

John the Baptist

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon explores the life of John the Baptist as an epoch-making vessel of God, emphasizing the importance of faithfulness and aligning with God's needs in our prayers and actions.

Duration: 1:04:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:5, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:15

Topics: "John The Baptist"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a vessel that God can use to bring about change in the world. The speaker encourages believers to not take things for granted and to be sensitive to anything that goes against God's character and name. They highlight the need for believers to have the zeal and jealousy of God, and to speak out against anything that contradicts the Lord. The speaker also discusses the coming of the Lord and the need for believers to be prepared for His return, as they believe that the current dispensation of grace is coming to an end and a new dispensation of righteousness will begin.

Transcript

Do you please turn to the Gospel according to Luke? Luke chapter 1. We'll read from verse 5. Luke 1 verse 5. There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest by name Zacharias, of the cross 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 cross, 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. So 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 half of fathers to children, and disobedient ones to the thoughts of just men, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people. We are living in a time very much similar to the days of John the Baptist.

Because at the time of John the Baptist, we find that God was going to change the time. He was to conclude the dispensation of the law and the prophets. And to introduce into the world a new dispensation of grace.

The law and the prophets ended at John the Baptist. And from there on, Christ will come into the world. So we know that the time of John the Baptist was a tremendous time.

It was a time of a great change. In a sense, brothers and sisters, we are living on the verge of another great change in time. We believe that God is going to conclude this age.

And to introduce into the world the age to come. Even this dispensing of grace is coming to an end. A new dispensation, the dispensation shall we say of righteousness, shall come upon the earth.

Because when the Lord shall return, righteousness shall rule over the whole earth. The Lord is coming again. And he is coming soon.

So we know that the time of John the Baptist and our time are very much similar in many ways. But for God to make that change in time, God looked for a vessel. Now this is the way that God always works.

Whenever he wants to do something on earth, and he is going to do it. And yet, in order that what he desires to be done on earth, he always looked for a vessel through which he can do what he intends to do. At the time when God was going to change from the dispensation of law and prophet into the dispensation of grace, God found on earth a vessel.

And this vessel was John the Baptist. With this vessel, God was able to make that change. And to bring in his purpose.

So John the Baptist actually is an epoch-making vessel of God. We know God has many vessels. But there is one kind of vessel which is of special value to him and to his economy.

And that kind of vessel is an epoch-making vessel. A vessel that can be used to make a change in time. So that the plan of God can be brought forth closer to his final realization.

Now of course in the Bible you find a number of people like John the Baptist who are epoch-making vessels. For instance, Abraham is an epoch-making vessel. Because starting from the time of Abraham, God is no longer just working with an individual.

Through an individual he is going to bring in a family. And through a family to bring in a nation. For instance, Moses is another epoch-making vessel.

Because through Moses that nation is finally brought forth. And of course you can go on and you'll find Daniel is another epoch-making vessel. Because through Daniel the children of Israel in captivity were restored to the promised land.

And the temple was rebuilt. So we find that in the Bible there are these epoch-making vessels. And with these vessels God is able to change the time and bring in his plan.

Now brothers and sisters, the way of God or the principle of God always remains the same. Because God is going to change the time. Therefore he is looking today for a kind of vessel like John the Baptist.

But of course, as we draw closer to the end of this age, we believe that whereas in the past an epoch-making vessel is an individual, such as John the Baptist, but in our time the epoch-making vessel of God will be a corporate vessel. A people who have the same characteristics of that kind of epoch-making vessel. And this is what God is looking for today.

Dear brothers and sisters, I feel it is of great urgency that God shall find such vessel upon the earth today. Because without such kind of vessel God's plan as it were shall be postponed and delayed. But if God shall find upon the earth a kind of people which he can use as an epoch-making vessel, then I believe that a change will come and will come very quickly.

And for this reason we would like to consider together this man, John the Baptist. Not just as a history, but from him we can see what kind of a person or persons that God is looking for to be his epoch-making vessel in our time. Now of course first of all we have to begin with his parents.

There you'll find a man by the name of Zechariah. He was a priest in the course of Abiah. We know the priest served in the temple in 24 courses.

And Zechariah belonged to the course of Abiah. And he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, whose name was Elizabeth. Now this couple were just before the Lord.

