

Hymns: 46 I am Resolved 47 I Surrender All And Can It Be?
Scripture: Psalm 51:7-12; 91:1-8

Big Idea: Be like Christ.

A while back, my son lamented to me the current state of the world and looked back fondly to the the “good old days.” He was very specific regarding the year. It was 1984. He was just five years old. It’s true that those were the innocent “wonder years” for him and a great time for our whole family.

When were the “good old days” for you?

- the roaring twenties before the crash,
- the forties after we won the war,
- the fifties idolized by the TV show Happy Days,
- or perhaps the Swingin’ Sixties – a time of surfin’ and folk music, and the Beatles.

Of course, we cannot forget the race to the moon capped off with the moon landing in the summer of 1969. Part of the attraction of looking back with nostalgia is that we filter out the problems, remember the good times, and yearn for our more vibrant and youthful bodies.

About the time of my son’s “good old days,” one of the greatest sports heroes emerged. He’s worth over a billion dollars today. He transformed the NBA into a powerhouse, and he’s called the greatest basketball player of all time. I still remember how my son idolized him. “I want to be like Mike” the commercial proclaimed. Do you remember that? While that fervor has long-since passed, many still wouldn’t mind being a billionaire like the famous Michael Jordon.

Who do you want to be like? Today, we continue our sub-topic of John the Baptist in our study through the dispensations of the Bible. What? you say. We **ended** last time with John the Baptist **beheaded** and his disciples taking his body and placing it in a **tomb**.

He’s **dead**, and we’re still studying his **life**? Will this never end? How can there possibly be more to the story? As we’re about to see, there is.

John Risen from the Dead

Matthew 14

[1] *At that time Herod the tetrarch*

You may recall this Herod Antipass **was a son of Herod the Great.**

heard of the fame of Jesus,

[2] *And said unto his servants, **This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works [] sh[o]w forth [] in him.***

Herod may have been thinking that if John had the power to return from the dead, he would come with the power to perform miracles. He may have also been hoping that the vengeful act of his wife Herodias had ultimately been reversed, that he had won his battle with her, and that he would see his friend John again.

But in John chapter 10 and verse 41 we're explicitly told:

John Performed No Miracles

John 10

*[41] And many [as they approached Jesus], [] said,
John did no miracle:
but all things that John sp[o]ke of this man were true.*

Back then, God frequently used miracles to authenticate his men. In the case of John, he was authenticated by the angel Gabriel's announcement, his miracle birth, and by the Son of God himself. John needed no miracles by his hand – despite Herod's confusion, Mark adds:

Mark 6

*[15] Others said, That it is Eli[jah].
And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.
[16] But when Herod heard th[at], he said,
It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.*

Herod was **convinced** and really **wanted** to believe that Jesus was **John** resurrected.

Time passed. A few chapters later we have more:

Mark 8

[27] And Jesus went out, [with] his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi:

To give you perspective here, Caesarea Philippi is not near Caesarea. Both names were given to honor Caesar. Philippi was added to distinguish this location in the territory of Phillip, a son of Herod the Great, from the one on the Mediterranean Sea. Caesarea Philippi is up in northern Israel at the base of Mount Hermon bordering Syria near Dan and about 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

*and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?
[28] And they answered, **John the Baptist**:*

Notice their **first** response was *John the Baptist*. That was the common belief regarding who Jesus was at that time.

*but some say, Eli[jah]; and others, One of the prophets.
[29] And he sai[d] unto them, But whom **say ye** that I am?
And Peter answer[ed] and sai[d] unto him,
Thou art the Christ.*

Now, were hitting the last references in the Bible that refer to John the Baptist. Are there more? Let's see:

Jesus Disciples Ask if Elijah Is Coming

Matthew 17

*[10] And his disciples asked him [that is, Jesus], saying,
Why [do] the scribes [say] that Eli[jah] must come [first]?
[11] And Jesus answered and said unto them,
Eli[jah] truly shall come [first], and restore all things.
[12] But I say unto you,
That Eli[jah] [has] already [come],
and they knew him not,
but have done unto him what[]ever they [wished].
Likewise [also] **shall** the Son of man suffer of them.
[13] Then the disciples understood that he sp[o]ke []to them of
John the Baptist.*

You may recall two sermons back in this study that John said he was **not** Elijah.

