

Reeds, Rocks, and Dandies

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the significance of John the Baptist's role in preparing the way for Jesus, highlighting how John's doubts were addressed by Jesus and how John's ministry was unique in pointing to the Messiah. It emphasizes the importance of not being swayed by worldly influences, staying steadfast in faith, and focusing on introducing others to Jesus, the ultimate message of reconciliation and salvation.

Duration: 45:24

Scripture: Malachi 3:1, 2 Corinthians 5:18, Matthew 11:11, Ephesians 4:14, John 1:29, Acts 17:11, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Matthew 3:1, John 3:30

Topics: "Preparation for Christ", "Faithfulness in Doubt"

Description

This sermon delves into the significance of John the Baptist's role in preparing the way for Jesus, highlighting how John's doubts were addressed by Jesus and how John's ministry was unique in pointing to the Messiah. It emphasizes the importance of not being swayed by worldly influences, staying steadfast in faith, and focusing on introducing others to Jesus, the ultimate message of reconciliation and salvation.

Transcript

Luke chapter 7, as we continue our study on the gospel of Luke and the context is that John the Baptist had some doubts. John the Baptist is in prison and he doesn't see the things that he was hoping to see of the Lord Jesus. He's not establishing his kingdom, he's not driving the Romans out of the country, he is not coming in judgment.

These are all things that John was anticipating, not understanding that in fact that was the end of the age, the end of the world, which is a long time, two thousand years at least from John. So because things are not working out the way John thought they should work out, he now has his doubts about Jesus. So he sent some of his disciples to Jesus and says, you know, are you the one? Are you the Messiah? Are you the one that we're hoping for and waiting for? And Jesus doesn't say yes or no, Jesus says go and tell John what you see, that the blind are seeing, that the deaf are hearing, and that the dead are being raised, and that the poor have the gospel preached to them.

And so let's read then from verse 24, so Luke chapter 7 from verse 24, and we'll read through verse 30. When the messengers of John had departed, he began to speak to the multitudes concerning John. What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in king's

courts.

But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you. For I say to you, among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

And when all the people heard him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him. And so the question now that Jesus has to address is, who is John? Because John has now faded off the scene.

John has been imprisoned. He is no longer preaching. His work, in fact, has been done.

Remember, he had one job, and that was to herald the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And once he had introduced the Lord Jesus, John fades away. And so the question then is really, who is John? Is John of any importance? And so Jesus is now answering that question.

And so once the messengers, or the disciples, as he calls it earlier, he began to speak to the multitude concerning John. So he's not speaking to his twelve, he's not speaking to the disciples, the broader group, but he's speaking to the multitude. And he is saying, what did you go out to see? What did you go into the wilderness to see? Now why is he saying, why did you go into the wilderness to see? Well, because there's not much to see in the desert.

So what did you go out there for? We have the deserts here, and there's really not much out there except dust and heat and sand. And yet some people go out there, and they find some kind of fascination with the desert. And so the question is, what did you go into the desert for? Remember, for them to go into the desert wasn't a one-hour trip into the high desert from here.

For them, it was a two-day journey for many of them. Many of them had to travel 50 miles, and remember we said recently 20-25 miles, 25 miles is a pretty long day, 20 to 25 miles a day. So two days journey for some of these people to go out there into the middle of nothing to see this, to see John.

And so why did you go out there to see? And he asks them two things. The first is, did you go to see a reed shaken by the wind? Now I think we all understand what a reed is. It's like a bamboo, it's just weaker.

It's just thinner, it's about an inch in diameter, and it's just very, very weak. Bamboo is amazingly strong stuff. We know that they're using bamboo for all sorts of purposes today, but a reed has no value whatsoever.

It can't be used for anything, it has no strength. And so he says, have you gone out to see the vegetation in the desert? And clearly that's not what they had gone for, but he's not just meaning the vegetation, he's not just meaning, have you gone to see these reeds that grow in the wadis, the little places where there's a little bit of water in the desert? No, he's obviously referring to John, and he's making a statement concerning the ministry and the character of John. And he's saying John is not a reed shaken by the wind.