They kept all the ordinances and the commandments of the Lord blameless. In other words, you'll find a couple who walked before the Lord with such godliness, with such piety, with such righteousness, with such honesty. They served the Lord together as a family.

And because of that we would think that God would greatly bless them. Well, bless them with many sons and many daughters. Because according to the promises in the Old Testament, those who fear God, those who honour God, God would honour them with many sons, many daughters, with physical, material prosperity.

That was promised in the Old Testament. Now of course, in the Old New Testament it is the spiritual blessing in the heavenly in Christ Jesus. But here you'll find something rather strange.

A couple walked before the Lord in such blameless way, and yet they had no child. For this reason I believe they must have prayed to God many, many times. Year in and year out.

Asking God to give them children. Asking God to fulfil His own promise. Asking God to vindicate them.

Asking God to vindicate God Himself. And yet, there was no answer. Until they were both avenged in years.

And it was humanly impossible to have any child. And maybe at this point they gave up praying. They thought it was simply useless.

But the wonderful thing was here. They were not offended by God. They continued to serve God as faithful as they did before.

You know dear brothers and sisters, how easily we can be offended by the Lord. Maybe worse than everybody else will be offended, but certainly I will not be offended by thee, as Peter said. But strange enough.

You'll find how easily we who are the redeemed of the Lord can be offended by none other but the Lord Himself. We will think that the people in the world, they will offend us of course, because they don't understand. And even our brothers and sisters will offend us.

They don't really know us. But certainly the Lord, He will never offend us and we will never be offended by Him. But dear brothers and sisters, there are times when the Lord does not seem to deal with you.

In the same way as He deals with other people. There are times when the Lord seems to delay or not to fulfill His promise to you as He does to many other people. There are times when you go to the Lord, lay hold of His promise, fully believe that He will of course honor His word, but He does not.

And you begin to wonder whether the Lord really cares for you. Whether He really loves you. Or even you come to the point, whether He is.

Even at one time John the Baptist had his problem. When he was in the prison he sent his disciples to the Lord and said, Lord is it You who we expect to come or is it somebody else? And the answer of the Lord is, blessed is he who is not offended by me. The Lord may not explain why to you.

But He expects you to believe in Him. He expects you to trust in Him. And not be offended.

Dear brothers and sisters, I believe that in our following the Lord there will come time when you will be tested in this way. And how many are offended by the Lord. They turn away from following the Lord.

Because He does not meet your expectation. Of course the Lord has His reason. The Lord knows how much we can stand.

The Lord knows how much He can test us. So you find that He tested Zacharias and Elizabeth. As if beyond their measure.

And yet they trusted in the Lord. They did not understand. No explanation was ever given.

But they still continued to believe in God and serve God as faithfully as they did before. They were not offended. God knew how much they could stand.

Now God did it for a special reason. Because God was looking upon this earth for an effort making vessel. But where will this effort making vessel come from? It had to come from somewhere.

So there you find God laid hold of this elderly couple. And tested them. Brought them beyond their natural ability.

And yet they trusted in God. So through them God was able to bring in that effort making vessel. One day.

Zacharias was serving in the temple. I believe it was almost nearing the time of his retirement. Maybe it was the last time.

And it so happened that a lock fell on him to burn incense in the temple. You know the way the priest served in the temple? Before the day dawned. Before the door of the temple was opened.

The priest who served in the course of the day. They were gathered together in a room in the temple area. And their locks were cast.

To decide who was to serve what during the day. Some will be serving at the brazen altar. Other will be serving the golden altar.

But of all the services of the priesthood. The highest, the noblest service that could ever fall upon a priest. Was to burn incense at the golden altar of incense.

Why? Because. Only the high priest could enter behind the veil once a year. With blood and incense and smoke.

Just to be before the ark. And then quickly retreated. So with the priest.

The nearest place to the mercy seat. Was the golden altar of incense. Because the golden altar of incense stood right before the veil.

And before the ark and the mercy seat. So it was considered as the highest privilege of a priest. To burn incense at the altar.

And many priests served in the temple for life. And this chance never came to them. And according to the rule among the Jewish people.

Once you got the privilege of burning incense at the golden altar of incense. You couldn't repeat it. It was just once for a lifetime.

And many didn't have that chance. So here you'll find Zacharias served God in the temple until he was retiring. And thank God at the very last minute.

The lock fell on him. So he entered into the holy place. To burn incense at the altar.

