

# *Jesus > Me < Jesus*

*John 3:22-36*

**Introduction:** Story about store.

In school working Joe, job (Paint Store). Thought I did a good enough job. Got offered a better position back at the University where I was going to Seminary. Boss told me that my job was to find someone to replace myself. (he was looking too) Had a couple people I knew come in for interviews; One friend was kind of desperate to find work so I ran it by him for an option and he got it. There was a few weeks of overlap between me leaving and him training. One coworker mentioned that the best thing I ever did was bring \_\_\_\_\_ to work there. He was great. In my heart I was both glad & sad. My ego was a little hurt, but I was happy that I'd found a good fit for the position.

**Have you ever had something like that happen to you? If not, just stick around on this side of the dirt long enough... it will. One day someone will come along who is better.** Even if you're the best right now, one day you'll get older, slower, your mind won't be as sharp, you won't be able to burn the candle on both ends anymore, etc.

Q: How long did it take for you to realize that someone else is better than you at something?

Ex: A light bulb went off for me during Football Playoffs Sr. Year. We thought we were good, there were some guys on my team that thought they could go play college ball, some even division one. There was a guy on the other team named Quincy Wilson. (now WVU's Director of Football Operations)

- Undefeated State Champ
- His dad was a NFL linebacker for the Chicago Bears.
- Over 3,000 rushing yards that season.
- Went on to play in the NFL.

We ran the opening kickoff back and thought we had a chance. That was until they gave Quincy the ball...

That's when we all realized we were not the best. That we had been surpassed in every way. By the end of the game we were just happy to touch the guy.

But even he found out that he wasn't the best either.

- Standout at WVU.
- Drafted by the Atlanta Falcons. Played in preseason, cut and assigned to practice squad.
- Signed with the Cincinnati Bengals played until 2008.

No one is irreplaceable or on top forever. Even Michael Jordan...

*I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.*

(said for success, but reminder that there was a lot of times that he wasn't the best.)

One day kids will think of MJ the way some of us think on Jerry West and other "greats" from yesteryear.

No one is going to be in their prime forever, no one will always be the best. Won't keep mind, looks, body, title, personality, etc. Your popularity will wain. (some won't know who you are) Teens: You won't be the popular one for long.

How do you react when your replacement is standing next you you? How you respond shows a lot about you. It shows what's real in your life, what's authentic.

In this passage we see John's response and it shows a lot about him and his relationship with Jesus. It was real – authentic.

**How do we have a real/ authentic response that makes much of Jesus (loyal to Jesus) and less of ourselves? = Make Jesus Lord of your life.**

**FCF: We have a problem...**

The essence of our sinful nature is a bent on self. We are self-focused.

Our hearts deceive us. One common way that we put our kingdom above Jesus' is with regard to religion and religious views. We'll see in this passage that religious loyalties or allegiances are so deceptive that they trick those of us that cherish them deeply.

Just like we don't admit sins of envy, bitterness, jealousy, rivalry. We (like we'll see John the Baptists' followers ted to make religious practices an institution that we put above even Jesus. John followers had a hard time transitioning their loyalty to Jesus, and so do our religious, selfish hearts. He must become greater – we must become less.

**Text Set up:** Tell story of John the Baptist's followers and the setting of the text.

- ❖ Theme of Jesus being greater than Judaism.
- ❖ TimeLine issues:
  - The sequence makes sense theologically. Remember that's John's goal in writing a theological themed treatise.
  - Vs. 24 reveals that John is aware of the sequence of events and the synoptic timeline.
- ❖ Vs. 22 simply means that Jesus went out of the rural areas into the rural areas of Judaea. Amen for that!

- ❖ Vs. 26 There is a debate going on by some of John's disciples about the durability of their leader's popularity.
  - "everyone is going to him" little bit of exaggeration on their part.
  - These are the only verses that associate Jesus & his disciples with baptism.
    - Whatever it means, it shows that baptism was affirmed by Jesus.
- ❖ It's John's followers that are the ones that are upset and not John.
  - They want to protect the popularity of their teacher.
  - They wanted him to do something to affirm his own lessening klout.
    - Followers are often more zealous than their teachers. History shows us this over and over.
    - Prime **example: Calvinism and Arminianism.** The actual guys had a lot more in common than not. Read them, both vary devotional and edifying.
  - They don't even hear his response.
    - The fact that they promote his teachings even after his death and did not join with the Christians is proof of that.

