

Thou Art My Prophet

by Steve Mays

The principle of greatness is being not double-minded, not bought by the world, and not an echo, and it requires a commitment to stand on your own and speak with God's authority.

Duration: 28:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 7:24-28, John 3:35, John 5:33

Topics: "Calling Of God"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays emphasizes the importance of having principles in order to achieve greatness and stand against the enemy. He uses the example of John the Baptist as a great messenger who had God's approval upon his life. Pastor Steve highlights the danger of compromising one's convictions and lifestyle, leading to a wishy-washy faith that is indistinguishable from the world. He encourages listeners to be single-minded and focused on the glory of God, in order to make a difference in the world and win souls for Christ.

Transcript

It's the 2010 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. I need to get rid of being wishy-washy. Either I'm in the light or I'm not, but you can't be in the middle.

Pastor Steve Mays shares how we can stand our ground for the Lord, today on Light of the Word. And when you're double-minded, I think God wants me, I'm not real sure. You're not going to do anything for the Kingdom of God.

But if I could get rid of being double-minded and be focused, I'll tell you, you could win a world for Christ. Do you remember how fun it was to build snowmen? After about an hour or so of rolling the snow and packing it tight, we then had our very own Frosty. Well, he was strong and thick and immovable.

But over the next few days, as the clouds moved out and the sun shined right through, our snowman turned into a slush man. Likewise, the faith that once was solid in our lives can go soft when the heat is on to compromise our convictions and lifestyle. Many are becoming so compromised that it's hard to tell the difference between them and the rest of the world.

That's what Pastor Steve calls a wishy-washy faith. And that's one of the areas he wants to help us improve upon today by way of a great example, John the Baptist. It's called, Thou Art My Prophet.

And it comes out of Steve's Dare to be Great series. Learn about that at lightoftheword.org. Now, here's Steve with today's lesson. So we turn to Luke chapter 7. Luke chapter 7. And we want to draw your attention this morning to verse 24 through 28.

24 through 28. And if you're taking notes, the principle of greatness. And last week, we looked at the life of Job, the principle of greatness part 1 in the Old Testament.

And this is the principle of greatness part 2 in the New Testament. And the reason why I chose these two men was because not only did people have great things to say about them, but God himself was the one who said, Have you noticed my servant Job? And this is what I think about him. And have you noticed my servant John the Baptist? Why did you go out into the wilderness? What did you expect to see? I'll tell you what you should have witnessed.

And so God now is bragging. And I think it would be really a cool thing if God could brag upon us. And he would say, This is my servant who has been faithful in the midst of some pretty difficult times.

And when God gives you that approval, not man, not yourself. But when you have done that work, Paul said, God, you know my conscience. In other words, I serve you.

When you know that you are right with God. When you believe that your life is just exactly where God wants you to be. You're growing, making mistakes, but you know that you're called, commissioned, and you believe Christ is coming.

Things are going to change. There are two great enemies to this principle of greatness. Two horrible things that we fight with all the time.

And one of those is that sin of selfishness. That sin of selfishness. It seems like when we were born, we constantly said, This is my toy.

And we see little children pulling toys away from other little kids. This is mine. Now who taught them that? And then you grow up and you say, This is my room.

Get out. This is my room. And then you get a little bit older.

This is my car. I'll drive it wherever I want. And then you finally graduate to being an adult.

And you say, This is my life, God. I'll do what I want. And the great danger of a selfish life is that it hurts so many people.

But it really stunts your growth. God has a difficult time using those who are selfish. Because God will not anoint your flesh.

God wants to anoint your spirit. So your flesh must die. So you must not hold on to things.

And the second thing that absolutely destroys really a minister, a church, a calling, a family, is insecurity. I have seen more marriages destroyed because of insecurity. So you assume the very worst.

And the crazy thing about insecurity is that you're so wrapped up in yourself, you can't see anything else. And we see that oftentimes. What am I going to wear? And what do people think? And what are people going to say? And if I do this or I get involved, no one's going to like me.

Well, first of all, we ought to be pleasing God. And secondly, we ought to be dying to ourself. And when you find a man or a woman who is used in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, they are always dying to who they are.

And they are always ready to minister. Jesus said of John the Baptist, There is not one greater born of women than this man John. And he had incredible principles.

And that's what I want to share with you. And one of the great things about really Jesus speaking about John is that he speaks about the power of his calling. He says in Luke chapter 7 verse 24, And when the messenger of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John.

What went you out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? Now the context is even better. When John left, some of the disciples and people were beginning to question John. They were beginning to say things about John.

And Jesus steps in and begins to say, Now wait a second, I know that you said one thing in his face, and now you're double-minded speaking another thing behind his back. But I'm going to tell you who this man really is. Now when I read that in the Bible, I want to listen very, very carefully.