Now at the time when the priest burned incense at the altar. There was nobody else in the holy place. Everybody was in the court praying.

And he was the only one in the temple proper. He was representing the whole nation. Burning incense before God.

That is offering prayer to God. It was a most sacred moment. And while he was burning incense at the altar.

Suddenly an angel appeared on the right side of the altar. And he was frightened. The angel said, Zacharias fear not.

Your supplication has been heard. And you shall have a son. And his name shall be called John.

You know this is the most unusual thing. Why? Because when Zacharias was burning incense at the altar. At the same time he offered prayer to God.

But the prayer that he offered to God at that moment. Can never be a private personal prayer. Why? Because he was there on a representative capacity.

He couldn't offer a small prayer of his own. And say now God give me a son. He could never do that.

He was there representing the whole nation. And he was there praying the prayer of the nation. And what is the prayer of the nation of Israel? The prayer of the nation of Israel is Oh God send the Messiah.

Send the Messiah. That is the prayer of the nation. And no doubt that was the prayer that Zacharias prayed at that moment.

But isn't that strange? The angel said thy supplication has been answered. And thou shall have a son. While he and his wife were praying for a son.

There was no answer. And while he stopped praying for a son. And he prayed for the Messiah.

The answer came. You shall have a son. Brothers and sisters.

What is the connection there? You pray for one thing and God answer you in another thing. What is the connection there? The connection is the son that was given to him was related to the Messiah. In other words when they prayed for a son for themselves.

There was no answer. But then they prayed for the Messiah. God said well you shall have a son.

Because this son shall be the forerunner of the Messiah. Isn't it true often times we pray and pray and pray for something for ourselves. And there is no answer.

Well if you are a new believer there will always be an answer. But if you are an old believer. Sometimes you will pray and pray and pray and pray and no answer.

And you begin to wonder. Why is it that when I was a new believer. Whenever I prayed God came rushing in and supplying my need.

But now no more. Why is it that your prayer was not answered? You have every legitimate reason to ask God for that need. And it is for his glory because it is his promise.

You may say Lord not for me but for your own vindication. But actually it is for you too. Now brothers and sisters you may be praying and praying and praying and there is no answer.

And sometimes you wonder whether God has changed. Are you offended? If you are not offended. Do you know that God is trying to draw you out of yourself.

And draw you into his need. Sometimes we only see our need and we do not see God's need. God has a need for a son.

An ascending vessel to prepare the way for his beloved son. And yet you are praying only for a son for yourself. So God said now he considers you as spiritually mature enough not to answer your prayer.

And you will not be offended. Until you begin to see that his need is more important than your need. You begin to forget your own need.

And you begin to think only of his need. Oh send the Messiah to us. Send the Messiah to us.

And God said yes. I will give you a son. And he will prepare the way of the Messiah.

Brothers and sisters I believe there is some very necessary lesson we need to learn. If we want to see that effort making vessel of God to come into being. God has to draw us into his need.

Most people only know their own need. But those who are growing up in Christ. They ought to begin to realize that God has need too.

And his need has to be matching us. Unless we are willing to pray his prayer. Unless we are willing to be burdened with his burden.

Unless we are willing to prevail as it were in prayer. Go through hardship and prevail and puzzlement. For his sake God's need cannot be met.

Now are we willing to be people like Zechariah and Elizabeth? But anyway. It is through that you find that God was able to bring in John the Baptist. Now we were like this morning to see a few things.

Concerning John the Baptist. There is these things that make him an effort making vessel of God. First of all of course we know that John.

His name was given by the angel. His name was not given by his father nor his mother. And you know there was the story after John was born.

On the eighth day they circumcised John because it was the custom of the time. When a Jewish boy was born you know on the eighth day they circumcised the boy. And then they named the name.

They gave name to the boy. So all the friends and relatives they gathered together you know. And they circumcised the boy.

And then they want to know what will be the name of the boy. And the mother said his name shall be called John. Oh no, no, no.

All these friends and relatives they said no, no, no. Because you do not have that name in your family. You see according to the Jewish custom they always try to go back into the family.

Either the father's family or the mother's family and get some names out of it. Maybe name after a favorite uncle. Or if it's a girl after a favorite aunt or grandmother.

So that's the way that the Jewish people always named their children. So when the mother said his name shall be called John. They said oh no, you don't have that name within your family.

