

John the Baptist - an Epoch Making Vessel

by Stephen Kaung

John the Baptist is an epoch-making vessel who played a crucial role in changing the time from law to grace and from law and prophets to Christ, and his life teaches us about the importance of fearing God, loving God, and being willing to deny ourselves and follow God's will.

Duration: 1:28:42

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:5-7, Romans 3:20, Hebrews 11:6, Revelation 12:1, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "John The Baptist"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the role of John the Baptist as an epic-making vessel of God. The preacher emphasizes that God's purpose never changes, but his ways and tactics may change over time. Before God brings about a change in time, he looks for an epic-making vessel, which in this case will be a corporate body of people. The preacher also mentions that the time of grace will soon be concluded, and a new era of righteousness will begin with the rule of Christ.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Luke? Luke chapter 1, we'll read from verse 5. And we'll read through verse 17. The Gospel according to Luke chapter 1. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest by name Zacharias, in the cause of the cause of Abiah, and his wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elizabeth. And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

And they had no child because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. And it came to pass as he fulfilled his priestly service before God in the order of his cause. It fell to him by lot according to the custom of the priesthood to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense.

And all the multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled seeing him, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said to him, Fear not Zacharias, because thy supplication has been heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. But the angel said to him, Fear not Zacharias, because thy supplication has been heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And he shall be to thee joy and rejoicing, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

For he shall be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And many of the sons of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn hearts of fathers to children, and disobedient ones to the thoughts of just men, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people. For he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit and power of Elijah, to turn hearts of fathers to children, and disobedient ones to the thoughts of just men, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

During the past conference, we shared together on John the Baptist. We used John the Baptist as a springboard to ask ourselves three very important questions. And these questions are, who are we? Why do we do these things? And what is our testimony? And I do pray to the Lord that we may be able to answer them rightly.

This morning we will still consider John the Baptist, but we would like to learn lessons from him as a person. We know John the Baptist is an epoch-making vessel of God. We know that God's purpose never changes, but God does change His ways.

His purpose remains always the same, but to reach His purpose, He sometimes changes His tactics, His ways. And when He changes His ways, He changes the time. So we find that from time to time, God does change His ways.

And whenever His ways change, the time changes. But before the time changes, God always looks for one or some epoch-making vessel. And through these vessels, God will change the time.

And we call these vessels epoch-making vessels. You know, God is not a man, yet He is alive. Nor He is a son of man that He shall repent.

Whatever He says, it shall be done. And whatever He speaks, He will make it good. That means that God never changes His purpose.

So whatever changes may come in time, they are all for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. John the Baptist is an epoch-making vessel of God. You remember in Matthew chapter 11.

It is said from the days of John the Baptist until now. The kingdom of the heavens is to be seized by force. And the forceful shall seize on it.

For the law and the prophets have prophesied unto John. You know, the law and the prophets, they prophesied unto John. In other words, the law and the prophets conclude in John.

For the law and the prophets, they prophesied about the coming Messiah. And John is the last of the prophets according to the Old Testament sense. He is the one used by God to conclude the law and the prophets.

And at the same time, He is the one who is used by God to introduce Christ, the coming King. The kingdom of the heavens comes in the days of John. Because in His days the King has come.

So from the days of John until now. The kingdom of the heavens is to be seized by force. And the word simply means that it is to be seized by those who are forceful.

As a matter of fact, the original language means seized by the violent. And we do not like the word violent. Because it gives us a bad connotation.

But actually the word violent is neutral. It can have a good meaning, it can have a bad meaning. If we do violence to other people, that is bad.

But we need to do violence to ourselves, which is good. To use another word, the Lord Jesus says, unless you deny yourself, take up the cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. Now deny yourself is doing violence to yourself.

Because we all love ourselves. We want to gratify ourselves. And to deny ourselves is difficult.

You have to do violence to yourself in order to deny yourself. But those who are willing to deny themselves. And take up the cross to follow the Lord Jesus.

They seize upon the kingdom of the heavens. And it begins from the days of John the Baptist. So brothers and sisters, John the Baptist is one raised by God to change the time.

