



**Who Are You?
John 1:19-28
Westport Christian Church
January 3, 2010**

This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said." (John 1:19-23 NASU)

As we begin a new year, I feel it is important that each of us answer the question, 'who are you?' Now, that may seem strange, but there are many people who do not know who they are. Who you are determines what you do and what you stand for. Do you know who you are? Understanding who you are will determine who and what are you communicating. Each and every one of us communicate to people every day. But what is it that we are sharing? What are we telling them about?

Many times people say so much without every saying anything. I was reading some silly things said by athletes and coaches. Listen to a few. Bill Peterson, a Florida State football coach told his guys, "You guys line up alphabetically by height." How about this one. "I'm going to graduate on time, no matter how long it takes," was said by a Senior

basketball player at the University of Pittsburgh. And then we have one of my favorites, “Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein.” This was said by ESPN football commentator and former player Joe Theismann.

I believe many times the way we say things are often as important as what we say. The message may be of utmost important but if we are relating through our actions that it really is not, how do people react?

The gifted English preacher, Charles Spurgeon, was telling a group of young preachers that their facial expressions should be in harmony with the subject they were focusing on. “When you speak of heaven,” he said, “let your face light up and be irradiated with a heavenly gleam. Let your eyes shine with reflected glory. And when you speak of hell--well, then your everyday face will do.”

When we speak of Christ, then we should be glowing with radiance. We have the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives. We impact people every day and we contribute to their final destination.

In the Scripture this morning, we discovered a man by the name of John. John was conveying to the people of his time the way to God. Today, we are to show people the way. We are to prepare the way so that the Lord might bring them in to enjoy His kingdom.

We are to be an . . .

I. INTERPRETER

As Christians we need to be aware of the many things that people face. Many of us face the same things every day. We need to be ready to listen to what questions they have and then lead them to the truth. Just the other day I was talking to a couple and one of them made the comment that they believed in God and said, “I know that I’m going to Heaven.” I had the chance to share with them there is more to it than just saying you believe.

Many times when we give someone an answer we may hear, “well who do you think you are?” That is the same question that John was asked. You see if we are living the life that we should be, if we are being the example

that we should be people should at least think if not ask, “who do you think that you are.” Not because we are dressed in the finest camel hair suite or munching on a bag of honey and locust. But because we act and behave differently from others. Just like a visitor to a foreign land we must be an interpreter to those who are seeking the truth. Those who are seeking answers. Those who are seeking love. Those who are seeking forgiveness, we must be their guide, their interpreter.

The second way we communicate Jesus to people is as an . . .

II INFORMER

To be an informer you must first know who you are, and what is your position. These people asked John who are you? John’s answer should be our answer as well, “I am just a messenger, preparing the way for someone more important.” John knew that he was a chosen vessel to be used by God. He was selected to do a job for the Lord and he knew what he was to do.

Do you know who you are? You are a chosen vessel of God! God has chosen you to share the Good news to others. God has chosen you to prepare the way for His second coming. John said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness.” We are to be a voice crying out in our world. Sowing the seed, presenting the Gospel, sharing the message of the One who is coming! John was not the substance of the message, he was just the communicator, an informer to those who needed to hear. The same is true of us. We are not the message. But we are here as a voice to inform others about Jesus.

The third way we communicate Jesus to others is by being an . . .

III INDICATOR

John here is telling and presenting Jesus as one who forgives. We are to identify the presences of Christ in our lives. What kind of Jesus are you showing others? I think many times people don’t come to the Lord because we present to them a type of Jesus they don’t want. Too many times we come across as better than they are. I mean we may stand there and tell them how much they need the Lord in their life, and then with our actions we show them something other than Jesus!

If I were to tell you that I was good at fishing and you never had the chance to see or taste anything that I caught, what would you think? If I were to tell you that I loved you, but when you needed someone to talk to or you needed help, but never had time for you, what would you think? If I told you I'm concerned for your spiritual well being, but never confronted you when you were doing something wrong, what would that prove?

Do you understand what I mean? We are to identify the very presences of Jesus within our own lives. Saint Francis of Assisi said, "wherever you go preach Christ, and use words if you have too!" The fact of the matter is we are to preach Christ wherever we go! If you are uncomfortable in sharing Christ then may I encourage you to go for it anyway. Share your faith, share what Christ has done for you.

However, it could be that you first may need to work on your own relationship with Christ before you can tell others. If you haven't allowed Jesus to change you then that may be the problem. Each week we have an opportunity to join in a Bible study lesson. Many times I have encouraged you to read your Bible, to study on your own, to allow God's word to grow within you.

However, if you are not going to let God change you then there is no sense in reading it. What I mean is if you are not going to put into practice the things that you read and the things that God reveals to you, then don't even bother reading it, because it won't matter. We need God to change us, to mold us and make us into what He would have us to be. I really don't know of anything worse than for someone who isn't living their own life right trying to tell someone else how to live!

Are we going to be perfect? No. Are we going to make mistakes? Yes. Then should we go ahead and try? Yes. You see some of the best sermons I have ever seen, came not from some great preacher. Not from some great theologian. But from the very lives of people who truly love the Lord and allowed Him to change their lives. We must be an indicator to people.

Conclusion; Who are you? Only you can truly answer that today. Are you someone who wants the cake and eat it too? Are you someone that thinks the world owes you? Are you someone that wants whatever is the best for

you and no one else? If that's the case then God can't use you! God wants to use those who have surrendered all. As Christian we must be like John the Baptist and prepare the way for the Lord. We must be an interpreter, sharing the true message of Christ in a garbled up world. We must be an informer, telling others we serve a risen Lord. We must be an indicator as to whom Christ is by the very life that we live.

The story is told about Queen Mary, who made it her practice to visit Scotland every year. She was so loved by the people there that she often mingled with them freely without a protective escort. One afternoon while walking with some children, she went out farther than she'd planned. Dark clouds came up unexpectedly, so she stopped at a nearby house to borrow an umbrella. "If you will lend me one," she said to the lady who answered the door, "I will send it back to you tomorrow." The woman didn't recognize the Queen and was reluctant to give this stranger her best umbrella. So, she handed her one that she intended to throw away. The fabric was torn in several places and one of the ribs was broken. The next day another knock was heard at the door. When the lady opened it, she was greeted by a royal guard, who was holding in their hand her old, tattered umbrella. "The Queen sent me," he said. "She asked me to thank you for lending her this." For a moment the woman was stunned, then, she burst into tears. "Oh, what an opportunity I missed," she cried. "I didn't give the Queen my very best!" (Our Daily Bread)

Don't miss your opportunity to give of your best to the Master. The very best you can give Him, is yourself. What a great way to start off the new year, with a new beginning. Will you do it today?

Amen