

What is your gaze upon?

The Gaze and Exclamation of John

John 1:29-37

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²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Here in our passage in the Gospel of John, we see John the Baptist looking at Jesus. He is on a mission from God. His mission - to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. The thing with John the Baptist though is that he does not know how Jesus looks like. He will have to figure that out. But John was given specific instructions from God. *“He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain..”*.

So when Jesus finally arrives, John the Baptist saw Jesus and what did he say? *“Behold, the Lamb of God”*.

Dear friends, what is your gaze upon?

When John the Baptist looked on Jesus, he could not help but burst into delight.

And when you gaze upon Jesus, wonderful things happen in your soul. You are filled with joy. Your joy becomes full. Others will start seeing and follow Jesus.

Before we look at the passage, allow me to take you back to the Gospel of John with a short introduction. We will be spending a few weeks in this Gospel. We’ll be looking at passages I may have skipped earlier this year.

Unlike the Gospel of Matthew and Luke, the Gospel of John tells us rather quickly about the ministry of John the Baptist. John was calling for *repentance* and was *baptizing* many people. And as people

flocked to John, the religious leaders wanted to know who he was. They asked him, “Are you the Christ, are you Elijah, are you the Prophet?”. And you know John said, “*I am a voice crying in the desert*”.

Now, this time in history is about thirty years after the birth of Jesus. The people of Israel had suffered much under many rulers and they are under Roman rule. When John the Baptist appeared on the scene, they were eagerly awaiting for a Messiah. A Savior who would liberate them from their political enemies. They were promised that a Messiah would come. They had age old prophecies to count on. And it had been four hundred since a prophet had arrived on the scene. And now John the Baptist appeared to be a powerful voice.

The passage for our consideration today begins with verse twenty-nine this way – “the next day”. What happened the previous day?

John the Baptist had finished responding to those who wanted to know his identity.

And John himself denies he is *not* the Christ, *not* Elijah *and* not the prophet. He is only a voice but a powerful and a formidable voice that others were paying attention to.

And how does John describe Jesus?

²⁶ *John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”* John 1:26-27

You see what John says here? Yes, John is a messenger of God. But compared to Jesus, he is not even worthy to tie the shoe laces of Jesus.

And John tells us a lot more about Jesus. So before we look at John’s exclamation in verse 29, let’s look at verses *thirty* through *thirty-four*. I am going through these verses because whatever John describes in thirty through thirty-four are chronologically before verse 29.

³⁰ *This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”*

I have at least three observations that John wanted this audience to know.

1. Jesus is divine and human at the same time.

What does John mean when he says, “*After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me*”? John the Baptist was born before Jesus was born. So he could not mean that Jesus is older in that sense. What John means is found in the way he writes about Jesus. That phrase “*he was before me*” is very important. It means Jesus was the Son of God simply “was”. Meaning he existed in divine form before he took on human form. This is to contrast with things that were made. All things were made, were created, came into existence, came into being through him. The stars, the moon, the sun, the cosmic and celestial objects, and those living beings all of them “came into existence” through him. However, the language for Jesus or the Word or the Son of God never has the preposition “made” or “came into existence”. He simply *was*. John is saying that Jesus is superior to him in every way and yet in his humanity Jesus is just like you and I.

Let me try and explain what I said.

Who among you has never lied, never envied, never lusted, never got angry, never sinned? No one.

Well, Jesus never sinned.

And yet who among you who needs food to survive, needs a rest, needs air to breathe, needs something to keep yourself warm? That is our humanity. And Jesus was human just like you and I.

Jesus was tempted like everybody else. Yet, He never sinned. Jesus did NOT have the smallest trace of greed, wickedness, deceit, envy, slander, pride, or foolishness. And yet as a human being, he became tired, he experienced a need for rest, ate and dined and did what we do as humans. He is truly human and identifies with all humanity.