From the time of the law, it is changed to the time of grace. From the time of the law and the prophets, it is changed to the time of Christ. He is used of God to change the time.

Therefore we call him an epoch making vessel. Whenever God wants to change the time, He always looks for such vessel. Now this is a mystery to us.

Because we will think when God wants to change the time, He can change it. But strangely, He will not change it until He finds the right vessel. And through that vessel, He will make the change.

Now this is a mystery to us. But this is the way that God always do things. Now dear brothers and sisters, do you know that we are on the verge of another change? In the days of John the Baptist, there was a tremendous change.

Because from law to grace is a great change. And from the law and the prophets to Christ is a great change. And John was used by God to bring in Christ Jesus.

At the first coming of the Lord Jesus, John is His forerunner. He prepares the way for the Lord. But dear brothers and sisters, we are on the verge of another tremendous change.

Why? Because the time of grace is coming to an end. You know, during the time of grace, whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus shall be saved. We are not saved by our own merits.

Because all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God. No one can be saved by doing the works of the law. We are being condemned by the law.

But thank God for sending His beloved Son Jesus Christ into the world. He is the Lamb of God who takes away our sin. By believing in Him, we are saved by grace.

Now this is the time of grace. So from the time of John the Baptist until now, the now does not refer just to the days of John the Baptist. It does not refer just to the days when Christ Jesus was on earth.

The word now continues until our time. This whole period of two thousand years is the time of grace. Whoever is thirsty can come and drink freely of life.

But the days of grace will come to an end one day. The door of grace will be closed. A change of time will come upon this earth.

And we know that our Lord Jesus is coming again. At His first coming, He brings grace into this world. At His first coming, He came as the Lamb of God.

But our Lord Jesus is to come again. And when He shall come again, He shall come as the Lion of Judah. That is to say, He shall come to judge the world.

So you can see that at His first coming, He brings in grace. But at His second coming, He will exercise judgment upon this world. At His second coming, this age will come to an end.

And the age to come will be ushered in. The age to come is the coming of the Kingdom of God upon this earth. And righteousness shall rule upon this earth.

Today it is grace. But in the days to come, it will be righteousness. Christ shall rule the world with an iron rod.

And brothers and sisters, we know that Christ is coming soon. So we are on the verge of another great change. But before this change will come, again you'll find God will be looking for epoch-making vessel.

But this epoch-making vessel will not be an individual. It will be a corporate body. God is looking for a corporate body.

A body of people whom He can use to change the time. They will be used to conclude the period of grace. And they will be used to bring back the King.

And they will be used to bring back the King. In the Bible, in chapter 12, there is a man-child. That man-child is collective.

Because later on you'll find they overcome Satan. And the they refers to the man-child. So the man-child is not an individual.

It is a collective term. It includes a number of people. Now who are these people? They are those in the church who overcome.

Because they overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. And by the word of their testimony. And they love not their lives even unto death.

In other words, you'll find there will be a group of people. They know the value of the blood of the Lamb. They are not better than anybody else.

But they know the value of the blood of the Lamb. They are not perfect. But they know to receive forgiveness of their sins through the blood of the Lamb.

Brothers and sisters, we need the blood of the Lamb not only at the time when we believe in Christ Jesus. At that time when we believe in the Lord Jesus, His blood cleanses us from all our sins. But to live on this earth as an overcomer, we need to be washed by His blood all the time.

Whenever we fall, we need to depend on the blood of the Lamb for cleansing. So in other words, we are being washed all the time. In 1 John 1 it says, If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

And the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses us from all our sins. If we walk in the light, every day we need to walk in the light. In the light of life.

Because the life that is within us will give light to us. To guide us in our journey through this world. You remember John 1 verse 4 says, In Him is life.

And the life is the light of man. So brothers and sisters, today we have the life of Christ in us. And His life of Christ will shed light upon our path.

And we need to walk in the light of life. As God dwells in the light. And that is how we can fellowship with one another.

But as we walk in the light, the light will reveal all the darkness in us. So we need the blood of the Lamb to wash us from all these sins. And that's the way that we grow in the Lord.