You should call him maybe Zacharias Julius. Well that would be the right thing to do. So they turned to the father.

And said now what shall he be called you know. Because of his unbelief. He became dumb and deaf.

So they make signs to him and said now what should the boy be called. So he asked for a tablet. And he wrote on the tablet his name shall be called John.

Then his tongue was released. And he praised God. The name was given by the angel.

By the name John. You know what is the meaning of the name John? You know if you have a boy you would like to call him John I know. There are lots of John's.

If he's a girl Mary of course. Do you know what is the meaning of the word John? Of the name John? John means the Lord is gracious. Jehovah is gracious.

In other words in the very name of this boy. You see the grace of God. Or to put it in another way.

John is an embodiment of God's grace. It is not because of the grace of God there will be no John. Because his father and mother they were both advanced in years.

And they couldn't bear a child. God brought them to death. As it were.

And even beyond that. In other words they were completely impossible. God exhausted their natural strength.

So that it was absolutely impossible for them to have a child. And then the grace of God began to work. And bring in that effort making vessel.

You know this is always the way grace works. The grace of God cannot work. If your natural strength is still available.

The reason why we do not see more of the grace of God. Is because our natural strength is so strong. If there is still a tiny little trace of that natural strength in us.

God said I have to wait. I cannot wait. Because if I do.

You will share my glory. You think that I have done it. You have done it.

You remember when the Lord Jesus raised up Lazarus. The same thing. The sister sent message to the Lord and said the one whom you love is sick.

They fully expected the Lord to rush back. But the Lord stayed back. He didn't arrive until Lazarus was in the tomb for four days.

In other words death and thoroughly died. Martha said don't open the tomb. It melts already.

But the Lord said that's the time when resurrection works. Dear brothers and sisters. Oh if we only see this basic principle.

When will grace begin to work in our lives? It is when our natural man. Our natural strength. Our natural energy.

Is fully exhaled. When a person is drowning. You cannot rescue him.

Because if you do. He still has strength there. And he will wrap his arms around you and pull you down with him.

And people who know how to rescue people. They will wait. If they cannot wait.

They will go there and give him a blow. And get him out. So that he will be almost like that.

Then you can pull him up. Brothers and sisters. Isn't it true? That grace will not begin.

Until the natural is fully exhaled. How true this is to us. When we first believe in the Lord Jesus.

How we try to accumulate merits. How we try to put our righteousnesses of our own. How we try to offer our natural fruits.

Thinking that by that we may appease God. It is only after we have exhausted all our natural strength and means and ways. Then as we are there helpless.

Just as we are. Grace saves us. We are saved by grace.

So faith. And not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.

But dear brothers and sisters. How easily we forget. The lesson we learn.

After we believe in the Lord Jesus. Then we try again. And that is the reason why we do not see more grace.

In our life. And remember. God can only use that which is of himself.

God cannot use anything that does not come from him. Anything that is not of him. Has to go to death.

And then God would only use that which comes from him. That is a principle. Very basic.

Very fundamental. And yet very essential. And it has to be applied throughout our life.

It is not just something to apply at time we are regenerated. It has to be applied throughout every step of our way. God has nothing to do with the natural.

Everything has to be of grace. But it cannot be of grace until the natural is fully. Have we learned this lesson? If we have learned this lesson.

Then we have the first quality. Of being in the effort making vessel of God. Secondly.

Well his name is John of course. The Lord is gracious. So it is the principle of grace.

All of grace. Secondly. John was one among the few.

Who were natarites for life. You know according to Numbers chapter 6. God said. If any man or woman.

Will like to vow a vow of the natarite. That is to separate himself or herself for the Lord. To consecrate himself or herself to the Lord.

He may do so. Why? Because. When God first brought the children of Israel out of Egypt.

And brought them to Mount Sinai. In Exodus chapter 19. The purpose of God was.

That the whole nation shall be a nation of free. In other words. Every Israelite.

Was to serve God. But when Moses was receiving the law on the mount. The children of Israel.

Sinned against God. By worshipping a golden cow. And thus they were disqualified.

From being priests. From serving God. Therefore God took out of that nation just one tribe.

And out of the tribe just one family. The family of Aaron to be priests. And the rest of the people.

They could not serve God. Even if they wanted to. They were disqualified.

Oh they lost such a privilege. You know. Our sense of service is entirely wrong.