But here Jesus seems to be saying that John *is* Elijah.

Who's right?

We're going to save the answer to that question for our questions message coming up next time.

Don't miss it!

John's Credentials Certified by Jesus

In response to a question from the chief priests and scribes regarding Jesus' authority, Jesus asked them a question:

Matthew 21

*[25] The baptism of **John**,
whence **was** it?
from heaven, or of men?
And they reasoned with themselves, saying,
If we [] say, From heaven; he will say unto us,
Why did ye not then believe him?
[26] But if we [] say, Of men;
we fear the people;
for **all** [believe] **John** [was] a **prophet.***

*[27] And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell.
And he said unto them,
Neither [shall] [I] tell **you** by what authority I do these things.*

John clearly testified that Jesus was “the Son of God” (John 1:34). If they admit John is from God, they must accept Jesus as the Messiah.

John’s Baptism Contrasted with Christian Indwelling

Then, after rising from the dead, Jesus spoke to his disciples saying:

Acts 1

*[5] For John truly baptized with water;
but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

These words of Jesus echoed those of John himself expressing the clear distinction between John’s baptism and the kind of baptism that occurred on and since Pentecost. You may recall from two messages back,

we learned that John’s baptism was one of repentance (Luke 3:16)

while baptism of the Holy Ghost now comes with the new birth (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:13).

If you know the Lord, you have been baptized with the Holy Ghost. That is, He has joined you to the body of Christ. You and like people are identified by Him to form what’s called His bride, the church. In addition, the Spirit of God lives within you and has transformed you.

We will learn more of this distinction in a minute, but in a nutshell, John’s baptism represented a commitment – a change of heart to follow the Lord by faith just as Abraham did. Baptism of a believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ represented not only the new birth, but a covenant relationship with the Savior, and the **power** associated with being a child of God.

Do you remember how John described himself as the *friend* of the bride? The church *is* the bride. This is a **critical** distinction between Old and New Testament saints.

Before we continue looking at **that** idea, let’s quickly note something else related to John. He marked the **start** of a **great** movement.

We have John’s specific baptism of **Jesus** used as a **point** of reference in Acts 1:22 as well as Acts 10:37.

John’s Teaching was Limited (by the law)

Now, let’s dig into a very fine point but a most important one regarding the work of the Holy Spirit as we transition from John’s dispensation (Law) to the next dispensation (Grace).

A good way to understand this is to remember Peter during and after Jesus’ trial. Do you recall that scene and what Jesus said after Peter exclaimed he would die with Him?

Luke 22

[33] *And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into **prison**, and to **death**.*
[34] *And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.*

In Mathew and Mark we learn that it wasn't just Peter who had this false confidence. Jesus predicted **all** of his disciples would scatter and deny him (Mark 14:27) despite their sincere pledge of loyalty to him unto death (v. 31).

You recall in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus told His disciples to watch. Instead, they fell asleep.

Matthew 26 tells us:

[40] *And he c[ame] [] to the disciples, and f[ound] them asleep, and sai[d] unto Peter,
What, could ye not watch with me one hour?
[41] Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:
the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

[returning to Luke 22]

[45] *And when he rose up from prayer, and [] c[a]me to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,*

The stress of the thought of what was about to happen wore on the disciples. In all, Jesus found them sleeping on three separate occasions that night.

[54] *Then they [speaking of the mob v.47] [took] him [Jesus], [] led him, and brought him into the high priest's house.*

And Peter followed afar off.

