

He Must Increase – Part II Continued
John 3:30-36
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...us this morning, this wonderful music that God has blessed us with today. I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to John 3. This morning will be our third message from this passage. The extended passage is John 3:22-36, which really we've looked at under kind of one theme which is really answering the question that we posed a couple of weeks ago: How do you recognize a spiritually vital and healthy ministry? What distinguishes truly, faithful, Gospel ministry? What marks a ministry that's on the right track, moving in the right direction? We've seen that John the Baptist is here before us in these 15 verses that present him really as a paradigm, as a model to emulate, as an example to follow. "Do whatever ministry you do like him." That's what this text seems to be calling us to do.

We saw the first message a couple of weeks ago, that the character of faithful, Gospel ministry is exhibited in the way John responds to the question in Verses 27-30. Remember his disciples come to him and say, "Hey, everyone is leaving you now and going after that One Whom you testified about," speaking of Jesus without using His name. John exhibits the character of faithful, Gospel ministry in the way he responds and the things that he exhibits in his life and his ministry.

Then last time, we turned in Verses 31-36 to the content of faithful, Gospel ministry. What is, when you distill it down, any teaching or preaching ministry, or Bible study ministry, or counseling ministry, or just discipling of our children? When you distill it down, what is left? What is the essence, the essential nature of the teaching? What's the content? When you take away all of the other things, what's the essential content? Well we see in John's ministry that the content of his ministry was the supremacy of Jesus Christ, that He exhibits what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:5:

2 Corinthians 4:5 ~ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ...

John preached Jesus Christ, and he didn't preach a small Christ, he preached a high and a lofty, a majestic and resplendent Savior. That's really the test of, the acid test as it were, as to whether we're on the right track. Is Christ being lifted up? I shared a quote and I want to read it again because to me it's such a challenge to my own heart and life in ministry. Bishop J.C. Ryle:

Would we know whether a minister is sound in the faith and deserving of our confidence as a teacher, we have only to ask a simple question: Where is Christ in his teaching? Would we know whether we ourselves are receiving benefit from the preaching we attend? Let us ask whether its effect is to magnify Christ in our esteem. A minister who is really doing us good will make us think more of Jesus every year we live.

May God help us all be like that. That we would make everyone we're around think of Jesus more every year they live. That ought to be our heartbeat any time we're fellowshiping together. I mean we're going to talk about the things of life and it's okay to talk about even things like the Braves and stuff like that. That's part of life. But overall, are we wanting to talk about Jesus and hoping the conversation can turn so we can talk about Christ? That's where we need to be moving. That's where we need to be focusing because we all need, every one of us needs to be celebrating Jesus more, and hearing about Him more. There is something about that communion of saints. It's wonderful ourselves, we have to seek Him alone, and in our prayer closets with the Word open, to seek the Lord every time we go to the Scripture, but there is something powerful about the communion of the saints.

Colossians 3:16 ~ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...

Remember that's a plural, 'you all'. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you (plural) richly." It dwells in us as we share, and admonish, and encourage one another, and we talk about Him. So that's the acid test of ministry.

What is a particular ministry, what does a person say about Jesus? How much is He the focus? Is He in any way auxiliary, or secondary, or even worse, only merely an afterthought? Or is the glory and majesty of Christ the lifeblood, or the aim, the target that is always somehow around the corner in view? John the Baptist's example was he said, "He must increase, I must decrease." Let's read Verses 30-36, we'll pick up the end of his first comments to his disciples, and then Verses 31-36. Verse 30:

John 3:30-36 ~ He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. 34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives

the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. 36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank You for Your Word, and as we come to it this morning, Lord, we're mindful of our great need for grace. We need Your grace every day, and we need it every time we open Your Word so that we might see what You want us to see. Open our eyes, open our hearts, and let us see wonderful things from Your law. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

