the bridegroom and then he speaks of himself as the friend of the bridegroom. Let me explain both of those because they're very important.

First of all, by calling Jesus the bridegroom, he is calling Him God. Because if you know your Old Testament, you know that in the Hebrew scriptures, the relationship that God had with Israel is depicted for us, really throughout, as a relationship between a husband and a wife, which means that when Israel would fall into pagan idolatry, it was considered to be adultery. Literally, like as a wayward wife who has violated her marriage covenant and gone off after other lovers. God refers to Israel that way on many occasions.

So in the Old Testament, it's very clear when you have this picture of marriage, of the relationship between God and Israel. God is the bridegroom and Israel is the bride. It's all there. So when John says that Jesus is the bridegroom and uses this same illustration, he is saying, "He is Yahweh, He is the Son of God, equal to God."

And please understand that this is just one more subtle, but yet one more declaration by the Apostle John to record this conversation to help you and I understand Jesus is God, He is deity.

But I want to focus here on the statement that John the Baptist makes concerning himself saying that he is the friend of the bridegroom. This is where you need a little understanding of Jewish marriage traditions. The friend of the bridegroom we're told sometimes when people are talking about this, that the friend of the bridegroom is most, most like our best man today. Actually, that's not really true. The friend of the bridegroom did way more than a best man.

I've been the best man and I didn't do nearly as much as these guys had to do. The friend of the bridegroom, was the go-between, between the bride and the bridegroom. He was involved in sending out invitations. Get this, the friend of the bridegroom planned the ceremony and then he also oversaw the whole wedding feast.

But there was one particular job of the friend of the bridegroom that was particularly important. And that was, he was the guard of the bridal chamber. And of course the bridal chamber is where the bride and the groom come together after the ceremony and consummate the relationship. But here's how it would go.

The friend of the bridegroom would wait for the bridegroom to arrive and he would guard the door of the bridal chamber with the bride inside, and he would not allow anyone in who was not supposed to be there because the only person supposed to go in there is the bridegroom. And when he would hear the bridegroom's voice, he would open the door and with great joy. He would let the bride groom go into the bridal chamber to be with his bride. He would close the door and then he would walk away rejoicing because he had done his job.

And that is what John the Baptist is now doing and that's why he says, "I am just the friend of the bridegroom." And when the friend hears the voice of the groom, he rejoices because "I did my job." This is such a good reminder.

As a Pastor, this is a good reminder, for any church leader, anybody, frankly, who does anything in the church, it's a good reminder that our primary task, my primary task, is to lead people to Jesus and keep them there. It's not to lead people to me. Good grief, don't come to me. It's to lead people to Jesus and then keep them going there.

I get so many emails and things in a given week with people coming to me for counsel and advice, and it disturbs me to be completely honest with you. Because my job as a pastor is not to draw people to me, it's to draw people to Christ, to turn them to Christ, to point them to Jesus and say, "you should be talking to Him about this."

Did you know He can talk to you? Did you know that He'll listen when you take these things to Him? Do you know that He'll respond to you? Do you know that He will lead you in the way that you are to go? Did you know that He promised to lead you in the way that you are to go?

Why are you coming to an under shepherd? I am nothing. Go to your savior. Go to your Lord. He will lead you. He will guide you. He will tell you the direction that you are to go. You come to me, I'll pray with you. I'd be glad to pray with you if you need somebody to pray with, and we will bring it to Jesus together. Perfect. I'm your man. But like John, the focus is going to be on Jesus.

I love verse 30. "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" Oh, that's just, that kind of sums it up right there. And John understood that Jesus had to be center stage and he needed to fade into the background. He understood that and he was okay with it.

And honestly, this should be the motto of every born again believer, "I must decrease and He must increase in my life, in my heart, in my relationship with my wife. I want to see Jesus increase in my business. I want to see Jesus through me increasing and me decreasing."

There's a problem with making that our motto though and the problem is there's this little thing called the pride of life. I say little, that's facetiously, it's not little at all. It's one of the three categories of sin that impacts us all. But it keeps us from fading into the background because we don't want to fade into the background, I want to be in the foreground.

You guys remember, when the Apostle John talked about this? Let me show you in his first letter.

1 John 2:16 (ESV)

For all that is in the world-the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life-is not from the Father but is from the world.

He says, "*For all that is in the world-the desires (or the lusts) of the flesh and the desires (or the lusts) of the eyes and pride of life.*" He says, and that's what we're talking about. He says, "Those things aren't from God, they're from the world." They were born out of the world and they're part of the world.

So what is the pride of life? The pride of life is that, this yearning, this longing to be seen and to be respected and to be honored, to be popular.

I have it. Do you have it? Do you have the pride of life inside of you? Do you recognize it? If you say no, you're lying because we all do. It's there for all of us just wanting to be seen, wanting to be noticed (I did that. I made that. You know that was me. And I'm in charge. It's fun to be the boss. I'm in charge. People

come to me for directions). That's all about the pride of life, the desire to have those things.

And this is what I think makes John the Baptist such an extraordinary man. He didn't allow that pull of the pride of life to control his heart when it came to Jesus. He graciously stepped aside and he said, “yeah, you know what? It's okay. Jesus needs to become more popular, and I need to become less popular. That's the way it needs to be.”

Wow! This is one of the most beautiful, wonderful examples of a kind of selfless attitude toward stepping aside and letting somebody else shine, because it's not always the example that we're given in scripture.

You read through the Old Testament and you have that cautionary tale about the first king of Israel, King Saul, who was king in his own right and by the Lord's direction. And yet when David started coming up and showing him up and becoming popular, Saul just couldn't fade into the background, just couldn't do it, wouldn't do it. He became jealous and prideful and angry. And ultimately it drove him mad, it literally drove him out of his mind.

