

**Lesson 110.5:** Jesus' Best Man

**Scripture:** John 3:22-35

**Memory Verse:** He must become greater, I must become less. John 3:30

Jesus and John had an amazing friendship, one that began even before they were born. They were more than just cousins; they shared a divine mission, one ordained by God, and foretold long before they were born, to change the course of history.

When Mary visited John's mother Elizabeth, John leapt for joy, even before he was born, to be near Jesus. John grew into a fiery prophet in the wilderness, calling people to repentance and preparing the way for the Messiah. But John never saw himself as the center of attention. He repeatedly pointed to the one who was coming, saying, *"After me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry"* (Matthew 3:11).

When Jesus asked John to baptize him John admitted, *"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"* But Jesus insisted, *"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15). Humbly, John obeyed. As Jesus rose from the water, the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove, resting on Him. A voice from heaven declared, *"This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17). In that moment, John's role as the forerunner of the Messiah was fulfilled.

Even after Jesus began His ministry, John remained steadfast in pointing others to Him. When he saw Jesus passing by one day, he exclaimed to his disciples, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29). John understood Jesus' mission better than anyone else. He described his own joy as that of the friend of the bridegroom, rejoicing at the bridegroom's voice. *"He must become greater; I must become less,"* John said, demonstrating his humility and devotion (John 3:30).

But John's fearless preaching eventually landed him in prison. He had openly condemned Herod for taking his brother's wife, and Herod, unwilling to tolerate such boldness, had him arrested. From his prison cell, John heard about the works Jesus was doing and sent his disciples to ask, *"Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"* (Luke 7:19). Perhaps it was doubt, or perhaps it was a longing for reassurance in his darkest moments.

Jesus' response was full of compassion. He told John's disciples, *"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me"* (Luke 7:22-23). With these words, Jesus reminded John of the fulfillment of prophecies, assuring him that everything was unfolding according to God's plan.

Jesus didn't stop there. He turned to the crowd and spoke of John with great honor, saying, *"Among those born of women there is no one greater than John"* (Luke 7:28). These words, spoken publicly, affirmed Jesus' great love for John.

The friendship between Jesus and John remind us of the beauty of relationships rooted in a shared purpose, pointing always to something greater than themselves. It was a bond born of heaven and carried out with love and courage on earth.