Because when it's all said and done, I want God to vindicate my life. And I want God to stand behind it. And there was a driving force behind John, I got to tell you.

And very important, he absolutely believed he was called by God. And he also believed that he was commissioned by God. And he also believed that Christ was coming.

And when I know that I'm called, and I'm commissioned with a message, and I know Christ is coming, it's going to alter my behavior. Because I don't have a lot of time. So it's going to focus my life.

If a businessman could understand the call, if he could somehow have a message that he could communicate, and he would know that he only has eight hours every day to get the job done, that guy would be wealthy. But without principles, you're never going to be great. And without principles, you're never going to be able to stand against the enemy.

You need to have a principle. And one of those principles are very simply to have God's approval upon your life. And so we see here, he was a messenger.

Verse 25, did you go out to see a man clothed in soft clothing, or beautiful clothing from Macy? No. Verse 26, what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, much more than a prophet. This is he whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee.

For I say unto you, among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. But he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And one last verse, I just want to read it to you.

In John 5, 33, Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness unto the truth. Now listen very carefully. John 3, 35, He was a burning and a shining light.

And ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light. That's going to be the crust of the whole study. He was a burning and a shining light.

And right off the bat, I've got to tell you, If you want to shine, and I do believe people do, I think marriages really want to shine. I think every woman in this room wants to have a great romantic marriage, and every guy wants to have a great family and a great wife. I think every child wants to shine at school, to be a star, to be a football player.

I think every single person, single, whatever it is, you want to shine in what you do. So people see you, and hopefully they see God. But the second thing is the problem.

To shine, you have to burn. And that means that you need to get the mental picture in your mind of a candle. And first of all, you have to light that wick, which means something's going to catch on fire.

Something's going to start burning. And it's going to start melting the wax. And the more you trim that wick, the more it's going to burn that wax, the brighter you're going to shine.

Because there's nothing worse than when all of a sudden you have a candle that is too tall. Black smoke begins to come. And now you don't see the light.

You see the black smoke. And so you trim it. And your life is going to be trimmed, and you're going to be consumed.

So people that say, I want to shine, and they don't want to be consumed inside, they don't shine, they spark. But if you want to make a difference like John, or you want to make a difference like Job, or you want to be Elizabeth, or you want to be an Esther or a Ruth, then you're going to have to come to grips with one thing. You're going to die to who you are, and you're going to consume what you have.

And you're going to burn for one purpose, and that's the glory of God. Four things I want to share with you this morning. What made this man great? Number one, very simply, in verse 24, he was not double-minded.

He was not double-minded. Notice verse 24. What went you out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken in the wind.

And those reeds were about 8 to 10 feet long. They were about a quarter inch, a little bit wider. And they would be there in Angeti.

They'd be waving in the wind. And what Christ is saying is, why did you go out and look at John? Did you expect to see a man preaching and then pouting? Did you go out to see a man that was trusting and then doubting? What did you expect to see when you went out into a wilderness? A man who had a double mind and was unstable? Was kind of questioning the call of God upon his life? Or why he was out here? Or what he was doing? Nay. You went out and you saw a man who was absolutely called, commissioned, and knew that I was coming.

He was absolutely committed to what he was doing. There was no playing around in his life. And when I become stable, not double-minded, one moment here, next moment there.

One moment on fire, next moment mad. One moment loving, next moment screaming. One moment this, next moment that.

So your whole family is messed up. One moment at church, the next moment at work. In other words, when I become stable, and I understand what God wants for me as a husband or me as a pastor, then I

can really focus on what God's called me to do.

And that's to preach and to be an example. And so he says here, he was not double-minded. He was not flaky.

He was not afraid. And when I'm afraid, it's because I'm worried about what people think. But you take that away, and you take away everything else, and you put God in front of me, then I'm not afraid of nothing.

I can preach and I can teach and I can do what God's called me to do. And that's exactly what John did. He was not afraid to stand.

And he was not afraid to speak. And it was no accident that he was here. He was commissioned by God.

And that's the problem. We're not real sure we've been called by God. And we're not real sure Christ is coming.

And we're not real sure that we're commissioned by God. So we call ourselves church people or pew people. Listen, if you are in the fellowship, or you are a believer in Christ, then there is a calling on your life, and there is a commission that God wants you to do, and Christ is coming.

And the problem is that I see this that I want to do, and what God wants me to do, so I really don't do anything very well. I don't do Christianity very well. I don't do my family very well.

But if I could get rid of being double-minded and be focused, I'll tell you, you could win the world for Christ. He didn't go to pieces. In other words, he wasn't worried.

He didn't fall apart. And God could throw him in prison, and John went in prison, but he didn't fall apart. And John was eventually beheaded.