The message, the distilled essence of all we communicate ought to be like John the Baptist, the supremacy of Christ. It's interesting when you look at the flow of John's discussion with his disciples which we have from Verse 27 to Verse 36. It's kind of a climax in some sense, his answer to their issue, remember? "Hey, Jesus is getting the crowds. There's a problem, John." That's basically what they're saying and John's final answer is, "No, He must increase. I must decrease. Don't you understand? He's the Bridegroom. I'm only the friend of the Bridegroom. So the Bride has to go to the Bridegroom. He must increase. I must decrease." What you have from Verses 31-36 is basically the reasons why Jesus must increase and John must decrease. We began to look at four reasons last Sunday. There are four reasons that Jesus must increase, that in one phrase, the reason Jesus must increase is because He is supreme. The supremacy of Christ is his focus here, but there are really four ways that John highlights Jesus' supremacy in these six verses, from Verses 31-36.

We saw last time that Jesus is supreme in His Person. The supremacy of His Person was the first thing we looked at. He is from above and therefore above all. He's not of the earth like everyone else. He is divine, John is saying. We also saw the supremacy of His Word. That He speaks the very words of God. That though every prophet that's ever spoken is given the words of God, they give what they're handed basically for a time, and the Spirit comes upon them, and they speak the words of God. But other times, if you talk to Isaiah, he wasn't speaking the words of God, just when the Spirit came upon him. But Jesus always speaks the words of God. So the Word is Supreme. The supremacy of His Word.

Now we come to the last two reasons for His supremacy, the last two expressions of His supremacy. The first we're going to look at this morning. The first point today, the third point overall, is the supremacy of His anointing.

1) The Supremacy of His Anointing:

Verse 34, the second half:

John 3:34 ~ ...for He gives the Spirit without measure.

That's the key clause we want to look at considering the supremacy of His anointing. ...***He gives the Spirit without measure.***

Now, a question we have to first address is there is some dispute over who is the subject of that sentence, 'He gives the Spirit...' The King James says, "God gives the Spirit without measure." It actually says up in the text. The NIV follows the lead of the King James here and says, "God gives the Spirit without measure." There is a textual issue, some manuscripts have the word 'God' there, some just have 'He gives...'. Then, even after you settle the textual issue, if you decide that it says 'He'. Who is He? You have to interpret, as always, you look at the context, look at the flow of the passage. I think when you look at the flow of the passage you see that the emphasis in this passage is that God does give the Spirit to Christ. It's not just that Jesus gives the Spirit to us, which is going to happen, and which is an important principle that John is going to spend a lot of time on. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a main doctrine in the Gospel of John, but what he's focusing on here is that God the Father gives the Spirit to Jesus without measure. Later on Jesus gives it to us without measure. That's Pentecost, but the focus here, and why do we think that's the focus here? Well, look at the flow. Remember he's trying to explain why Jesus is supreme. The reason Jesus is above everybody else is because the Father has given Him the Spirit without measure.

Look with me back at John 1:31. These are John the Baptist's words from earlier in the Gospel here. In Verse 30 actually, He says:

John 1:30 ~ This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'

The supremacy of Christ, do you see that? "He has a higher rank than me because He existed before me." Look at Verses 31-34:

John 1:31-34 ~ I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.” 32 John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

I did not recognize Him... He’s saying, “Look, remember He’s my second cousin.” Do you remember the story of Luke? He tells us about John the Baptist’s birth, and Mary and her cousin Elizabeth? They’re both the sons. Jesus, the Son of Mary. John the Baptist is the son of Elizabeth. So that makes them, in my reckoning, second cousins. I think that’s right. It gets complicated. First cousin, once removed. Second cousin, three times removed. I don’t know. You can get really interesting on that. Cousin is easy, isn’t it? My cousin. Well, they’re cousins, but apparently he never saw Jesus in the flesh. His mother, living near Jerusalem, and his dad being a priest, Zechariah, John lived around Jerusalem, and Jesus lived where? Up in Nazareth, way up North. They apparently didn’t have the family reunions like some of us do, and so the first time he saw Jesus was when Jesus came to the Jordan to be baptized. He said, *I did not recognize Him...* In fact, he emphasizes that because he says it twice in this passage. In Verse 33 he says it again, *I did not recognize Him...* He wants you to know, “I didn’t know Him according to the flesh. How did I recognize that He is the Christ? What was it that distinguished Him?” Look at Verse 32.

