

John, the Ascetic

by Marcus Dods

John's story teaches us the importance of spiritual growth, renewal, and interceding for the needs of others through a life of prayer and self-discipline.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:1, Mark 1:4, Luke 1:80, John 1:6

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Prayer Life"

Description

Marcus Dods preaches about John the Baptist's radical decision to leave behind a life of comfort and privilege to live a solitary, ascetic life in the wilderness, in order to focus on spiritual matters and prepare the way for the coming Messiah. John's example of self-discipline, prayer, and dedication to God's work serves as an inspiration for believers to prioritize their spiritual lives over worldly distractions and to intercede for others in prayer. By forming a community of like-minded individuals in the wilderness, John created a space for deep reflection, prayer, and anticipation of the Savior's arrival.

Transcript

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6).

Going from the comfortable home and well-provided life and fair prospects of a priest's family, he went to the houseless wilderness, and adopted the meagre, comfortless life of an ascetic; not from any necessity, but because he felt that to entangle himself with the affairs of the world would be to blind him to its vices, and to silence his remonstrance, if not to implicate him in its guilt.

Like thousands besides in all ages of the world's history he felt compelled to seek solitude, to subdue the flesh, to meditate undisturbed on things Divine, and discover for himself and for others some better way than religious routine and the "good wine of Mosaic morality turned to the vinegar of Pharisaism." Like the Nazarites of the earlier times of his country, like the old prophets, with whose indignation and deep regret at the national vices he was in perfect sympathy he left the world, gave up all the usual prospects and ways of life, and betook himself to a life of prayer, and thought, and self-discipline in the wilderness.

When first he went there, he could only dimly know what lay before him; but he gathered a few friends of like disposition around him, and, as we learn "taught them to pray." He formed in the wilderness a new Israel, a little company of praying souls, who spent their time in considering the needs of their fellow-countrymen, and in interceding with God for them, and who were content to let the pleasures and excitements of the world pass by while they longed for and prepared themselves to meet the great

Deliverer.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/marcus-dods/john-the-ascetic/>

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