John is not a reed shaken by the wind. Now if you go through the whole of the Scripture from the beginning right through to the end, you'll find that the word reed appears a number of times. Sometimes it's in the book of Revelation, for instance, it's used as a tool to measure, and so that's about the only

purpose it has, is that, you know, you can use it for something like that because it's light.

But most of the time it's spoken of as something that is unstable, and something that is weak. And so John, he says, is not weak, and John is not unstable. Now it's easy for them to look at John and say, well, you know, John doesn't really count because he preached for a little while, and we don't know how long he preached for, maybe six months, maybe a year at the most, and then he just disappeared.

So John doesn't count, John doesn't matter. And of course Jesus is going to address this in this passage now. But I want for us to understand the indictment against preachers who are reeds in the wind, because clearly if Jesus is saying John was not a reed in the wind, then there are others who are reeds in the wind.

And it's not just a reed that is in itself weak, that it's in the wind. In other words, it is blown by every situation around them. Now remember, the Scripture speaks about the fact that we need to become mature in the faith, that we are no longer, in Ephesians chapter 4, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

And so today we have many preachers and many Christians who are reeds shaken in the wind. They are blown around by every new doctrine that comes around. And there are new doctrines being thought up all the time.

And it's almost a full-time job trying to keep track just of people that you know. And where are they now? What do they believe? Do they still believe the truth? Because men are being blown this way and that way by all sorts of false teaching and all sorts of false doctrine. And I keep being shocked by friends, people that I thought were friends, people that I thought were on the same page as we are, and who were in fact for a time.

And then suddenly one day you listen to them preach, or you read something that they wrote, and you find no, the latest winds of doctrine has swept them away, and they're going in a wrong direction. And so John is not blown by the wind. He is solid.

He is stable. Yes, he had his doubts at the end, but he came back to his faith, and he in the end dies as a martyr. But the problem is that it is easy today, because of the influence of the Internet, particularly because people are watching all sorts of preachers, because they can't come to church.

Many churches are still closed, and others like ours are semi-closed. And so many people are home, and they have time, and they're watching all sorts of YouTubes, and all sorts of preachers, and folk we've spoken about this before, and I'm going to emphasize it again. The problem is that you have no way of understanding who it is that you're watching, or listening to, when you switch on to some channel on YouTube.

You don't know the man's life. You don't know his background. You don't know his doctrine.

You don't know his motives. And we need to be careful who we listen to. We need to be careful what books we read, because there is more heresy, folks, hear me, there is more heresy in the world than there is true doctrine.

Broad is the way, and Jesus speaks about that broad way, we talked about that not so long ago, as a religious way. Broad is the way, and there are many on that religious way, but narrow is the way that leads to eternal life. In the end, Jesus says, when I return, will I find the face? Will I find the true face? And so

people have faith in all sorts of stuff today.

But is it the truth? Is it the reality? Let's not be shaken by the wind. Now, it doesn't mean that we don't change when we have to change. There are adjustments that we have to make in our doctrine.

There are adjustments that we have to make in our lifestyle. But before we make those adjustments, we need to make sure that it is a positive correction, and not a negative correction. I've mentioned to you before, when you when you fly, when we still did fly, and you wake up in the middle of the night, and you feel the airplane is turning, because the pilot or the automatic pilot is making an adjustment.

Well, hopefully what he's doing is he's bringing the plane back on track again, because the winds have blown it slightly off track. And so he's making a positive correction. But can you imagine if the pilot makes a negative correction? And so he's on the right track, but he says, well, you know, I don't like this direction.

I'll just go half a degree to the left. And you know what's going to happen. Half a degree to the left, if you leave here, and you're half a degree off by the time you get to Europe, you're going to be thousands of miles off track.

We must make adjustments when we must make adjustments. But when we do that, we need to make sure, a hundred percent sure, that it is the right adjustment. I've had to make minor adjustments.