John 1:32-34 ~ John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’

Do you see that? How does John know He is supreme? He is supreme in that He is like no other man before Him. The Spirit of God comes upon Him and remains upon Him. Every great man of God in the Old Testament that was used of the Lord, the Spirit of God worked through them, but the Spirit of the Lord came and went. But Jesus is unique in that the Spirit comes and remains. Now having seen that, then you go back over to Chapter 3 in Verse 34, “For He gives the Spirit without measure.” Remember, John is trying to show the supremacy of Jesus here. “The reason He must increase is because He has the Spirit without measure!” This

is what sets Him apart from every other man. It makes Him completely unique. His possession of the Spirit is entirely unprecedented. No man ever possessed the Spirit the way Jesus had the Spirit. That's the essential meaning here.

Now what does this mean? I said the supremacy of His anointing. He's anointed with the Holy Spirit in an unprecedented way. The Holy Spirit is upon Him. God has placed the Spirit upon Him in a completely unique, completely surpassing way. No one has ever been anointed with the Spirit like Jesus. That is what John is saying. Now one of the questions that should come to you, or at least I think should come, maybe it shouldn't come, maybe it won't come, is why does Jesus need the Spirit? I think that's a good question anyway, isn't it? I mean John just said He's from above. John has made clear, "He existed before me. Even though I was born six months before Him, He existed before me because He's from eternity. I know it. He's from above. He's seen what's up there in Heaven. He's come down from Heaven." But here he says that another reason He's supreme is not just because of His intrinsic deity that he said, the supremacy of His being, the supremacy of His Word, but the supremacy of His anointing. He is supreme because He is anointed like nobody else. Why did He need an anointing? Well the answer is that Jesus, though fully God, became fully man, and He entered into the weakness of our frail humanity. "He came in the likeness of sinful flesh," Paul says. His flesh was not in and of itself fallen of course, that's why the virgin birth, but He came in frail humanity and listen, He lived a life of obedience though the eternal God is inhabiting flesh, He lived as a man. He did not use His own power.

A good illustration of this is the temptation of Jesus. What's the first temptation that satan gave to Jesus? Remember Jesus has been fasting for 40 days? The text tells us He's hungry. He's done with His fasting and He's ready to head back out, but He knows that the tempter is going to be there. So the tempter comes and he says, "If You are the Son of God," what? "Turn these stones into bread." What was satan tempting Jesus to do? He was tempting Jesus to use His own intrinsic power that had formed the world that was even then upholding all things by the Word of His power. He was asking the Divine Son to superimpose His power and alleviate the suffering of the human man. Even though it's one person, it's mysterious, it's mind-blowing but this is what was happening. "Turn these stones into bread if You're the Son of God." satan knew He was the Son of God. We talked about last time how every time the demons saw Him coming they went into panic. They knew Him, they recognized Him. They saw behind the veil of human flesh, and satan in his arrogance and his wickedness says, "If You are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." Turn aside from the mission of living as man. What did Jesus say? He quoted Deuteronomy 8, I believe it was Verse 3, and He said, what

did He say? “Man,” listen to that. “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” He’s saying, “I am true man. I am living as a man. You will not set me off the course.”

So the Divine Son intrinsically infinite, as John has told us already, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This Word became flesh,” but when He becomes flesh He enters into our flesh. He takes our weakness, and He’s tempted in every way, yet without sin because that is the mission. When He does His miracles, He does His miracles as the most Spirit-filled man that’s ever lived. He was mighty in the Spirit! What a Savior! That’s Who Christ is and that’s what John is saying. He is supreme. Not just because of His eternal being that He’s God. He’s supreme not just because of His amazing Word, He’s supreme because of His amazing anointing. The Spirit is upon Him. The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity is working in Him in His dependence.