With more life, we have more light. And with more light, we see more of our own darkness. And when we see our own darkness, we are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

So we enter into more light. And with more light, we begin to see more darkness. So by degree, gradually, we are being brought into the light of God.

And our life in Christ begins to grow. From glory to glory. And to be transformed and conformed to the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

So we need the blood of the Lamb every day. You know, sometimes even our prayer needs to be washed by the blood of the Lamb. And even our tears need to be washed by the blood of the Lamb.

That we may be more like Him. So brothers and sisters, we need to appreciate the value of the blood of the Lamb. We will never grow, outgrow the blood of the Lamb.

We need the blood of the Lamb all the time. The closer you are to God, the more you sense the need of the blood of the Lamb. So you find this man child, who represents the overcomers of the Church.

They overcome because of the blood of the Lamb. You know, Satan is an accuser. And he is always trying to accuse us before God.

He is always trying to accuse us in our conscience. Now how are we going to overcome the accuser? By the blood of the Lamb. And number two, they overcome because of the word of their testimony.

They have a testimony. And what is their testimony? Their testimony is that Jesus is not only their Savior, but also their Lord. You know, many believers only receive Jesus as their Savior.

But they have not received Jesus as their Lord. But these people, they not only receive Jesus as their Savior, they receive the Lord Jesus as their Lord. The Lord of their life.

And this is a reality in them. So when they say Jesus is Lord, it is real. You know, many people may say Lord, Lord, but they do not do the will of God.

So you find that when they say Lord, Lord, and do not do the will of God, it is not real. There is no power in their word. But for those who really put themselves under the Lordship of Christ, when they say Jesus is Lord, there is power behind it.

And Satan will flee from them. And thirdly, they do not love their lives even unto death. The life there is their soul life.

In other words, they are willing to deny themselves. Even unto death. In order to do the will of God.

And these are the overcomers of the church. And these overcomers of the church will be the epic making vessel of God in the last days. Soul brothers and sisters, what is it that God is looking for today? He is looking for such epic making people.

And with these people, He is going to conclude this age. And to bring in the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. So you see how important it is that by the grace of God, we will be in that epic making vessel.

That's the reason why this morning, we would like to talk about John the Baptist. We would like to learn in him the different principles that govern the epic making vessel. Or the principles that make the epic making vessel.

And I hope we will listen very carefully. Because this is of tremendous importance in our days. To some, it may be a little deep.

But if you can receive it, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us, and you too will enter into these principles. Now the history of John begins with his parents. So here you find an old couple, Zacharias and Elizabeth.

They were both the descendants of Aaron the priest. And you find the scripture said, they were just before God. And they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Now this is most unusual in those days. Because you remember that was 2000 years ago. When Christ came the first time to this earth.

Now during those days, even though the chosen people of God, the Jews were back in the promised land. And the temple was rebuilt. And the priesthood were serving in the temple.

And the law and the prophets were being read. And outwardly you find in the promised land in Jerusalem, there were a people. Seemingly very religious.

But strangely, during those years, God did not reveal himself to them. There was no vision of God. And God did not speak to them.

The word of God was not only rare, but there was no word from God. Why is it? It was because of the low spiritual condition of the people of God. God could not speak to them.

God could not reveal himself to them. Yet outwardly, they seemed to be very religious. They kept the Sabbath.

They read the law and the prophets. They offered sacrifices. And they were priests serving in the temple.

But in reality, they were an ungodly people. But among the ungodly people, you find an old couple who were different. They were just before God.

And they kept all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless. They were different from the other priests. You know, even the priests at that time were just being religious.

They served God as a profession. Instead of serving God out of love. But this old couple was different.

They really loved God. They feared God. And they were advanced in age.

But strangely, the Bible said they had no child. Now, brothers and sisters, if you know the Bible, you find this was most unusual. Because under the law, in the Old Testament time, God promised those who fear him will be blessed with the fruit of the womb.

In Deuteronomy chapter 28, it says they will be blessed with a fruitful womb. In Psalm 128, it is said Psalm 128 verse 3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine in the inner part of thy house. Thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth Jehovah. So according to law, in the Old Testament time, what is the blessing of the Lord to those who fear him? They will be blessed with many children. If they have no child, it means they are cursed by God.