We think that if we serve God. God is honored. Instead of thinking that if God allows us to serve him.

We are honored. Now the children of Israel were disqualified. They couldn't.

Even if they wanted to. They couldn't. But God being so merciful.

God opened as it were a back door of service for them. And said now if any man or woman. Of any tribe.

Young or old. If you really love God. If you really want to serve God.

Even if you are not of the family of Aaron. Of the tribe of Levi. God said I will give you another chance.

If you only vow a vow of a Nazarite. It means that if you decide. That you are willing to separate yourself.

Maybe for a month. Maybe for six months. Maybe for a year.

You can separate yourself. And devote yourself completely to the Lord. To live for God.

You may do so. You may do so. That's a Nazarite.

But usually a Nazarite is just a few months maybe. You know. But in the Bible there are a few Nazarites who are life.

Nazarites for life. Samuel is one. And here John the Baptist is another one.

Because even in his mother's womb. He is not to drink any wine nor strong drinks. So John is a Nazarite for life.

A Nazarite according to Numbers chapter 6. Has to abstain from three things. One is from anything that comes from the vine. From the seed stones to the skin.

No raisin, no grape, no wine, no vinegar. Nothing that comes out of the vine. Number two.

No razor ever comes upon his head. So his hair will grow long. And number three.

He cannot draw near to any dead body. Not even the nearest of his relatives. Because that would defile his head.

Of course spiritually. The Nazarite vow in the Old Testament time. When you apply it to the New Testament.

It is consecration. It is consecration. It is Romans 12.

Verse 1. Therefore brethren. By the compassion of God I beseech you. To present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Wholly acceptable to God. And this is your reasonable service. So here you will find in the New Testament time.

The Nazarite vow actually is consecration. In other words. After we are born again of the Spirit.

Since we are redeemed by grace. We shall respond to grace. With an action.

And that action is called consecration. You know. We who are vessels of grace.

We who are saved by grace. And the grace of God is so great upon us. It ought to constrain us.

To offer ourselves back to God and say. Now Lord. I am yours.

I have no right to live for myself. I am willing to be separated. And to live entirely for you.

Or to put it in a better way. To let you live in me. Now this is consecration.

This is a Nazarite vow. And having had that vow. We abstain from certain things.

Not physically but spiritually. We abstain from all the produce of the vine. Why? Because the Lord said I am the true vine.

The vine represents what the world can give us. The world can give us pleasure. Like wine.

The world can give us strength. Like raisin. The world can give us some enjoyment.

Like grace. But. If we are constrained by the grace of God.

We want to offer ourselves to the Lord. And say Lord from now on. I know I will not draw my pleasure.

My satisfaction. My strength from the world. But instead you are my satisfaction.

You are my strength. You are my pleasure. You are my resources.

We abide in the true vine. And draw all our resources from the true vine. So we will not go back to the world.

And try to find our pleasure and satisfaction and strength from the world. This we separate ourselves. We do not allow the razor to come upon our head.

Not physically. Not physically. But spiritually.

In other words. If we consecrate ourselves to the Lord. Then we take Him as our head.

So we cover our head. From now on you are my Lord. You direct my life.

I am no longer my own master. But you are. That is the meaning of no razor coming upon your head.

Let your head grow as a cover. Because you take Christ as your head. And you do not draw near to any dead body.

Not physically. But spiritually. Because in the scripture dead body means the flesh.

The flesh always defiles. We will have nothing to do with the flesh. From now on we have to walk according to the spirit.

And not walk according to the flesh. Now that is consecration. What is consecration? Consecration is the response to grace.

Consecration is to be separated for God. Consecration is to draw all our resources from the Lord. Instead of from the world.

Consecration is to acknowledge Him as our head. And be covered before Him. Consecration is to walk not according to the flesh.

But according to the spirit. And this is for life. Not just for a time.

It is for life. And dear brothers and sisters because of that. John shall be great before the Lord.

Oh dear brothers and sisters. We who have received so much grace. Do we respond with a consecration? Consecration is not only something that you only do once in your lifetime.

It is something that you begin once. And you continue throughout your life. And that is the reason why you find a burnt offering has to be offered.

Every morning and every evening. Has to be renewed. We have to renew our consecration.

Every morning and every evening. And it shall be continued. The fire of the burnt offering never goes out.