What does it mean? This anointing? Let’s think about that a little bit to help us understand the importance of this, the anointing. The word ‘*Messiah*’ comes from ‘*Mashiach*’ which means ‘*to anoint*’. The word ‘*Christos*’, a Greek word, has the same meaning. It comes from a word that means ‘*to anoint, to rub oil on, to pour oil on with the idea of ceremonial significance*’. In the Old Testament, the Lord had the priests, and the kings, and the prophets anointed. Sometimes actually, physically anointed with the oil, but the oil wasn’t magic, it just represented something. It meant, when God said, “Set apart David as king,” they anointed him. Samuel anointed him. Remember he said, “Which one am I supposed to anoint? That guy right there looks good. The tall one.” “No, it’s not him. No, it’s not him. No, it’s not him.” He went all the way through the seven sons of Jesse, remember? “Do you have any more sons? I was told to come to your house.” “Yeah, we’ve got the little guy out there tending the sheep.” “Well bring him in,” and he anoints David. This is what the anointing means: The anointing of God means to be set apart from everyone else unto service. It also means to be empowered for service. The oil represents the Spirit of God because the only way that human flesh, human frailty can do the work of God is, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord. That’s the way everything that has ever been done in the history of this world that has been done by a man, was done by the Spirit if it accomplished anything.

So God teaching us in the Old Testament, putting together the building blocks of His revelation so that we could understand Who Jesus is, and the wonder of Who He is, He gives these three offices: The prophet, the priest, and the king. He sets

them apart and then He says, “Anoint them with oil,” and anointing oil meant ‘the Spirit of God is upon you, will come upon you, and enable you to perform the office of prophet.’ The Spirit of anointing, the Spirit of God would come upon you to perform the office of priest, and especially the High Priest. The Spirit of God will come upon you to anoint you, to enable you to do the work of a king. So what is John saying here? He’s saying that no man has ever been anointed like this man. There was no prophet that was ever like Jesus. There was no priest that was ever like Jesus. There was no king that was ever like Jesus. There was never a prophet-priest-king, it was always different, distinct offices. Remember when Uziah tried to take the office of priest? He was the king, he was God’s anointed. He had the oil put upon him, the Holy Spirit, but he went in and asked the king into the temple to offer a sacrifice and he was stricken with leprosy for the rest of his life because no man was like that. He was worried that he’d take two offices. But here we have Jesus Who becomes a true man, the Divine Son becomes true man, worthy to take all three offices. John says there never was a man like this.

Now the Holy Spirit anointing, I said set apart unto God for service, empowered for service. You can think of the Holy Spirit when He comes, and the way that He works throughout Scripture really in two ways. I mean, there are more ways than this, but for our purposes, let’s think about two. The Holy Spirit’s work from Genesis to Revelation is to mediate two things. First, the presence of God, and secondly, the power of God. He mediates, He is the contact person of the Trinity. He is the One Who comes most intimately in contact with humanity, even with the creation. The Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit equal in power and glory, and yet in the economy of salvation it’s the Spirit Who applies redemption. But let’s think about the presence and the power. John says, “Jesus has the Spirit without measure.” Therefore, He has the presence of God without measure. He has the Spirit of God without measure and He has the power of God without measure.

A) The Presence of God:

Let’s think about, first of all, the presence of God in Christ. Now of course He has the presence of God because He is God. When He was conceived, God had come into time and space. It entered in to time and space in the womb of Mary. But He also, as a man, was filled with the Holy Spirit. Here’s the miracle, I think when you read the New Testament carefully, He grew in the fullness of the Spirit with the climax being His baptism.

Now let me show you some things here. The presence of God, the Spirit mediates the presence of God, the Spirit manifests the presence of God. That's His role in redemption. There's an interesting word used in Luke 1:35 where it says:

