

“Hey John, Are You The Messiah?” Pt. 1

Luke 3:15-20

John’s Strong Example of Ministry

I One of the things that we can see by John’s example is that a good, God-approved ministry gets people _____. It challenges their understanding and thought processes about what they believe.

- A. We see here that **“the people were in a state of expectation”**, which means John’s words, working along with God’s influence, were _____. He said for them to expect the chosen one and they were listening; i.e. their senses were on high alert.
- B. You know the cause of true religion has gained a giant step with any ministry, church or family when people begin to slow down and think. Thus, “thoughtlessness” about spiritual things is a predominant _____ of unconverted people. In most cases, they show total indifference towards spiritual things so they don’t set their minds to chase after it further. So, as Isaiah says, they never understand (Is.1:2-3)
- C. A healthy sign for a non-believer, and even for the growing Christian, is when we see a spirit of reflection start to come over a person. You can see in their face that the neurons are firing and the gears are really turning. This is the _____ of a heart that is beginning to draw towards God (John 6:44; Rom. 12:2) **I.e., both thinking & transformation of the mind are necessary on the road to the conversion of a _____.**
- D. When we think about talking to people, and sharing the gospel with them, we can’t help but wonder how they will react or what they will think as we share- *“How’s this gonna hit them?”*. Some good things to remember as we approach anyone:
 1. **The truth of Christ, itself, has nothing to fear from sober examination- we _____ inquiry!** Be watchful of any religion that discourages it and says *“I’ll do the thinking for you.”* No, we invite investigation, because we know it is _____ for true conversion.
 2. **Much of Christianity’s claims are not appreciated simply because they are not _____.**
 3. However, **thinking alone, no doubt, is not faith and repentance, but it is always seen as a hopeful _____**

4. When hearers, or inquirers of the gospel begin **“wondering in their hearts”**, we ought to thank God and be encouraged that He is likely _____ something. We then do everything we can to water those thoughts by the truth of God’s Word.

II. We learn, secondly from these verses that a good minister, or church, always exalts _____!

- A. John’s not dumb... he saw the state of mind that the hearers were in and he quickly made sure to tell them of a coming one far _____ than himself.
- B. He refused the _____ that they tried to give him and used strong imagery to make sure they were clear on the difference between him and Jesus, explaining what the true Messiah will be like compared to him (v.15-17 read...)
- C. Conduct like this will always be the characteristic of a true minister of God. He will never allow himself nor his office to be credited for that which should only _____ to the Savior. Paul also touched on this (2 Cor. 4:5) So, as Christ arrives on the scene, John (Jn. 3:30) will then begin to say... *“He must increase, and I must decrease”*- a mark of a true minister of the Lord.
- D. When evaluating a minister or ministry, it’s always good to ask... **“Where is _____ in His teaching?”**
- E. A good question to ask ourselves, in whether we are benefitting from such teaching and preaching, is a similar question... **“Is my focus being brought to the exaltation of Christ, or the exaltation of _____, or my needs?”** A minister who is really doing us good, according to God’s standards, will cause us to see clearer and clearer pictures of who Jesus is each year of our lives.

III. We learn, thirdly, from these verses, the undeniable difference between the Lord and even the best of ministers.

- A. John makes this clear at the outset... **“I baptize you with water but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with Fire”**. I.e., a minister when ordained:
 - a. Can minister outward ordinances of Christianity, but he cannot fully _____ the hearts of all of his listeners
 - b. He can preach the gospel faithfully to their ears, but he doesn’t hold the power to _____ a soul
 - c. He can baptize outwardly but cannot cleanse their _____.