Vs. 28 John the Baptist is not upset/ perturbed by the news of Jesus' rise in popularity. Why? Because Jesus was Lord of His life. **Jesus (loyal to Jesus) and less of ourselves? = Make Jesus Lord of your life.**

- He understood our Big Idea =

**Big Idea: It's not about you, It's not about me, It's all about Him.**

### *I. Realize everything anyone has is from God. Vs. 27*

- ◆ Carson "God's sovereignty stands hidden behind all human claims"
- ◆ 1 Cor 4:7 And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?
- ◆ This is a truth that we need to apply to all areas of life. John the Baptist is simply applying it to this one.
- ◆ Being loyal to Jesus/having Him as lord of our life means that we don't see things in our life as self-made, but as a gift.
  - Power, positions, possessions, gifts, intellect, heritage (how many picked where you were born?)

Illustration:

Turtle on the fence post. Draper Driving.

Transition: John's reaction to Jesus' growing popularity was not being annoyed. It was the opposite of how the world then would react, how religious people would react (Pharisees reaction to Jesus), and how you and I would react. Why? He knew everything he had was a gift from God.

## II. *Realize you're not God. Vs. 28*

- ◆ I'm not God.... & Neither are you.
- ◆ You're not the messiah. (no matter what your mom told you☺. You can't do anything you want to do. You can't be whatever you want to be)
- ◆ John the Baptist Explanation:
  - "friend who attends the bridegroom" equivalent to our "best man"
    - I'm just the Best Man.
    - He was happy being the friend of the groom.
      - > Are you ok with being the bridesmaid ladies?
  - God's people pictured as the "bride of God" was a theme in the OT:
    - Is 62:4-5; Jer 2:2, Hos 2:16-20
  - It is a continued theme applied to the church:
    - 2 Cor 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Rev 21:2,9; 22:17
- ◆ John has the complete Joy of the best man.  
He knew that he was sent to bear witness not to himself but to Christ.

**Argument:** But won't this type of living/attitude end up in misery and emptiness. I mean you gotta look out for yourself right?

- ◆ This brought John complete Joy (vs 29c)
  - His complete joy was knowing what his God-given mission was and seeing it completed.
- ◆ What is success? What brings ultimate satisfaction in life?
  - Finding God's will & Doing it!
  - Success in life is when you find God's will for you and do it!
  - How do you find God's will?
    - Do what you know is God's will today.
  - How do you know you are where God wants you to be? You are there right now!
    - Dr. Hay, "Keep your heart where your body is"
    - "wherever you are; be all there"

Transition: Being loyal to Jesus/having Jesus as Lord of your life means you are not self-oriented & you realize all you have is given from heaven.

## III. *Realize that Jesus is God and above everything. Vs 31-35*

- ◆ Ultimately Jesus is important and needs to be greater, not because of his teaching but because he comes directly from the heart of the God the father.
- ◆ Jesus is superior to anything on earth.

## Conclusion:

We are self focused: We are ok with being God centered so long as God is man centered.

We need to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus.

- “He must increase; I must decrease” Jn 3:30
  - (someone has said,) We want to make much of Jesus only if he is willing to make much of us.
  - We want to be God centered so long as God is us centered.
  - We need to play 2<sup>nd</sup> fiddle in a much grander show.
    - Your decrease/struggle is not primarily about you triumphing and coming through stronger. It is about making much of Jesus.
- Our story exist to display His story.

**Application:** Applications: (think through room)

### ◆ You

- Ok with not getting recognized for something. Ok with not being honored for service. Ok playing 2<sup>nd</sup> fiddle.
- Recognition
  - finances

### ◆ Me

- Having good preachers in that are better preachers than me. Billy Martin.

### ◆ Church

- Being more concerned about building Jesus' church than our own.
- Be more into His kingdom than our own.

**Jesus (loyal to Jesus) and less of ourselves? = Make Jesus Lord of your life.**

Being loyal to Jesus/having Jesus as Lord of your life means you are not self-oriented & you realize all you have is given from heaven.

**This is not a change that you can do yourself. You need supernatural change. You need Gospel change.**

For some making him Lord means salvation:

Vs. 36 ends the chapter. Asserting again as in 3:18 that belief in the Son/Logos (who is God) is what issues/gives eternal life.

### ◆ Just two alternatives.

- It is more than just looming judgment, it is already here.
  - People without Jesus are oriented to sin.
  - The way of escape from this present reality for you is to believe on the Son.
  - Not believing on Jesus is not to be condemned; but to continue in your condemnation.

- Carson “God’s wrath is not some impersonal principle of retribution, but the personal response of a holy God who comes to his own world, sadly fallen into rebellion, and finds few who want anything to do with him.”
- Believers already enjoy the eternal life that will be brought to consummation with our resurrected bodies.
  - This present reality of salvation should give you a wonderful sense of assurance.
- ◆ Just two choices: You can’t straddle the fence with God. “Either you’re on the elevator or you’re not”

**Call to Action:**

“There are just two choices on the Shelf – Pleasing God or pleasing self”

**Memorable Statement:** **It’s not about you, It’s not about me, It’s all about Him.**