I've not changed anything that I believe from what I was taught as a young man. And I thank God for my teachers who taught me well. But I've had to make small adjustments on less important things.

But every time I made those adjustments, and there were also times when I was pressurized to make adjustments, and in the same, and I would go through the same exercise, and if necessary, I'll go through the same exercise again. I take a minimum of six months, six months of studying the Scriptures on that subject, of reading everything I can on every side of that subject. And at the end of that time, when I have grasped every aspect of the doctrine or of that topic, will I decide whether I need to make a correction or not make a correction.

I have been with brethren who, in one second, literally in one second, I was with a brother and explaining something to him on a particular doctrine. And instantly, he embraced the error. I was saying to him, this is the truth, this is the error.

And that opened his mind to the error. And I was in a foreign country. It was the day before I left.

By the time I landed back here in LA, he had published on the internet his newfound doctrine. Total heresy. Just like that.

Folks, don't make adjustments until you are sure that you need to make an adjustment, and that the adjustment you're making is a correct adjustment, and not just because it is a fad. Unfortunately, so much of what preachers preach today is based on fashion. I was speaking with Clayton before the meeting.

He was asking about a particular doctrine. And I used this word, I said, because it is fashionable to believe that thing. And so doctrine comes in fashions, the same way as we have our fashions.

Now I'm not going to speak about human fashions. This suit is 25 years old, by the way. It's still the same suit, the same shirt, and the same tie.

So I'm not bound by those. But there are fashions in doctrine. And we know we went through the whole charismatic thing, and that is still fashionable in some areas.

Now we're in the whole reformed thing, and a lot of people are going into that, and that has become fashionable. And the prophecy updates is fashionable right now. And the list goes on and on and on.

And so there's these fads that come and go in doctrine. And those who are like a reed shaken by the wind, will adjust and change their doctrine as the fashions in doctrine change. No, John, Jesus says, and this is one of the things that makes John great, is that John was not shaken by the winds of doctrine.

Be careful of preachers who change their doctrine. If they make those changes correctly, for good reasons, then that's one thing. But if they change simply because it is popular.

And remember, there's a tremendous amount of pressure on preachers to change something or the other, just because it is popular, because it will get more people in the door, because they will get more money in the offering bag, or whatever it is, more followers on Facebook. Be careful of preachers who change simply because it is popular. If a man makes a correction, and it is an honest correction, and he can explain exactly why he's made that correction, that's another thing.

I think the other thing that Jesus is commending John for here is that he is not shaken by winds of doctrine, but he's also not shaken by the winds of the politics of the day. And by the politics, I'm not just meaning what happens in Washington, I'm meaning the fads. We know that we're going through a, maybe I shouldn't call it a fad, otherwise I'll get into all sorts of trouble.

But we've gone through a phase. We're going through a phase here in America, and it's affecting the rest of the world. And preachers are changing their message based on the cultural environment, the political environment in which they find themselves.

And remember, John has a very real cultural environment, a very real political environment in which he is preaching. And we'll see in a moment that he's not in the palaces, he's out in the wilderness. Remember when we introduced John in chapter 3 already, we spoke about the fact that he was not getting his influence from Jerusalem, or from Rome.

He was getting his influence from God out in the desert. And so preachers are adjusting and changing based on cultural fads, based on political expediency. Now I'm not making a statement for or against Black Lives Matter, please understand what I'm saying.

But when it's become fashionable to put Black Lives Matter on the sign outside, simply because that's what everybody else does, and maybe that will protect the property from looting, or maybe that will bring people in. That is not the basis on which we form our doctrine. That is not the basis on which we preach.

We preach on the basis of the Word of God, and the Word of God does not change. What was wrong before Black Lives Matter is wrong today. What was wrong 2,000 years ago is still wrong today.