Never goes out. That is the second quality you will find in the effort making vessel. That is John.

Now thirdly. Thirdly you will find John the Baptist. Shall walk before the Lord with the spirit and power of Elijah.

Now John the Baptist is not Elijah. He is like Elijah. Why? Because he came in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Now what is the spirit of Elijah? I believe we mentioned that before. You know Elijah. Elijah's disciple Elijah.

Before God took Elijah up to heaven. Elijah followed Elijah. Elijah tried to shake him off but he wouldn't.

He followed him all the way. Until they crossed the river Jordan. And then Elijah told Elijah.

God is going to take me away. Ask whatever you want. And it shall be given to you.

And you remember that young man Elijah said. Give me a double portion of your spirit. And Elijah said you are out of our faith.

I cannot give it to you. But if you see me taking up. Then God will give it to you.

And sure enough as they were talking. Carried off fire and horsemen came. Separated them.

And Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind. And Elijah said my father, my father. He saw Elijah went up.

And the mantle of Elijah fell down. He took it up and put it on himself. And he received a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

Now you wonder what is the spirit of Elijah? Oh you say that young man is really ambitious. You know he wanted to be doubly powerful than his master. An ambitious young man.

Not now. Not now. What is the spirit of Elijah? The spirit of Elijah is none other than the zeal of the Lord.

Because you remember Elijah said to God. I am jealous for you. I am jealous for you.

I am jealous for your right. I am willing to sacrifice my life. If only your right your name may be maintained.

But I am no better than my father. I am the only one left. They have killed everybody.

I am the only one left for you. But God said no. I have seven thousand left.

That is the spirit of Elijah. The spirit of Elijah is the jealousy of God. The zeal of the Lord.

In other words Elijah was a person. Who was literally burned with the passion of God. When he saw the nation forsook God.

God's name, God's right were not honored. He was burned within himself. He couldn't contain himself.

And he was willing to sacrifice himself. If only the name of God, the right of God might be restored. Now that was the spirit of Elijah.

And because of that spirit he was persecuted. Because of that spirit he suffered a great deal. Listen to Paul.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers. And there he said I am jealous with the jealousy of God for you. I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to one man who is Christ.

And yet I am afraid that you may be deceived as Eve was deceived in the garden. From the sincerity and the simplicity that is in Christ. Paul said who? Paul said and I do not burn.

In other words the zeal of the Lord. The jealousy of God. Burn within Paul.

And you see Paul how he suffered. Look at our Lord Jesus. In the beginning of his ministry.

How he entered into the temple. And he saw these men in the temple area. Buying and selling.

Making profits. Cheating people. And there was the temple.

And our Lord Jesus could not contain himself. He was burned with the zeal of the Lord. And he overthrew the table.

And he drove out these cattle. And he said you made my father's house a house of merchandise. The zeal of the Lord has devoured him.

And because of that he suffered. He was crucified on the cross. Dear brothers and sisters.

What kind of a vessel that is an effort making vessel. It must be a kind of vessel that is filled with the spirit of Elijah. A kind of vessel that is literally devoured by the zeal of the Lord.

A kind of vessel that has the jealousy of God. Oh brothers and sisters. In the time of our Lord Jesus.

Every day thousands and thousands of people came to the temple area. People have been buying and selling all the time. And nobody seemed to be bothered by it.

And here came our Lord Jesus. And when he saw it he couldn't stand it. Isn't it true dear brothers and sisters? In the world today.

Not only the world but the religious world today. In Christianity today. Things are going on in the name of God.

And what sacrilegious it is. And yet dear brothers and sisters. We can come in and go out.

And we do not feel a thing. As if everything is alright. Everything goes on as usual.

Can it be that way? Where is the zeal of the Lord? Where is the jealousy of God? When you see the right of God. The right of our Lord Jesus. The name of our Lord Jesus.

Being put to shame. Dear brothers and sisters. Can you contain yourself? No wonder.

God cannot find that apple making vessel. An apple making vessel is a vessel of grace. An apple making vessel is a vessel of consecration.

An apple making vessel is a vessel. In whom is the spirit of Elijah. It is true.

You will suffer if you know this. You will suffer if you burn. You will suffer if the zeal of the Lord devours you.

You will suffer both within and without. You will. You cannot be popular anymore.

You will be rejected. But dear brothers and sisters. It is that kind of vessel.