So this is the most unusual thing. Here you find an old couple. They fear God.

But they have no child. What a contradiction! God did not fulfill his promise to this couple. On the contrary, God shut up the womb of Elizabeth.

So you find this old couple, they must have prayed. Asked the Lord to give them a child. But their prayers were not answered.

They must say to God, You promised. Now fulfill your promise. But God did not fulfill his promise.

Because of this, they were misunderstood. People will look at them and say, well, they look as if they were very pious. But who knows what's in the secret.

They must have serious sins. Because they were cursed by God. So brothers and sisters, what you find here? You find because of this awkward situation.

God's name was under a cloud. Because he did not keep his promise. And the couple were under a kind of reproach.

Because they were misunderstood by everybody. Were they offended by God? They were not. Even though God did not fulfill his promise to them, they continued to serve God.

They continued to walk uprightly before God. They continued to keep all the commandments of God blameless. They were not offended by God.

Why? Why did God treat them in this way? Because God has a higher will concerning this couple. God wanted to do something. But he couldn't find it anywhere.

Other people were not qualified. But this couple, they fear God. So God said, I will do something with them.

God did not treat them in the ordinary way. With other people, if they fear God, God will bless them with many children. But with this couple, God dealt with them in a special way.

He did not fulfill his promise. Because he had a higher will concerning this couple. He allowed them to go through trials.

Go through suffering. And eventually you find their prayer began to change. Instead of asking God to give them a child, to take away their shame, to give them a smile, they began to pray exclusively for the coming of the Messiah.

They began to be delivered from their own self-interest. They gave up their self-interest. And now they devoted themselves completely to the interest of God.

They began to travail in prayer. To pray for the coming of the Messiah. And then you find one day, Zechariah was already advanced in age.

Probably almost to the time of retirement. But he was still serving in the temple. And during those days, the way they served, before the temple door was opened, the priests of that course, they were gathered in a room.

And they were cast lots to decide which priest is to do what work in the temple. And that day when they gathered to cast lots, the lot of burning, the incense fell upon Zechariah. I'm sorry, I have to give you more information.

Because I'm afraid you don't understand the background. You know, the priestly service composed of many things. But the highest service is to burn incense at the golden altar of incense.

Because the golden altar of incense is the closest to the ark and the mercy seat behind the veil. And you can be a priest and serve in the temple for life, and the lot of burning incense never came upon you. And if that lot fell upon you to burn incense at the altar, you are allowed to do it only once in your lifetime.

So you find Zechariah served God until he was advanced in years. He never had the opportunity of doing the highest priestly service. But now the lot fell on him.

So during the time of prayer, he will go into the temple to burn incense at the golden altar of incense. During that time, he was the only one in the temple. All the rest of the people will be in the court.

They will be praying. But he will be the only one in the temple. He will represent the whole nation of Israel.

Burning incense before God. And he will pray the prayer of the nation. Now, what is the prayer of the nation? The prayer of the nation is, Oh, that Messiah may come.

That is the prayer of the nation. So on that day, Zechariah was praying that prayer on behalf of the whole nation. And suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood on the right side of the altar.

And Zechariah was frightened. And the angel said, Fear not. Your supplication has been heard.

You shall have a son. And you shall call his name John. Now, brothers and sisters, remember.

Zechariah had long given up the prayer for a son. And when he was burning incense, he could not pray a private prayer. He had to pray the prayer of the nation.

And yet the angel said, Your supplication has been answered. And you shall have a son. Why is it? Because his son is related to the coming of the Messiah.

His son is to prepare the way of the Lord. So you find that his prayer is answered. But God answered his prayer in a higher way.

Did God keep His promise? God did keep His promise. But He kept His promise to the very last. So that when the promise is fulfilled, it is fulfilled on a higher ground.

Not a child for yourself. But a child for God. Brothers and sisters, that's how John came into this world.

So John was born through the prevailing prayer of his parents. They prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed. They prevailed in suffering.

Asking for a child. And God will not answer them. So they began to pray not for themselves anymore.