Luke 1:35 ~ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

The word translated to 'come upon' is the Greek verb 'episkiazō' which, when you go back to the Old Testament, which was originally written in Hebrew remember, but remember they translated the Old Testament into Greek in the 2nd Century B.C. So you can see how the usage of Hebrew words were translated over into Greek words even in the Old Testament. When you look for 'episkiazō' in the Old Testament, you find it associated, the idea of the Spirit of the Most High will come upon you, you find it associated with the temple and the tabernacle. In Exodus 40:35, the hovering of the cloud of God's glory, hovering over the tabernacle is this word. The visible manifestation of the presence of God later called the Shekinah glory is there over the tabernacle. Remember Moses has them build the tabernacle to these precise specifications. God gives them to Moses and God has the people do it. Remember how it happens? The Spirit of God comes upon Othniel and whatever the other guy's name was, to do the great work, the skilled craftsmanship. You see, the Spirit of God not only sets you apart, He empowers you. But when it was all done, it says Moses had them set it up, and everything is done. The text says that Moses does just as the Lord had told him. Then it says the cloud of glory descended upon the tabernacle. The idea of hovering over is this word.

Then think about how that goes forward in the span of redemptive history. The tabernacle has the cloud hovering over it, a visible manifestation of the presence of God. That's where God is. Remember when they built the temple, 1 Kings 8? What happens when Solomon finishes the work of the temple? The cloud of glory comes to hover over the temple. Isaiah, in that same temple, sees the cloud of glory hovering, filling the temple. In Ezekiel 10, remember Ezekiel writing during the Babylonian exile when the people had been cast out of the land, expelled from the land of Canaan? In Ezekiel 10, the heartbreaking message of the prophet Ezekiel, he sees in a vision the cloud of glory departing from the temple. The glory has departed, but he sees in Chapter 43 that the new temple to be created will have the cloud of glory over it. As you read through the unfolding of history, every Jew who was really listening and watching should have been looking when 60 or 70 years after Ezekiel wrote, when they finished the temple in 516 B.C. What happened?

No glory. No cloud. When the tabernacle was built there was a cloud. When the temple was inaugurated there was the cloud of glory, but when they rebuilt the temple, no cloud of glory. That was one of the reasons there was so much mourning. Remember what the prophet Hagi is told in Chapter 2, Verses 7 and 9? “This temple will have a greater glory than the former temple.” When? No glory. 516 B.C. Four hundred comes, no glory, Three hundred, no glory. Two hundred, no glory. One hundred, no glory. Fifty, no glory. After John the Baptist, we hear that he’s going to be conceived in Luke 1, the angel comes to Mary and says, “The Holy Spirit, the One Who manifests the presence and glory of God, will hover over you.” The glory is coming back. The Spirit of God, the visible manifestation, the manifest presence of God is coming back, and it’s coming back in the presence of His Son. There is a sense in which every day of Jesus’ life the Spirit was upon Him. As you read even through the rest of Luke, what happened?

Luke 2:52 ~ And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

What does that mean? *...and in favor...* Wasn’t He already in favor? Of course He was, but the human Jesus, obedient, faithful, is growing in wisdom. He’s growing in stature. He’s growing up as a young man and He’s growing in His favor with God. He’s walking in righteousness, and it’s the blessing of God that is increasing and increasing. This is what we talked about before, how He had to live a perfect life to give His perfect obedience. He couldn’t atone for our sins when He was, well if it was just necessary to be pure, He could have when He was a child. He could have paid for our sins to get us back to even, but He doesn’t just get us back to even at the cross. He doesn’t just declare your sins are forgiven, He gives us a perfect righteousness. He lives 30 some odd years in perfect obedience as a man, and He gives to you and me, everyone who believes, a perfect righteousness, a perfect record.

So the Spirit is growing in the man, Christ Jesus, the Spirit, the power of the Spirit, so that when He comes to the baptism, it’s a significant event. He’s accepting the mission. Remember John the Baptist says, “Look, I’m not worthy to untie the thong of your sandal, and you’re coming to be baptized by me. This isn’t right.” Jesus says, “It’s necessary to fulfill all righteousness. Don’t you understand? I’m coming to be a substitute. Do what is required. I’ve got to obey the Father.” And John baptizes Him. What happens? The Spirit of God descends upon Him like a dove. John’s eyes are open to see the Spirit of God coming down. It wasn’t the first time. The Spirit was on Him all along, but this was a visible manifestation of an even greater outpouring. Here the man Christ Jesus now is mighty in the Spirit!