He didn't stop preaching. And he wasn't afraid to stand before a king and say, You are in adultery. You are in a serious error.

You are committing a horrible sin. Right in public, he preached against sin. In other words, nothing was holding this man back.

Why? Because he was focused. I need to get rid of this double standard. I need to get rid of being wishy-washy.

Either I'm in the light or I'm not, but you can't be in the middle. And when you're double-minded, I think God wants me, I'm not real sure. You're not going to do anything for the kingdom of God.

You've been called and commissioned, and God wants you to run with all your heart because Christ is coming. Number one rule of being great in principle is you have to deal with your mind and this double thing. Yes, you are saved.

Yes, there is a calling. Yes, this is what I want to do. Then do it with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul.

Number one. The second thing, he not only was not double-minded, he was not bought by the world. You could not buy this man.

This is a very important point. He was not bought. Notice verse 25.

But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in fine clothing. Now there's nothing wrong with a nice suit. There's nothing wrong with going shopping.

There's nothing wrong with having things. And there's nothing wrong with having money or even very, very successful. I want to say that up front.

But there is everything wrong with being caught up in how you look or what you drive or how you handle material things. They cannot occupy your mind. If God has blessed you great, then God has given to you the ability to help others and you need to do that.

He didn't give you all that money for yourself. He gave you all that money to take care of yourself and then turn around and win a world for God. In other words, it's important.

But that's not the point. The point is, he wasn't concerned about clothing. Oh, I can't go here because I don't have a dress.

Oh, I can't go there because I don't look good. Listen. Does God want you to go visit at that hospital? Go.

Does God want you to do something? Then do it. In other words, clothing was not an issue. And John didn't have a home.

He was exiled. He lived out in the desert. Now, why? Because he didn't have time.

He didn't even get into vacations. Why? Because Christ was coming. He had to win a generation for Christ.

He had to prepare a people out of sin. He had a job to do. And that was more important than material things in his life.

No doubt. He could have. So, you go out.

What did you see? A guy dressing. Fine clothing. No, you found a man clothed in goat skin.

Bushy hair, probably. He had one purpose. Repent, or you're going to hell.

He had one message. Christ is coming. And then he had one thing he had to say.

Behold, there is the Lamb of God. And he had one more thing to do. I must decrease.

He must increase. He knew exactly what he was doing. We don't know that.

I don't know why I'm here. I don't know what I want. I'm married.

I don't like it. I have kids. I don't know what to do with them.

You're married because you need to love them. You have children because you need to raise them. You're alive because you're an instrument of God.

I don't think so. I just want to go die. No.

You need to come alive. You've been dead long enough. Every one of you have been called by God.

He had a nation that he had to shake for God. He had a people that he had to go after. And he had a king that he had to share.

How do I wake up? Oh, I wonder what I'm going to do today. No. You wake up because there's a king wanting you to share.

Well, I just work a Taco Bell. Then you go and you shine for the glory of God. And you make tacos for the glory of God.

And those ought to be the best tacos in Southern California. I just work a Taco Bell and make them the best. You throw your heart into it.

You throw your life into whatever you do. Oh, give me a break. I'm never going to be better than this.

If you don't make tacos good, no. You have to start somewhere in life. In other words, you have to understand that it's not the material things.

It is the spiritual things. And then the material things do come. But he wasn't driven by material things.

He wasn't caught up. He could let them go. Homes were not important.

Things were not important. Clothing was not important. He was called.

Commissioned. Christ was coming. He was driven.

And I think it's probably a good message for our society today. Homes are falling off. Foreclosures.

Listen. Start praying. Ask God to put things in perspective.

And there was a determination, a discipline, a denial in his life. All I'm saying is, number one, don't be double-minded. Number two, do not be bought by this world.

I need this to do this. No. You've been called to minister.

And then material things will come. Or they might go. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Number three. Number three. Not an echo.

He was not an echo. Notice verse 26. What went you out to see? A prophet.

Yea, I say unto you, much more than a prophet. I like this verse. He wasn't speaking about, you know, Chuck or Greg or Billy Graham.

He didn't say, well, this is what Steve says. Or this is what, you know, Ross says. Or this is what so and so says.

He says, this is what God said. There comes a time that we are an echo. There comes a moment that we almost assume another person and we want to be like them.

And that's okay if they follow Christ. I know that I follow Chuck. And I know that we all kind of look to Billy Graham.

And we all kind of look to others. And those are good benchmarks. But there comes a time that I need to stand on my own.

This is my voice. This is my heart. This is my passion.

This is my conviction. And if we could do that. If wives could do that.

If husbands could do that. If business people could do that. If churches could do that.

It'd be so cool. In other words, we're not just working here. We have been called to come here.

And so our voice is important. Our commitment is important. Our dedication is important.