And when my philosophy, when my culture, when my preaching is affected and changed by the environment, either because I'm afraid, or because I want to carry favor, I'm in serious trouble. Churches have changed dramatically in the time that I have lived. Churches now look like nightclubs.

They're painted black. They have flashing lights, and smoke, and noise, and all of this kind of stuff. Why? Because it's fashionable.

It's got nothing to do with the Word of God. In fact, it's contrary to the Word of God. So how can it be contrary to the Word of God? Because we are children of the light, not of the night.

But when you want to make the church like a nightclub, make it dark so that nobody can see anybody else, and why is the nightclub dark? Because sins are done in the dark. Those are of the light, the Scripture says, come to the light that their deeds may be seen. But it's fashionable.

God help us that we don't change who we are and what we do because it's fashionable, because it's the culture, or because it is politically expedient. In some areas it is politically expedient to be for Trump, and in other areas it's politically expedient to be against Trump. Just depends on your environment.

And so preachers will change their message based on what they think will work for their area. That's not the basis on which we form our doctrine. And so John is not moved by what's happening in Rome, or what's happening in Jerusalem, or what the latest fads are with the Pharisees and the rabbis.

His ministry is based on the truth of the Word of God. He's not shaken by the wind. And so we need to be careful of those who are shaken by the wind, those who change just because of pressure, because of the environment, because of peers, because of whatever goes on and goes around.

And remember this is the thing that identified Jesus. We spoke about that a few months ago, that Jesus set his face as a flint, and you see the difference between these two pictures, a flint or a rock. And flint, remember, is the hardest, one of the hardest kinds of rock you can get.

And a reed, the one is flexible, easily broken. The other is set, it doesn't change. And Jesus has his face set as a flint towards Jerusalem, towards the cross, and nothing gets him off track.

Not the popularity, or the desire for popularity, not the opposition of his friends, not the attacks of the devil, not the attacks of the of the Romans, or of the Jews. He said, I'm going to do the will of God, and he is unchanging, immovable from the foundation of the earth. It says that he was slain, and from the foundation of the earth he had already set his face towards the cross.

And John is a man just like that, not shaken by whatever is going on this way or that way. And then the next thing he says is, what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings courts. Now again, this is a allusion to John's dress.

John was maybe a little eccentric, if you will. He wore a coat of camel's hair, which must have been very uncomfortable, because camel's hair is coarse and prickly. It's not comfortable, and he had a belt on, and he didn't eat comfortable food, but he ate that which was available out there.

And so, did you go out to see? I don't think you understand the term here, a dandy. Anyone know what a dandy is? No. It's an English term.

It's an effeminate, overdressed man. Did you go and see a dandy? Somebody who's effeminate and soft and overdressed. No, he says you come to see a prophet.

But what is the point? Is the point now got something to do with his clothes? Does this make him something? And obviously it doesn't. Jesus wasn't dressed that way. Jesus was dressed in a common

dress, the common garb of the people.

So what John wore didn't define him as such. It was an expression of who he was, but there was no blessing in him dressing that way. But Jesus is again making a point, and the point is that he is not a narcissist.

I think that this really is, you know, in looking at these passages, I try and find a word that will sum it all up, and the word for me is narcissist. A narcissist is someone who lives for pleasure, who chases after comfort and ease and after luxury. And he says that John was not someone who was chasing after luxury and ease, to be nicely dressed and to live in comfortable environment, but he was willing to be in a hard place.

For what purpose? Just because he liked to suffer? No, because he needed to be with God. And I think that that makes a statement, because sometimes we don't get with God because we're too comfortable. We don't want to be uncomfortable.

We want to do what we want to do. We want to enjoy what we want to enjoy. But John recognizes that no, if he's going to meet with God, and if he's going to be in a real relationship with God, he needs to be away from the influences of the luxury and the comfort of the city.

Again, I'm not suggesting that we have to go and live out in the desert. That's not the point. The point is that we need to sometimes walk away from our fleshly desires for that which is comfortable, for that which is easy, so that we can spend time with God and spend time in his Word.

