

Introduction

- <https://people.com/sailor-knows-he-might-die-on-solo-arctic-ocean-mission-exclusive-12023367> - Details of rigorous journey - especially danger of sleeping for too long because of potential to hit ice.
- Before you attempt something like this, there are two things you had better understand: Who am I? And what do I need? Am I actually capable of doing this? Do I have the experience? And what will I need to survive—what boat, equipment, supplies, navigation, preparation? He had everything he needed... but he forgot his pants.
- Do you know who you are? We've all asked the question, "Who am I?" We spend much time pursuing to know our authentic self. How do you know who you are? The world would tell you to about your family of origin, the culture you grew up in, the circumstances that have shaped your life, your values, your abilities, your passions.
- Not wrong to consider those things, but as followers of Jesus, we've discovered that you can't really know who you are until you know who Jesus is. His identity shapes your identity.
- The most significant question you'll ask in life is not, "Who am I?" but, "Who is God?"
- The Bible begins NOT with answering the question, "Who are you?" But, "Who is God?" In the beginning, God created...
- John starts His Gospel with the identity of Jesus, and in the beginning of John's Gospel we're introduced to John the Baptist, a witness to the

identity of Jesus. What we learn about John the Baptist is that he's confident in who he is because he's confident in who Jesus is.

- Two simple truths from this passage: You understand who you are when you understand who Jesus is. And, you understand what you need when you understand who Jesus is.

You understand who you are when you understand who Jesus is.

- Each Gospel writer tells us about John the Baptist. The synoptic Gospels give a lot of details about the baptism of Jesus. John gives us John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus.
- John went around the region of the Jordan River preaching that the Kingdom of God was at hand. He called people to repent of their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River. ([Luke 3:3](#)). Many responded
- John's in the wilderness, baptizing people in the Jordan. Think about Israel's history. . God had led His people through the wilderness and across the Jordan into the Promised Land. But Israel repeatedly failed to trust God and live as His people. Now John is standing in the wilderness, at the Jordan, calling God's people to come back to the wilderness and repent because God's promised King is coming. It's as if John is saying, "It's time to begin again. Prepare yourselves for His Messiah."
- vs. 19-20 Religious leaders want to know John's identity. Was he the Messiah? "Who are you?" John's immediate response: "I'm not the Messiah."
- vs. 21 - "Are you Elijah?" [Mal. 4:5-6](#) prophesied about the return of Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Elijah had been taken, so many anticipated his return. John the Baptist's appearance and manner resembled Elijah, but he was not the physical return of Elijah.

- vs. 21 - “Are you the Prophet?” In [Deuteronomy 18:15-18](#), Moses prophesied that God would raise up a prophet similar to himself. John denied it. Jesus is the fulfillment of [Deut. 18:15-18](#).
- vs. 22 -23 “Then, who are you?” Religious leaders need an answer. John answers by quoting [Isaiah 40:3](#). “I’m just a voice crying in the wilderness.”
- [Isaiah 40](#) opens with a promise of comfort. John is the one prophesied about as the forerunner to the Messiah who would announce the redemptive work of the Messiah - the One who would bring comfort.
- John knows who God created him to be - a voice - crying out and pointing people to the true King. John is not the main event. He’s just the herald announcing what’s to come. John knows who he is because he knows who Jesus is.
- vs. 24-28 - “Why do you baptize?” John baptized with water preparing people for the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.
- John acknowledges the greatness of the Messiah, and John acknowledges his unworthiness to even untie the straps on Jesus’ sandals. John is humble because he knows that his role is not about him, but about the Messiah.
- Two questions to ask yourself:
- **Will you look within to discover who you are?** The question to John: “Who are you?” The question we’re all trying to answer about ourselves, “Who am I?” Culture tells you to look within yourself to discover who you are. What makes you happy? What do you desire? What do you want? What are you passionate about? What feels true to you?
- But, your heart is fickle and filled with sin. Should you really try to build your life on looking inside of yourself and thinking about what you want?

- **Or, will you look toward Jesus to discover who God saved you to be?** The world says, “Look within.” The Gospel of John says, “Look to Him.” You don't create your identity by looking within to discover your true self. You receive a new identity by receiving Christ. John has already told us that everyone who receives Jesus is given the right to become a child of God.
- When you're focused on knowing who Jesus is, you'll discover who you are. You are made in His image, saved by Him for His purpose. Life is not about you. When life is not about you, you can serve even if you're not noticed. You can celebrate the accomplishments of others even when you aren't celebrated. You can obey the Lord even when others question your obedience. You can be a voice instead of needing to be the main event.
- Some of you are exhausted trying to prove who you are. If you are a follower of Jesus, let me remind you that there's great freedom in simply being who God has saved you to be. Let me also remind you that you are not what you accomplish. You are not what people think about you. You are not how well your children turn out. Your value is not determined by how fit or attractive you are. You are not your past. You are not what happened to you. You are a child of God to be used by Him for His glory. That's freeing!

You understand what you need when you understand who Jesus is.