He was proclaiming. He was preaching. In other words, he was focused in a very powerful way.

And he was more than a prophet. He was sent by God. Now, do you know that you've been sent by God today? I don't think so.

I just got up and hopped in my car and just kind of drove here. No. You are here because this is where God wants you.

God wants you to hear. And where you end up this afternoon is where God wants you. Well, I don't think I'm ever going to be a prophet.

Listen. When you speak, do you speak with His authority? And when you love, do you love with His passion? In other words, is Christ in us? We live, we move, we have our being in Him as Christ coming through our lives. Oh no, I'm so defeated.

I think this is me speaking. I don't want to hear what you have to say. Tell me what God wants to say.

And boy, I'll tell you, it's hard. Because there's a lot of me that wants to talk, but we don't get anywhere. God will not anoint your flesh.

He wants to anoint your spirit. And when a businessman begins to have a voice, and when a congressman begins to have a voice, and when a church person begins to have a voice for God, I'll tell you, you can reach a school, you can reach a factory. I've got to have a voice.

It has to be my voice. It can't be somebody else's. And I had to grow into that in a very wonderful way.

He wants to anoint my voice, anoint my heart, and fill me with authority. You know, John Wesley was a great example. Britain was asleep, but John Wesley, he woke them up.

America's asleep. We need someone who's going to wake us up. Are we ready to be a voice not to compromise, not to be double-minded, not to be bought by the world, but to speak the word of God? It's a tremendous commitment.

We need to wake up America. And then also, lastly, not just a man. He wasn't just a man.

Verse 27 and 28. This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I will send my messenger. Oh, I'll tell you, he was a guy, but he was sent.

And there's a big difference. He was not just a guy. There was a calling.

Not just a girl. There was a calling. Not just a wife.

There's a calling. And all of a sudden, he shined. In other words, this man, I want to testify, he lived before my glory, and he lived for my kingdom.

He shined for my purposes, and he gave for my kingdom. My kingdom was more important, and my message was all important. And because of that, he didn't waver.

And because of that, he didn't have time to be distracted. And because of that, he had to learn my voice. And because of that, he had to come to a new point in his life.

And so he chose to burn. And what I like about that, it says, And we beheld his glory. Or we wanted to hang around as long as he was burning.

And it's so cool. You find somebody, you know, and I were talking about Alan Redpath. And we got to listen to him.

And I just think there's no one like him. He's gone. But we went to a retreat, a pastor's retreat.

Alan Redpath was preaching. And he talked about the crucified life. And he taught it in a way that Gail and I took a walk after he got done teaching.

We walked, I think, through the trees, and we prayed, God, help us to consecrate our life and to die for this thing. We were so moved that he was a voice. If we don't have a voice in this pope, but a voice in the churches, we're dead.

And I'll tell you one of the great things about God. He doesn't need the church. You can be the voice.

But you can't be double-minded. And you can't be distracted. And you got to speak for God.

And then you have to be willing to burn. Oh, I want to shine. Are you willing to be consumed? I think two great words on the principle of greatness is, number one, consecration.

Number two, crucifixion. You know, God, I'm dedicated. Not just Sunday morning.

I'm dedicated. This is real. So, God, help me consecrate my life and have fun.

Christianity should be a great thing. It's not bondage. You get rid of self, you can really have fun.

And second, help me to crucify myself so I never lose what you won. Two sins will stop you dead in your track. Selfishness will cause you to miss the call of God.

And insecurity will cause you and rob you of the greatest joy of your life. You ought never to be afraid of men. We live in the presence of the Almighty God.

Pastor Steve Mays, with good encouragement, to stand our ground for the Lord and be a bright light in a dark world. Good examples from his lesson called, Thou Art My Prophet. A good friend is defined as

someone who knows all about us and likes us anyway.

God is that friend to each and every one of us. He knows us quite well and loves us just the same. The question is, what are we bringing to this friendship? How are we showing the Lord our love for him? In Pastor Steve's popular series called, Dare to be Great, he shares tangible ways we can pursue and strengthen our friendship with the Heavenly Father.

Within the example of Abraham, you'll discover principles of greatness that you can begin to use. Principles that will bring you and the Lord real satisfaction. Dare to be Great also highlights principles in the greatness found in the lives of Job, the Apostle Paul, plus the insight featured today on John the Baptist.

This four-part series is available at lightoftheword.org. We enjoy making these resources available for a minimal charge, but we also want to invite you to support this ministry with a gift of any size. If you appreciate Pastor Steve's teaching, which I'm sure you do, why don't you help us keep this program on the air? Get in touch with your contribution and ask for the series called, Dare to be Great. lightoftheword.org or reach us at 800-339-WISE.

That's 800-339-W-I-S-E. Please join us back here again for more positive study from Steve's SOS Collection here on Light of the Word.

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