

Get Out of Your Tomb

14 - The Mystery of God: The Gospel of John
Church on the Park | Easter Sunday, 20 April 2014

Text: John 3:22-30; John 20:11-18

Theme: Jesus calls us to get out of our tomb and live a resurrected life.

Intro: Last week we looked at what Jesus and the Gospel of John teach us about genuine faith. This week we turn to John the Baptist. At one time John the Baptist was the most popular and famous man in Israel, but soon he was eclipsed by a brighter light. Jesus arose and drew away most of John the Baptists followers. Today, we will look at this event and also combine it with the resurrection of Jesus.

1) Get out of your tomb (John 20:11-18)

- You have heard the expression, “Get out of your **box!**” I want to take it a bit further today and say, “Get out of your **tomb!**”
- A **tomb** is a place of **death, decay**, pain, **mourning**, tears and separation. It represents something that God had never intended for the human race. It shows us the effects of **sin**. It’s a picture of the **old life** and the **past**.
- We know for a fact that Jesus rose from the dead—the **empty tomb** is a clear fact of history. They put him in a tomb, but death could not hold him down.
- But do you know that he did not just **rise** from the dead for **himself**, but for **you!**?
- He wants you to **participate** in his **resurrection**. He wants you to get out of your **own tomb**.
- Our sinful nature wants to **gravitate** back to the **tomb**, rather than move on to **God’s commission**.
- Listen to Paul: **Romans 6:1-4**
 - Jesus’ death is your death, his burial is your burial, and his resurrection is your resurrection!
- The **hobbit** in the **tunnel**. Quote from the book Pg 193.
 - The **Bilbo** wanted to turn back because of the **enormity** of the dragon. But then he made a **decision**, to press on through the tunnel into the mountain caverns full of treasure.

2) Keep the right perspective (John 3:22-30)

- There was an **argument** that arose about what John the Baptist was doing. The man arguing with him wanted to make him **jealous** and **prove** that he was right because John was **losing** people.
- The **two songs**: 1) John the Baptist was the most famous song in Israel at the time. It was at the top of the charts and everyone was dancing to it. 2) But then another song arose to the top of the charts and everyone forgot John the Baptist and started singing about Jesus.
- What do we do when we are not the **centre** of attention?
 - Think about **David & Saul**. David killed Goliath and the people started singing, “Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands.”

- The fact that David just became greater than Saul, caused Saul to react with murderous hatred. He spent about ten years trying to hunt and kill David.
- Notice the difference between **John the Baptist's perspective** and **Saul's**
- We need to keep the **right perspective**. Life is all about **Jesus** and **his plan**. We are there to be **invisible servants**, assisting and preparing the way.

3) Let Jesus increase and let yourself decrease (John 3:30)

- John said, "He must **increase** [grow] and I must **decrease** [become less]."
- This is the whole **goal of spiritual growth**: Jesus increasing in our lives and ourselves becoming less.
- **How** does Jesus increase in our lives?
- Our **egos** don't want to become less and die.
- The **Butler movie**. The main character learning to be a servant in the White House.
- Notice the **order**: First, Jesus must increase; then, we decrease. We can't decrease ourselves unless first he is increasing.
- This verse has always **encouraged me** in ministry as people have **moved** on to follow Jesus, but it's also one of the greatest **challenges**—letting go.
- This is the **purpose** of every **church** and **ministry**: not that we would increase and Jesus decrease, but that we would decrease and Jesus would increase.
- As we **disciple** people, we need to watch that they are not more **dependent** on us than Jesus.

4) It's all about intimacy with God, not about how many people are flocking to us. (John 3:29)

- The **divine romance**
- The **bride** and the **bridegroom**
- Jesus **died** to **purchase** and **purify** his bride. Jesus **rose** from the dead to **take** his bride away with him.
- When we have this attitude and perspective we know great joy!
- Revelation 22:17

Conclusion: Don't stay in sin's tomb, but get out! Keep a right perspective by letting Jesus increase in your life and letting your ego decrease. The end of all things is the wedding of the Lamb and God wants us to be a bride that has made herself ready.