[55] *And when they had kindled a **fire** in the midst of the hall, and were s[itting] together, Peter sat down among them.*

[56] *But a certain **maid** beheld him as he sat by the fire, and **earnestly looked upon him**, and said,*

This man was also with him.

[57] *And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.*

[58] *And after a little while...*

Mark 14

[69] *... a **maid** saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.*

[70] *And **he denied it again.***

*And a little after,
they that stood by said again to Peter,
Surely thou art one of them:
for thou art a Galilaeen,
[your] **speech** [betrays you].
Note the keyword *speech*.*

*[71] But he began **to curse and to swear**, saying,
I know not this man of whom ye **speak**.*

They attacked his **speech**. Peter **spoke** words of cursing.

[returning again to Luke 22]
*[60] ... And **immediately**,
while he yet **sp[oke]**,
the cock crew.
[61] And **the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter**.
And Peter remembered the word of the Lord,
how he had said unto him,
Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.
[62] And Peter went out, and **wept bitterly**.*

The point is, just like Peter, believers in Jesus lack power without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In John chapter 16 verses 7 and 13, Jesus said the Spirit could not come until He left.

Now, let's look at the difference the Holy Spirit made in Peter's life:

Acts 4

*[8] Then Peter,
filled with the Holy Ghost,
said unto them,
Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,
[9] If we [] are be[ing judged]ed [today for] th[is] good deed done to the [lame] man
[he healed a man crippled from birth (Acts 3:2)],
[as to] what means he is made whole;
[10] Be it known []to you all, ...,
that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
whom ye crucified,
whom God **raised** from the dead,
even **by him** do[es] this man stand here before you whole.*

Acts 12

[1] Now about that time Herod the king

Historians tell us this Herod is Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great. His kingdom included roughly **all** of his grandfather's former territory.

stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

[2] And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

[3] And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. ...

[4] And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, ...

[5] ...: but prayer was made without ceasing [by] the church unto God for him.

*[6] And when Herod would have brought him forth,
the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers,
bound with two chains:*

and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

*[7] And, **behold,***

the angel of the Lord came upon him,

and a light shined in the prison:

and he smote Peter on the side,

and raised him up, saying,

Arise up quickly.

*And **his chains fell off** from his hands.*

Peter escaped.

Peter started out as an **Old** Testament saint but at Pentecost became a **New** Testament saint.

And finally, in Acts 18:24-19:7 we have two instances of Old Testament saints in Ephesus being converted. The first is a Jew named Apollos. He was *eloquent* and had a strong understanding of the Old Testament. He *boldly* taught these things in the synagogue along with John's baptism of repentance. When two Christians, Aquila and Priscilla, heard they filled him in on the covenant relationship relating to Jesus Christ.

The story continues in chapter 19 with another group of believers in John's message. This time, the Apostle Paul found these believers baptized by John. Paul explained to them that John preached baptism of repentance **and** faith in Jesus Christ. When they believed in Jesus, they received the Holy Ghost.

Application

We started out today considering a sports hero. Kids wanted to be like Mike. We saw in scripture how many mistook Jesus for John the Baptist. What greater compliment can we receive than to be compared to Jesus Christ or be mistaken for Him? With John, it was a common occurrence.

But how exactly can we be like Christ? Here are some ways:

- Be ye holy, that is, be set apart and morally upright. (I Peter 1:16)

- Have a heavenly focus – look not upon the things which are seen but the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (II Corinthians 4:18)
- Serve the Lord with singleness of heart (Colossians 3:22; Matthew 22:37)
- and enlist Holy Spirit power over the flesh (Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:16-18) – let not sin reign in your mortal bodies (Romans 6:12). Unlike Peter before Pentecost, we have the Spirit of God dwelling within us. We need only appropriate His power and not rely on our flesh to win the battles before us.

We who know Him are called Christians. As a bride, we claim His name. As we leave here today let us resolve, through the power within us and like John the Baptist,
every day
and in every way
to be like Christ.

Benediction

*Now the God of peace,
that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ;
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)*