And so John is not driven. He is not motivated by luxury. He's not motivated by clothing or by easy living.

And again, if we look at preachers today, many preachers are driven by these things. It's all about money. It's all about easy living.

It's all about jet planes and fancy motor cars and million-dollar suits. Well, maybe not million-dollar suits, but certainly thousand-dollar suits. What is it that motivated John? It was the will of God.

It wasn't what he wanted. Was there something in John that, as a human being, would say, I'd rather live in a palace than live under a bush in the desert. I'm sure that, I mean, John wasn't crazy.

I'm sure he understood that it was a lot more comfortable in a palace on a bed than it was sleeping on the ground under the bush. I'm sure he understood it was much more comfortable wearing fine linen or silk garments than wearing hairy garments. But he made a choice, and his choice was with God.

And for that purpose, he was willing to suffer whatever was necessary in order to be in the place that he needed to be. I think there's a second thing that is highlighted here, and that is that John, as I said earlier, chooses to not be under the influence or to carry favor with the powers that be. Because notice he says, they live in luxury are in kings courts.

Remember in Jerusalem at this time there is Herod, called himself king of the Jews. He wasn't the king in any way. He wasn't of a royal line, and in fact he wasn't even a Jew.

But he called himself the king. And then of course there was Rome, and there was Caesar, who was a king in the real sense of the word. And so John is not in the palaces.

Why is he not in the palaces? I think for two reasons. The first is because he doesn't want to be influenced by the palaces. Oh sorry, I forgot to mention there's a third palace that we have in the New Testament.

The palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. Remember that's where Jesus is tried before him. So there's another palace.

John is not in the palaces. He is not being influenced by the powers that be. Whether they be the religious powers in the form of Caiaphas, or whether they be the political powers in the form of Herod.

But he is with God. And I believe this is a very important statement, and a statement that I believe that each one of us need to decide for ourselves, and that each preacher needs to decide, and each preacher that you watch and listen to, you need to decide about. Are they with God? Are they living in Him? Remember in Acts, Paul says in Him we live and move and have our being.

Are they moving, living in Him? Or are they living in the palaces of religiosity? Or are they living in the palaces of politics? And folks, I'm very frustrated these days as I'm hearing more and more preachers. I listened to a friend of mine again yesterday afternoon, preaching a political message. And you say, brother, you preach a political message.

No, I preach an anti-political message. Preaching a straight-up political message. We don't live in the politics of this world.

We don't live in the religion of this world. We live in Christ. In Him we live and move and have our being.

And John says, I'm not going to live there. I'm going to live where I can meet with God. And secondly, John is saying I'm not influenced by those things.

You see, if you get to live in the palace, you have to do what the palace tells you to do. So if you're living with Caiaphas, Caiaphas gets to call the shots. If you get to live with Herod, Herod gets to call the shots.

And we see that even today, that those who are in houses of influence and houses of power have to play the game. John says, I'm not playing those games. I'm doing what God wants me to do.

So where are you living today? Are you living in religious palaces or in political palaces? Or are you living with God? And so John says, I'm not interested in those things. I want the Lord. I want His will.

I want to be used by Him. And so he says then in verse 26, But what did you go out to see? A prophet. Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

So Jesus is answering their question for them. Obviously they did not go out there to go and see a well-dressed, soft individual. They didn't go out there to see somebody vacillating and changing with every wind of doctrine and every circumstance.

They went there because there was a prophet. Remember, there had not been a prophet for 400 years. They had read about the prophets.

They had heard about the prophets. The prophets are in the Old Testament, which they had, but there had not been a prophet for 400 years. For 400 years God had been silent, and here for the first time in 400 years is a prophet.

Now they'd heard about Elijah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel, and here's the chance to see a real, live prophet. And of course Jesus says, yes, he is a prophet, but he is not just a prophet. He is more than a prophet.

He is more than a prophet. Verse 27, This is he whom it is written, Behold, I sent my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you. So he's quoting the Old Testament.