So just as John the Baptist he was a voice, you have a voice too. And God calls you to be a witness for him as well. So when we present Jesus to others, present him as not just as human but divine and human. Both as God and Man. Present him as sinless and holy but present him also as relatable to others.

2. Jesus is God’s Revelation to the world.

Jesus was publicly revealed to Israel with his baptism. John has had the privilege to baptize Jesus. And God’s revelation didn’t end with Israel. Jesus is the Savior of the world. What we also see is that John the Baptist did not know Jesus personally. But John the Baptist received a revelation from God so that he could identify Jesus. Many people came to be baptized by John but there was one man who John would need to identify. That man was the one “*whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he*” verse 33. So as John kept baptizing, he came to a time when the heavens tore and a voice of thunder came from heaven. And that voice said, “*This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*”. Luke 3:22

So many people are curious about God. They perhaps want to know God and want to hear from God. God has already spoken.

Hebrews chapter 1 verse 1 *“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son”*.

Do you know how the last book of the Bible ends? *“He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”* Revelation 22:20. It is Jesus who speaks and is still speaking through his word.

So when we present Jesus to others, we present him as the living word of God. The word that is able to living and active. The word that is able to separate what is holy is unholy.

3. Jesus gives and fills you.

So not only is Jesus the unique God-Man, the divine-human who shared his humanity, Jesus is also the giver and filler with his divine power. What a great offer! When we present Jesus others, do you present him as someone who just does not give but baptizes you. This word literally means *fill* or *immerse*.

In verse 34, John says, *“And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”*

What the Holy Spirit does is very unique – the Holy Spirit convicts and exposes us to the holiness of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in us and comforts us. And the Holy Spirit helps bear witness about Jesus. The Holy Spirit is Holy. If someone claims to be led by the Holy Spirit but a desire for holiness is far from them, it very likely not the Holy Spirit.

³⁸ *Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”* ³⁹ *Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* John 7:38-39

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” John 8:26-27

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit even when he was in his mother’s womb. And he was a powerful witness. You can be a powerful witness too. Jesus wants to fill you and immerse you so that you can be a witness too.

So with all this revelation that John the Baptist received, he sees Jesus and what does he say?

Look at verse twenty-nine.

²⁹ *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*

Here we see John's gaze and exclamation.

According to the Cambridge dictionary, an exclamation is a word that expresses sudden pain, surprise, anger, excitement, happiness, or other emotion: "Ouch," "hey," and "wow" are exclamations.

According to the Collins dictionary, an exclamation is a sound, word, or sentence that is spoken suddenly, loudly, or emphatically and that expresses excitement, admiration, shock, or anger.

What does John mean?

John says Jesus is the like a gentle lamb that was led to the slaughter. Why? To take away the sin of the world. Jesus is a debt eraser. That debt is your sin. And there is no sin in the world that Jesus cannot erase. This a Savior better than any political leader or national leader. This is a Savior who takes your sin away. Forgets it. Cancels it. When you put your trust in this Lamb, this Lamb is the most gentle. But those who continue to reject this Lamb, this Lamb will be Judge one day.

So, John the Baptist gazes on Jesus and witnesses. But something happens the next day. His witness becomes even more powerful.

Look at verses 35 through 37.

³⁵ *The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.*

If you see in verse 35, these two disciples are disciples of John the Baptist. Andrew is one of these two disciples. John pointed them to Jesus. And they followed Jesus.

John the Baptist had his gaze on Jesus. And when his gaze was on Jesus, he exclaimed in joy. Behold the Lamb of God.

We must gaze at Jesus too. And we must tell that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

You know the famous words of John the Baptist. I must decrease. He must increase.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: **What is gaze upon?** John 1:29-37

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What did John the Baptist know and believe about Jesus?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. How did John the Baptist witness about Jesus when he saw him? In what way has Jesus impacted you?
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: In what way can you imitate John the Baptist to witness for Jesus?