He's ready to take on all the forces of evil, ready to fulfill His mission in the cross. The man Christ Jesus, the Messiah, the final anointing, the prophet, the priest, the king—He's here! That's why after the baptism, the same Gospel of John, Chapter 2, Verse 19. Remember when Jesus is in the temple and He says to them, "Destroy this temple."? The temple is there. It's not that building. It's not Herod's temple. It's the man, Christ Jesus. He's the temple. He's where the glory dwells. He's where the fullness of God's presence is. He in Himself the second Person of the Trinity, and the fullness of the Spirit, all there in flesh! So He has the fullness of the presence. No man ever had the presence of God on Him like Jesus. That's what John is saying. He's saying, "You guys are quibbling over the fact that they're going from me to Him. You don't have a clue! You think I a holy man." They probably did. They probably said, "John's a holy man. Look how he lives." He says, "Compared to Him, I am the filthiest, scummiest, dirtiest." I mean, He has the presence of God upon Him like no man ever imagined. "This is the wonderful day of redemption. Why are you missing the whole point?"

B) The Power of God:

But not only the presence of God par excellent, but also the power of God without equal. The power of God. Not just the presence of God mediated by the Spirit, the power of God, set apart unto God so that you can represent Him and have His Spirit and presence with you, but then also to be empowered by Him for ministry. Jesus is now full of the power of the Spirit as He goes into His ministry. This is actually exactly what the Old Testament has said. I want you to look back with me at Isaiah, three passages in Isaiah which are beautifully fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus. It's the beauty of God's plan how it hangs together, and how it all fits together so immaculately. You have three major passages where it talks about the Spirit of the Lord being upon someone, upon the servant of God. Remember I mentioned prophet, priest, and king. We're going to look at how this is unfolded, this supreme anointing is going to happen, Isaiah says, writing 700 years before the birth of Christ. See we've had lots of wonderful prophets. Moses was a great prophet. Elijah was a great prophet. Isaiah was a great prophet. But we haven't seen a prophet like the prophet that's coming.

Isaiah 61:1-2 ~ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon a man that is coming who will be this supreme prophet. When He speaks, when He makes proclamation, the prisoners are set free. Moses couldn't do that. When He makes proclamation, broken hearts are bound up. Elijah couldn't do that. When He brings good news, He proclaims the favorable year of the Lord, every problem is fixed. One is coming that by the very words of His mouth will far exceed anyone before because the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him in an unprecedented way. He is the Great Prophet. Isaiah 61, Verse 1 and following is prophesying the supreme prophet to come, who will be a man who has the Spirit of the Lord God upon Him. Turn back to Isaiah 42. Jesus is the Great Prophet, empowered to be the greatest prophet.

Isaiah 42:1 ~ "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

This idea of justice, He'll bring forth righteousness. The priest mediates righteousness. It goes on down to Verse 2.

Isaiah 42:2-4 ~ "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. 3 "A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 "He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

The coastlands, the wicked Philistines, and the Sidonians, and the people of Tyre, they're all going to become righteous because this Great Priest is going to have the Spirit of God upon Him in a way, and He's going to bring people to God. In fact, if you follow Isaiah's flow, the rest of these chapters, the servant of the Lord is a key phrase. When you follow that through the next few chapters, you find it over and over again, God's Servant is coming. God's Servant is coming until finally the last usage of 'The Servant of the Lord' is Isaiah 53:11. In Isaiah 53, He was pierced for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. He ends up that passage by saying, "The Servant of the Lord is going to bring many to righteousness." So He is uniquely the priest. He is going to bring men back to God. There has never been a priest like Jesus. Aaron, he was great but he was nothing compared to Christ. That's what John is saying.

But also, He's the great King. Turn with me to Isaiah 11.

Isaiah 11:1-2 ~ Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,

Now who is Jesse? We just mentioned that a minute ago, didn't we? He was the father of David. David, the prototypical king. David, the great King of Israel. Isaiah, writing 300 years after David, says, "Listen, a shoot is going to spring from the stem of Jesse. There's coming a descendant of David. There is coming One from David's line, from Jesse's line, and He's going to bear great fruit." Look at Verse 2, ***...the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him...*** What kind of King is He going to be?