Who is he quoting? Quoting the last prophet in the Old Testament, Malachi. And Malachi chapter 3 begins, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight.

Behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. So he's quoting directly from Malachi chapter 3, and he's saying John is that prophet. But notice what Malachi says, He will prepare the way before me.

He will prepare the way before me. And that's exactly what John came to do. So then in verse 28, I'm going to, you say, well, what does that all mean? I'm going to come back to that in a moment.

For I say to you, among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. But he was least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. Two statements here.

The first is that there is not a one born of a woman. There's no human prophet. There is no greater prophet than John the Baptist.

In other words, John is the greatest of all the prophets. Now this would rattle the Jews' cage a little bit. Because remember, they had many great prophets.

Who was the greatest of the prophets? Moses. Moses was the greatest of the prophets. And remember, it was Moses who prophesied that a prophet like unto me will the Lord raise up.

And he's not speaking of John, he's speaking about Jesus. But the Jews regard even to today, and obviously I understand as Christians, we don't really see Moses as a prophet. We see him as the law or the law giver.

But in fact, the scripture calls him a prophet. He is a prophet in the true sense. And so he is, according to the Jews, the greatest of all prophets.

Jesus saying, here's John. He is greater than Moses. He's greater than Isaiah.

He's greater than Ezekiel. He's greater than Daniel. He's greater than all of them.

Now, what makes John greater than Moses? Remember, we know what Moses did. Moses delivered the people, brought them out of Egypt, took them to the promised land, couldn't get them into the land, but got them to the border, gave them the law, formed them into a nation from a rabble of slaves. He forged them into a true nation and with an army who could defend them.

Fight against the enemies. He was indeed a great man. Here's John.

He preaches for a few months, and Jesus says he's greater than Moses. How can John be greater than Moses? How can John be greater than Daniel? Remember, Daniel gives us a clear view of the end times. It's complete with dates and periods, and how one kingdom would replace another kingdom, and how

ultimately the Lord Jesus would come.

And when Jesus would come into Jerusalem, to the very day, he predicts all of those times and those dates. How can John be greater than him? Because John never prophesied one word in the sense of foretelling the future. How can John be greater? Because John was the one who introduces Jesus.

John introduces Jesus. And remember, if we go back to Malachi, I will send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. He will prepare the way before me.

And so John is the greatest because he is the one who gets to make the greatest announcement of all. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That was the greatest message that any prophet preached.

And remember that they spoke about a virgin will conceive and bring forth a son and you will call his name, and so on. And there were great prophecies in the Old Testament, but all of them saw them afar off. All of them saw these prophecies to be way somewhere in the future.

But John was the one who saw Jesus and had the privilege of saying, here he is. This is the Messiah. And I think that there's a lesson in that for us.

Because there is nothing greater that you and I can do than to introduce people to Jesus. Introduce people to Jesus. Remember, Jesus says, and I don't want to get sidetracked because we're running out of time, but greater works will they do.

Speaking of us, what are the greater works? And remember, you can go back and listen to those recordings. The greater works are not greater miracles because the church has never done anything greater than Jesus did or that the apostles did. No bigger miracles, what bigger can you do than raise the dead anyway? But the greater works is introducing someone to Jesus, causing someone to be born again.

And folk, we don't appreciate the magnitude of that miracle. It far exceeds the miracle of someone from the dead. It's one thing to raise someone from the dead.

It's another thing to give someone eternal life. And obviously we can't give someone eternal life. John understands he is not the Messiah.

He's simply the one who's pointing to the Messiah. And as we point to the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter into the ministry of John. And for that reason, Jesus concludes this sentence, that he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John.

Now how can we, and obviously we can speak about the least, but how can we, because if the least is greater than John, then all of us are greater than John, all of us individually. How can you be greater than John? For the same reason. John was able to point to the Lord Jesus, behold the Lamb of God.