And prayed for the Messiah to come. And God answered them at the last minute. So the first principle of an epoch-making vessel is prevailing prayer.

Whenever God wants to change the time, He will raise up some people who are willing to give themselves to prayer. Not just ordinary prayer. But prayer becomes a travail.

The burden is so heavy. They have to travail in prayer. They have to groan in their spirit.

They have to pay a cost to pray. And when God has such people, God will change the time. If you read church history, you find in church history whenever God is going to make a new move, He always has to find first some people who will travail in prayer.

This is how the church begins. Before Pentecost, for ten days, a hundred and twenty believers, they pray together with one accord. It is through the travailing prayer of a hundred and twenty believers that the church is brought to birth.

Or to use a move in our century. You know, in 1904 and 1905, there was a great revival in Wales. We call it the Great Welsh Revival.

And the Spirit of God just swept over that country. In such power that the judges wear white gloves. In other words, they have no case to judge.

And you know, in Wales, there are mines. And the miners were very rough people. They curse all the time.

And they have axes, donkeys, to carry those coals. But these rough miners got saved. And because they got saved, they don't curse anymore.

And the donkeys could not understand them. A great revival came upon the people. Do you know how it happened? Do you know how it happened? There was a young man by the name of Evan Roberts.

Evan Roberts. He was a miner. But he loved the Lord.

When he was working in the mine, he read the Bible there. And he would look at the word and work, which is action. And he prayed.

Now this is how he prayed. He prayed, O God, bend the church and save the world. Bend the church and save the world.

And of course he was not alone. There were others praying with him. And through their travailing prayer, a mighty work of God swept over Wales.

And even when I was in New Zealand in 1970, I met people. It is the result of that revival. Or to put it even more closer to us.

Now we are meeting here today. Do you know how the whole thing began? Do you know how the whole work began? Now it began in China. And it spread over the world.

Back in the 1920s, it was through the prayer of two sisters. Two sisters, they were missionaries in China. And they were in the country place in Fukien.

Near Fuchao. In the village. But they knew the Lord.

And they realized for the work of God really to grow, God must apprehend a group of young people. A group of college students. And with this group of college students, God can change China.

So they gave themselves to prayer. It is through the prayer of these two sisters. One was Miss Barber.

And through their prayers, a revival broke out in Trinity College. And that's where Brother Watchman Lee and other young people were saved. And from that, you find it began to spread.

So prevailing prayer is the first principle. How we need to ask God to raise up brothers and sisters who are willing to give themselves to prayer. Not praying for their personal interest.

But pray for the kingdom to come. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Pray for the coming of Christ. To prepare the way for the return of our Lord Jesus. And if God has a people who are praying, he will prevail.

He will change the time. That's the first principle. The second principle.

The second principle is hidden in the name of John. You know, John was not only miraculously born. Because his parents were beyond the age of giving birth.

But God renewed the womb. So he was born miraculously. But his name was given by the angel.

He said, you shall give birth to a son. And his name shall be called John. Now, what is the meaning of John? John means Jehovah is gracious.

Saying, Jehovah is gracious. That is what John means. In other words, our God is a gracious God.

That is his character. You remember when Moses asked to see the glory of God? And God passed through by him and declared his name. He said, Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious.

Our God is a gracious God. That is his character. And the name of John is God is gracious.

In other words, he is to be characterized by the character of God. He is to be a person who knows the grace of God. Or to put it another way, he is the product of God's grace.

He knows how God is gracious. Because he himself has experienced God's grace. And because of this, he is able to represent God.

And he is able to preach repentance. Because he knows God is gracious. If people will repent, God will forgive their sins.

And God will save them. Brothers and sisters, the second principle of an effort-making vessel is knowing the grace of God. What does Paul say? Paul said I am what I am by the grace of God.

You know, we do not know God's grace. We do not appreciate his grace. We are not being characterized by God's grace.

We believe in ourselves. We are self-confident. We can do it.

We are able. We think that we are. Therefore, we do not know God's grace.

You know, before we believed in the Lord Jesus, what hindered us from believing in Christ Jesus? It is because we believe we are good. We believe we can keep the law. So we do not need the grace of God.