That God can use to change the time. How we can take things for granted. How because we have seen things so often.

We do not sense anything. We do not feel it anymore. But if you are filled with the jealousy of God.

If you are filled with the zeal of the Lord. Brothers and sisters. When you see something that is contradictory to the Lord.

Contradictory to his character. Contradictory to his name. You cannot contain yourself.

You cannot be quiet. You cannot. You may be a fool in the eyes of the world.

But only God's rule can change the time. And this is the kind of effort making vessel. And finally.

What is the work of this vessel? This vessel is to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The Lord is coming. But when he shall come.

Shall he find a people who are ready for him? You know awkwardly the whole nation of Israel. Who are praying for the Messiah to come. But were they ready? When the Messiah finally arrived.

Were the nation ready for the Messiah? Not at all. Even in Jerusalem. When they heard from the wise men.

That the child is born to be king of the Jews. They were troubled. They were not ready.

But God must have a prepared people. For the Lord. So he sent John the Baptist.

To do that one thing. To make ready a prepared people. For the Lord.

To prepare a prepared people. For the Lord. That was the work of John the Baptist.

And sure enough you know. When Christ came. All the followers of the Lord in the beginning.

Were the disciples of John the Baptist. John the Baptist prepared them. So when the Lord came.

They followed the Lord. All the disciples of Christ. Were the disciples of John the Baptist.

And when they left John and went to the Lord. John said I rejoice. I rejoice because this is what I come for.

Historically. This was true. Dear brothers and sisters.

Do you know why the Lord is delayed? Do you know why the time is changing. And yet it seems to be so difficult to change. Why? It is because.

If the Lord shall return today. Will he find a prepared people for him? The bride has to make herself ready. And then the bridegroom.

Will come. To claim her. As his bride.

The problem today is God's people are not prepared. We may say in our mouth. Lord come quickly.

But are we prepared? If he shall come right now. Are you ready for him? To be saved is one thing. But to be prepared and ready for him is another thing.

Are we prepared? Are we not like that wicked servant? The Lord will not come yet. He will delay. Or are we that good and faithful servant who knows his heart.

And prepared. He can come anytime. You are ready for him.

A prepared people. Dear brothers and sisters. To me I feel.

The most urgent ministry in our time. Is the ministry of preparing a prepared people for the Lord. I believe this is the most urgent ministry.

It is true. Evangelizing the world is important. It is true.

But I think the most urgent need today. Is a ministry. To prepare a prepared people for the Lord.

Now who can prepare such a prepared people? If we ourselves are not prepared. How can we prepare other people? We have to be prepared first. By the Lord.

And then in turn we can prepare others for the Lord. The bride has made herself ready. It is true.

That she was given. He was given the bright shiny white linen. Which is the righteousness of the things.

She is given. And yet she has made herself prepared. Ready for the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters. This should be the ministry of the effort making battle. And this I believe is the most important ministry.

At our time. May we be raised by the Lord. As a prepared people.

When the Lord shall come. He shall find the people ready for Him. And may we be that effort making vessel.

For God can use to prepare His people. For the Lord. I believe dear brothers and sisters.

We want the Lord to return. But. Are we ready for Him? Our Heavenly Father.

We do praise and thank Thee because. We know that it is Thy will. To change the time.

To bring in the King. And His Kingdom. The Lord.

We do feel that. Thou art calling for a vessel. An effort making vessel.

Whom Thou could use. To do that work. Lord we just humble ourselves before Thee.

We know that we are vessels of grace. And yet. Often times.

We do not know what grace is. Often times we. Rely upon our own.

Natural strength. Thinking that we can do. Things for Thee.

And O Lord we ask Thee to. To show us. What grace really is.

We want Thy grace to have more opportunity to operate. In our lives. And Lord we do desire that we may be a people.

Who respond to Thy grace with consecration. A life that is given to Thee. Acknowledging Thee as our head.

As our Lord. And we pray that the spirit of Elijah. Shall mock us out.

O Lord we cannot create it. It is only when we see Thee. It is only when Thou does reveal Thyself to us.

That we may be filled with the zeal of The Lord. O Lord may it devour us. That we may really be used of Thee.

To prepare a people for Thyself. O Lord when Thou shall return. May Thy bride be ready.

To give Thee all the praise and glory. In the name of our Lord Jesus.

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