But in fact, what Jesus had come to do was not yet finished. And so John's disciples could not be born again. They could believe on the Lord Jesus, and after the cross they could be born again.

But remember that until the cross happened, you could not be born again. You could be saved by faith as Abraham and the others were saved, but not be born again. Only after the cross could you be born again.

Now if John is the greatest of the prophets because he pointed to Jesus, then the church is greater than John, because we can point to the resurrection and to the full work of atonement. John is looking at it by faith in the future. We're able to look at it in the past.

And so our message is a greater message than John's message. John's message was simply repent, because the kingdom is at hand. John's simply saying change.

Our message is God will change you. John's message is you change yourself. Stop doing the wrong stuff.

Start doing the right things. Our message is that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things are passed away.

All things have become new. We have a greater message. It doesn't make us greater men, greater people, greater women than John, but we have a greater ministry.

The ministry of reconciliation. Paul says that he has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. Reconciling man to God.

John could not preach a ministry of reconciliation because reconciliation was not available, because the cross had not yet happened. So John can only preach a message of judgment and of the wrath of God. We have a message of reconciliation because Jesus has died and he's opened the way whereby peace can be made between sinner and God.

And so we have a glorious message that John could not have. We have a glorious privilege that John did not have. Of course, there's a final thing I just want to highlight and there are many aspects that we can talk about, but John is not part of the church.

Now I know this shocks some people and some people think that this is heresy, but when did the church begin? After the cross. After the cross that is commonly said at the day of Pentecost was when the church was born. There was no church in the Old Testament.

There was only men and women of faith in the Old Testament. There was no church. There was no bride of Christ in the Old Testament.

God was married to Israel and then eventually he divorced Israel because Israel continued to be unfaithful to him. But we get to be part of the bride. John is a friend of the bridegroom.

We are the bride. We are more privileged than John could have. Now let's not get a big head.

It's just God's grace. It's just God's grace. But I think you can begin to see why Jesus is saying that among those who are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

And when all the people heard him, even the tax collectors justified God having been baptized with a baptism of John. I think we need to leave that for next week. Father, we pray that you would help us to understand.

Lord, we've covered a lot of ground this morning, said many things, but Lord I pray that you would help us to understand that it's about Jesus. It's not about politics. It's not about culture.

It's not about doctrine. It's not about prophecy. It's about Jesus.

And what made John great was that his association and his connection with Jesus. And Lord, the only thing that gives us any value is our connection with Jesus. Lord, I pray that you would help us as a congregation, as a church, and me as a preacher, Lord, help us to not be reeds that are shaken by the wind.

But Lord, help us to be steadfast, immovable, unchanging. Lord, that our hope may be built based upon the Lord Jesus Christ, that our doctrine is based on the word of God and not based on what's fashionable in theological circles. Lord, that our message not change with the culture of our time, but that our message may be the eternal word of God.

Because Lord, the church is the pillar and the ground of the truth. And Lord, when the pillar is shaking, then what happens to truth? So Lord, I pray that you would help us as a congregation, as individuals, to indeed be those who are a solid foundation that others can look at and say there is an unchanging God that these people are built upon and that they rely on. And so Lord, I pray that you'd help us to understand these things.

Above all, Lord, help us to be doers of your word, to be those who are unchanging, immovable, who are rock solid, dependable, reliable, not shaken by circumstances, not shaken by anything around us. And Lord, at the end of the day also that we may be those who choose you rather than comfort, who choose you rather than the fame and the acclaim that comes with living in a palace. But Lord, that we would choose to be identified with you in Jesus' name, I pray.

I pray, Lord, for those who are not with us this morning, particularly for those who are sick. We pray that you would help them, strengthen them. We think particularly of Maria at this time.

We pray, Lord, that you would bring her through this rejoicing. I pray, Lord, for your protection on each and every one in this time of a physical attack, but also spiritual attacks. And so Lord, I pray that you would bring us together again on Thursday.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Pxc0_X61yrw.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/anton-bosch/reeds-rocks-and-dandies/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net