But thank God one day we realize we cannot do it. We have no righteousness. And we humble ourselves.

And we see the grace of God which is Jesus Christ. But unfortunately, after we are saved, we forget. We still live by our own selves.

By our own wisdom. By our own strength. We do not appreciate the grace of God.

Just like the Galatian believers. They begin with the spirit. But they want to complete with the flesh.

Brothers and sisters, an epoch-making vessel is one who knows God's grace. It is grace. All is grace.

Then you can be used by God as an epoch-making vessel. I have to hurry. Number three.

You find that John, before he was born, the angel told Zacharias this boy that is to be born shall drink no wine or strong drink even from his mother's womb. Now what does it mean? It means that John will be a Nazarite for life. Now again, I have to explain a little bit.

You go back to the Old Testament. You know, God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt. And God brought them to himself at Mount Sinai.

God said, if you keep my covenant, if you obey me, I will make you a nation of priests. In other words, every Israelite will be a priest. Every Israelite lives to serve God.

That is the highest occupation. But unfortunately, they worship the golden cow. So they disqualify themselves from serving a holy God.

So God just called one family, the family of Aaron to be priests. In other words, they could not go to God directly. They had to go to God through Aaron and his sons.

They were disqualified from serving God. But God opened a back door. That is in Numbers chapter 6. God said, even though you people were disqualified, even though you people were disqualified, but if you really love me, and you want to serve me, I will open a back door for you.

From any tribe, anybody, man or woman, you can serve me through the back door. And that is by taking the vow of a Nazarite. Nazarite means consecration, separation.

You may separate yourself for me. I have not chosen you. But you can choose to separate yourself.

You can take a vow. Say it for a hundred days. I will separate myself for God.

I will devote myself for God. Now, it is very strange. In the Nazarite vow, in the Nazarite vow, it does not tell you what a Nazarite does.

It only tells you how a Nazarite lives. No, we think serving God is do something for God. But serving God actually is living for God.

If you live for God, you will have something to do for God. If you do not live for God, you may do many things, but God is not pleased with you. So usually people will take a vow from a Nazarite.

Say it for thirty days. Or for a hundred days. But very rarely you have Nazarite for life.

Samuel in the Old Testament is a life Nazarite. And John the Baptist is a Nazarite for life. Now, a Nazarite must restrain, abstain from three things.

Number one, he cannot eat or drink anything of the vine. Number two, he cannot have the razor upon his head. Number three, he cannot be defiled by any dead body.

Now, of course, in the old days, because they are God's earthly people, so these requirements are physical. Now, today, we are God's heavenly people. Therefore, brothers and sisters, what is a Nazarite vow to us today? What is a Nazarite vow to us today? It is because we love the Lord.

We want to separate ourselves for God. We want to live for Christ. Now, if you want to live for Christ, you have to abstain from three things.

You cannot take anything that is of the vine. It does not mean physically, because we took them this morning. So it is not physical, but it is spiritual.

You remember our Lord Jesus said, I am the true vine. Why is it the Lord said I am the true vine? Because all the other vines are false. Vine in the Scripture, vine gives pleasure, satisfaction to man.

You know, strong drinks, strong drinks, wine, it satisfies people. It gives people pleasure, and grapes, raisins, give strength to man. So in other words, the world is like a wild vine.

The world is like a wild vine. It does produce things that will give pleasure to man. It does satisfy the flesh.

The Bible calls it the pleasure of sins. The world does have something to offer, but the satisfaction is temporary. The pleasure is transient.

At the end, there will be sorrow. But Christ is the true vine. Brothers and sisters, those who separate themselves to live for God, they find all their pleasure and satisfaction in Christ.

They do not go to the world to try to find pleasure and satisfaction. To find strength from the world because their spring is in God. All their resources is in Christ.

Christ is enough for us. Brothers and sisters, is that our case? Do you go to the world to find pleasure? To find satisfaction? As if Christ is not enough for us? Or do you find Christ is enough for us? He is more than enough for us. We drink of him.

He is the true vine. Do not allow any razor to come upon your head. Why do you put razor on your head? To beautify yourself.