- vs. 29 - John sees Jesus and testifies about Jesus. In John's Gospel, John has already baptized Jesus.
- When Jesus comes near: “The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John does not say, “The Son of God, the Messiah of God, or Savior of God's people...” All of those statements would have been correct, but John identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God.

- In Israel, lambs die. Lambs are offered as a sacrifice. At the Passover, the blood of the lamb was applied to the doorposts of homes so the Hebrews could be saved from Egypt. Lambs were sacrificed at the temple as part of the daily sacrifices.
- Now, standing before John and the crowd was the true Lamb of God, the One sent by God to be the once and for all sacrifice for sins - the One prophesied about in [Isaiah 53](#).
- Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus takes away sin by taking sin upon himself ([Isaiah 53:6, 12](#)). Jesus doesn't merely tell us to stop sinning. he deals with our sin by bearing the judgment that we deserve so our guilt can be removed. He takes away our guilt. He takes away the punishment we deserve.
- Jesus is NOT the Messiah who came to merely restore Israel as a prominent nation. His mission was much more significant. He came to die as a sacrifice for all who would believe, Jew and Gentile alike.
- John knows who Jesus is, and John also know what he and every other person needs - a sacrifice that would once and for all atone for the sins of humanity.
- vs. 30 - John knows who Jesus is. Jesus existed before John. Jesus ranks ahead of John because Jesus is God.
- vs. 31 and 33 - John isn't saying that he had never encountered Jesus before. Their families were related. He's saying that he didn't recognize Jesus in His messianic identity until God gave him the promised sign. Jesus' identity as the Messiah sent from God confirmed as the heavens opened up, the Spirit descended, and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased" ([Luke 3:22](#)).
- Why did John baptize Jesus in the Jordan River if Jesus had not sins to repent of? John not giving all the details, but all four Gospels help us to understand Jesus' baptism:

- Validates the ministry of John. Jesus approves of John's message.
- To show us that He's one of us. Jesus not guilty, but at His baptism, He steps into the water to identify with the people He came to die for.
- To reveal His identity. Heavens open up, Spirit descends and rests on Jesus. Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. (This is most important for John's Gospel.)
- When you are baptized, you are identifying with Jesus. You're saying that His death and resurrection apply to you. You're dead to the old life, and alive to Christ.
- vs. 32 - Spirit rested on Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes on the One who is anointed by the Father. [Isaiah 11:2](#) - prophecy of a coming King of the line of David who the Spirit who rest upon. Also, [Isaiah 42:1](#) and [Isaiah 61:1](#) speak of the Spirit being upon God's Messiah.
- Rested = remained on Jesus permanently. Unlike the OT, where the Spirit would temporarily come upon people for a specific purpose, God's Spirit remained on Jesus. And the One whom the Spirit rests upon, gives those who believe His Spirit. He baptizes believers in the Spirit.
- vs. 31 - John knows there's a huge difference between him and Jesus. John's baptism symbolized cleansing. But, only Jesus can actually make you new by taking away your sins and giving you His Spirit.
- Jesus is the Son of God, the Lamb of God, and when you see Him for who He is, you'll see what you need. You need Jesus to take away your guilt, and you need Jesus to give you the power to put sinful struggles to death in your life.
- Do you know what you really need? Two questions to consider:
- **How often do you focus on the wrong problems?** If I asked you what the biggest problem in your life is right now, what would you say? Your finances? Your health? Your marriage? Your loneliness? Your anxiety?

Those are all real problems, but have you ever stopped to consider the problem of sin in your life and how your sin affects so much of your life? If Jesus fixed all the problems you have but didn't deal with your sin, you would be on your way to eternity apart from the grace of God.

- You're greatest need isn't for Jesus to make your life easier. Your greatest need is for Jesus to make you right with God, and He does that because He is the Lamb of God who takes away the penalty of your sin and places His Spirit in you to give you the power to put sin to death.
- Many of us are constantly saying, "If God would..." If God would fix my marriage, finances, etc. What if you began saying, "God, will you give me the strength to go to war against my sin by your Spirit?" How would putting sin to death change the way you view your marriage, your finances, parenting, etc.? What if you started asking God to show you your sin and asked Him to make you more like Jesus? What if you asked Him to change you more than you ask Him to change your circumstances?
- **How often do you look for change in the wrong place?** The power for transformation and change is not in you, it's in Him! It's not in trying harder, becoming more disciplined, reading the right books, listening to another podcast, or developing a better routine. It's in depending on the One who baptizes us in His Spirit.
- That doesn't mean you do nothing. It means you quit trying in your own strength. You trust God's work in you as you obey Him.
- You pray for His help. You saturate your mind with the Word. You obey what He has commanded. You put sin to death. You pursue the fruit of the Spirit. In all of it, you trust that God is at work in you as you obey Him.
- Where is God calling you to obey Him?

- Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and gives us His Spirit. That's what we need!
- Have you received what you need? Have you placed your faith in the Lamb of God who went to the cross to die for you only to rise from the dead three days later so that your sins could be forgiven and so you could be given the gift of life? This morning, turn from your sins and turn to Christ by faith.