So stepping aside is a pretty powerful thing to be able to say, “My time is done. It's time for somebody else.”

Before we move on to these last 6 verses, which we'll do pretty rapidly, did you notice the three musts that are here in chapter three so far? Let me put them on the screen for you.

Three “Musts”

One for the SINNER - he ‘must be born again’

One for the SAVIOR, - “He must be lifted up”

One for the SERVANT - he “must decrease”

They're called the three musts. There's one for the sinner, one for the savior, and one for the servant. For the sinner, he must be born again. For the savior, he must be lifted up. One for the servant, he must decrease. Must. Must. I must decrease.

The final 6 verses of the chapter are not spoken by John the Baptist. These are written by John the Apostle. John the Baptist finishes his statements in verse 30. Now in verse 31, this is the commentary written by John, the author of this gospel account. And he writes and makes three statements in these last 6 verses.

First statement, statement number 1, “³¹*He who comes from above is above all* (I want you to take note of that). *He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.*” He says it twice, and who is he? Who comes from above or comes from heaven? He's talking about Jesus. He's simply making a point that he's emphasizing again, the deity of Jesus Christ, He is above all. We're going to actually come back to this in just a bit. It's a simple statement. It's not a difficult statement to figure out.

Statement number 2, verse 32, “*He bears witness (speaking of Jesus) to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.*” Those who do, he says, “³³*set their seal to this, that God is true.* ³⁴*For he whom God has sent (meaning Jesus) utters the words of God, for he gives the spirit without measure.*” He's making again, a fairly simple statement here in these 3 verses that whoever believes the testimony of God declares that God is true.

Did you know that the converse of that is also the case? Whoever rejects God's Word is calling God a liar. Let me show you first John, chapter 5.

1 John 5:10 (ESV)

Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

“*Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God* (and that means doesn't believe his word, doesn't believe anything He said has) *made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his son.* And so the second statement is simply about those who accept the Word of God as the Word of God. And they do so in a way of saying, God's true. This is true.

And then finally, statement number three in verses 35 and 36, He says, “*The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.*” ³⁶ *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*”

Really the third statement, verse 36 is just a real simple repeat of what we read after the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. I want you to focus on verse 35, where John writes, “*The Father loves the Son and is given all things into his hand.*” He's given all things, guys, let me say that again.

Did you know that the Father has given all things into the hands of the Son? All things and all means all. God, the Father has given all things into the hands of

the Son. I say that again simply to let it sink in. This is something we really have to hold onto and is repeated throughout scripture. Jesus even said it, right before the great Commission,

Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Matthew 28 he said, “*Jesus came and said to them, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* Now, that's a pretty bold statement. You got to be God to make that statement. If I say, if I came out and made that statement, “All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me.” They'd lock me away, and rightly so, only God can make that statement.

But I want you to know that's true. All authority in heaven and earth has been given over to the Son. And why do I emphasize that? Well, I emphasize it because it's so easy, isn't it for Christians just like ourselves to start looking at what's going on in the world all around us, especially when things don't go our way. Like the vote doesn't go our way in the elections. And we're banging our heads against the wall (another four years, I can't take it) or personally in our own lives, things are just not going well, physically, emotionally, relationally, financially, and we're all just getting fixated on that. And it can really lead to despair, can't it?

Until we come back and remind ourselves of one very important truth. All authority in heaven and earth has been given over to Jesus and He's our Lord. He's my Savior, and I am His. And you are His. And all authorities have been given to Him.

Now, that doesn't mean you're going to understand everything that happens. A lot of things that are going to happen in this life you're not going to get at all.

Here's the question you have to ask yourself, “Am I going to base my faith in God on my ability to understand what He allows in this life? Or am I going to trust Him because He is worthy to be trusted?”

Because I'll tell you right now, if you haven't lived long enough yet to have something happen that you just don't get, it'll happen. And I'm sure for most, the majority of you, it already has.

And those things can shake us to our core, “Lord, I don't get it. I don't know why. Why? What? Why'd you let that happen? Why did that happen?”

And you get silence, don't you? You ever wondered why you get silence?

It's because you couldn't even understand the answer if He gave it to you. You and I don't fully understand the question, let alone the answer. We're asking questions about things we know nothing about. And He says to you and me, trust me, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Trust me. Trust me. That's where the rubber meets the road, doesn't it?

Let's stand together. Have you ever seen one of those bumper stickers? You're driving around, there's somebody in front of you. You're going through a bad day and somebody has a bumper sticker on the back of their car. You pull up behind them and it says, Jesus is Lord.

You want to get out and punch them right in the mouth. I don't want to hear that right now because I don't, because what's going on in my life is not fun. It's not enjoyable, and it doesn't feel good. But you know what Jesus is Lord.

If you need prayer this morning, we'd love to pray with you. Just come on up after we're done.

Father, we thank you so much for the reminders that you've given us in Your Word. Thank you, Lord, for the wonderful example of humility that we see in John the Baptist, understanding his role, knowing that it's not going to be center stage, but it's okay. And being willing to fade into the background.

Lord, we need to learn from that example, and we need to learn how to trust You and just be faithful every day with whatever we have in front of us, just be faithful. Help us, Lord, to do that and help us to see that no task is too small. We thank You and we praise You for the reminders that we've gotten here today.

Continue, Lord God, to minister Grace to us, filling us with Your Spirit, teaching us as we go. Guiding us, Lord, as we look to you in Jesus' name, we pray and all God's people said together, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.