But he says you allow the hair to grow. Long hair means covering. So the spiritual principle is this.

Instead of trying to beautify our head, that is to become head to our own selves. We are willing to have our head covered so that Christ may be our head. Our beauty is in obedience, not in taking the place of authority.

A Nazarite is a person who always has his head covered before God. In all things he allows Christ to be his head. And number three, he does not go near to a dead body.

Because the flesh in the sight of God is like dead body. It defiles. So, we live by the life of Christ.

We do not live by the life of the old man. We live by Christ. For me to live is Christ.

Brothers and sisters, that is the meaning of a Nazarite. Are we Nazarites? Do we live for Christ? Are we separated? Are we devoted to him? This is a principle that makes an effort making that. Number four, John was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Even when he was in his mother's womb. And you know, this can be proven. Because you remember when Mary came to visit Elizabeth.

And when she greeted Elizabeth, that is in Luke chapter 1 verse 44. You find the womb within Elizabeth jumped with joy. Why? That shows that John was filled with the Holy Spirit when he was even in the mother's womb.

Thank God all who believe in the Lord Jesus has the Holy Spirit. We all have the Holy Spirit dwell in us. God dwells in us.

The divine person dwells in us. We all have the Holy Spirit in us. But not all are filled with the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean by being filled with the Holy Spirit? It simply means this. You allow the Holy Spirit to rule over your life. Dear brothers and sisters, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? To be filled with the Holy Spirit is not just an emotional thing.

It means that you allow the Holy Spirit to have control over your life. Instead of walking in the flesh, you walk in the Spirit. To be filled with the Holy Spirit that is another principle of an epoch-making vessel.

Like the five wise virgins, they not only have oil in the lamp, they have oil in the vessel, and they are the ones who go out to meet the bridegroom. And finally, you find that John will come in the Spirit and power of Elijah. He will walk before the Lord to prepare his way to make ready a prepared people for the Lord.

The Spirit and power of Elijah. Now, what is the Spirit of Elijah? The Spirit of Elijah is simply this. In 1 Kings chapter 19, verse 10 and verse 14, twice, you know Elijah at the camel, there was a big victory, and then his life was threatened by Jezebel, and he fled for his life, and you remember, God asked him, Elijah, what are you doing here? And Elijah said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah of hosts.

So the Spirit of Elijah is the jealousy of God. God, Elijah was jealous for God. He saw the whole nation worshipping Baal.

And he was jealous for God. So he wanted to turn the nations to God. And this jealousy just consumed him.

Just eat him up. Just eat him up. And that is the Spirit of Elijah.

And you remember the Apostle Paul had the same Spirit. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 2, he said, I am jealous with the jealousy of God for you. Because I have espoused you as Christ's virgin to one man, Christ.

And I am afraid the enemy may entice you to bring you away from the simplicity of Christ. Brothers and sisters, are we filled with the jealousy of God? Are we jealous for God? Are we deeply concerned with God's name? His name is not sanctified in this world. Are we jealous for His name? Are we filled with the jealousy of God? We want God to be what He should be.

Because this is what He is. Are we jealous? That is the Spirit of Elijah. And what is the power of Elijah? The power of Elijah is in prayer.

In James chapter 5, Elijah is a man of life passion. But he prayed with prayer. Then he prayed again.

He is a man of prayer. That is where his power is. Brothers and sisters, what is the greatest power that God gives to His church? It is prayer.

So let's give ourselves to prayer. These are the principles governing the making of an epic making vessel. May the Lord raise up many brothers and sisters who will be marked by these principles.

What an honor and glory to the use of God to conclude this age and to bring in the age to come. To bring back the King. May the Lord help us.

Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we do come to Thee this morning to pray that we may learn the lessons from John the Baptist. How does this make him an epic making vessel? We pray that Thou will make us epic making vessel. We pray that Thou will enable us to prevail in prayer.

That Thou will enable us to know Thy grace. That Thou will enable us to be separated for Thee. To be filled by Thy Spirit.

And be marked by the Spirit and power of Elijah. Use us for Thy own glory. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

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