Isaiah 11:2-4 ~ ... The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,

He's going to be a mighty King. He can deal with His adversaries, but He's a tender, merciful, holy King.

Isaiah 11:5 ~ Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Look what kind of peace this King brings. You think Solomon was impressive, he was. You think David was impressive, even more so. But they are nothing compared to this King. Look at the peace He brings.

Isaiah 11:6-8 ~ And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

There is no conflict when this King comes. He erases everything that's wrong with this Earth. He brings the rule of God over all, even the animals no longer in conflict. So great is this King, and why is He so great? Because the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him in an unprecedented way. That's Jesus. John is saying, "How

can you be missing this? It's all about Jesus. He is supremely anointed. There's never been another Man like Jesus. He is the Bridegroom, He is the Great King, He is the Great Priest, He is the Great Prophet. When you understand that, that's your message. We don't preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus. Every need that you have falls under the categories—You need a prophet, you need a priest, you need a king. You don't know what to do. You don't know what your problems are. You need a prophet. You need God's Prophet. Jesus is that Prophet. You need Him to come and to speak His Word to you. You need a priest. I mean, you're broken, you have problems in your relationships. You have problems in your relationship with God. You need a priest. A priest brings parties together. There's never been a priest like Jesus. You need Him. You have sin, the war with sin is overwhelming you. You're fighting but you're not making any progress. You need a King like Jesus to come, a mighty King, Who can defeat your adversaries, Who *has* defeated your adversaries, Who you only need to speak the word, and to stay with, and you will grow in obedience. John says, "The reason He must increase is because He is supreme. He is the supremely Anointed One of God Who is our Savior.

2) The Supremacy of His Relationship:

He's not only supreme in His anointing, He's also, lastly, supreme in His relationship. Verse 35:

John 3:35 ~ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

This I think illustrates again why he's talking about the Father gave the Spirit to Jesus without measure in Verse 34. He explains it, why did the Father give the Spirit without measure to Jesus? Because, ***The Father loves the Son and have given all things into His hand.*** What this is saying, John is saying, "Listen, the reason He must increase, and the reason that I must decrease is because He has a relationship with the Father that none of us has anything approaching anywhere close." He has a unique relationship with the Father. ***The Father loves the Son and have given all things into His hand.*** I mean, think about the way John, the apostle who had written this Gospel has described God's relationship with Jesus, Chapter 1, Verse 18:

John 1:18 ~ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Remember we'd said the words 'only begotten' translates to the Greek word, 'monogenēs', which really means 'one and only, one of a kind, unique'. Jesus is

the One and only. He is in a class by Himself when it comes to God looking down upon the sons of men. He is the One and only. He is just an empty but somewhat helpful, it's nowhere close, but the image is how Abraham must have felt about Isaac. You know he had Ishmael before Isaac, then he has other sons later. But imagine what Abraham must have been like when he is sitting on his porch rocking in his rocking chair. He has a porch on his tent. Remember he didn't live in a house. There are some really nice tents that have that, I think. Right? They have porches. He's rocking, or he's sitting in his fold-up recliner, whatever that chair is. Anyway, he's sitting there and he sees his sons walk by. I'm sure he feels warm in his heart about all of them. He was brokenhearted to have to send Ishmael away, remember? He loved Ishmael. He was a good man. But how much different when Isaac came into view. "That's my son. That's the son God gave me." How his heart must have leaped when Isaac came into view. That's the son of promise. It's not just, "He's my boy," that's the one through which redemption is coming. "That's the one God called me to offer up," and how he offered him up, and it broke his heart as he laid him on the altar, and he raised his hand. But then God said, "No, don't harm the boy," and he received him back as a type. He received him back with even greater love, greater esteem, and as a type of Christ. How Abraham must feel when he sees Isaac. Now multiply that a million times over and that's how the Father, the God of Heaven, the ancient of days, when He sees the Man, Christ Jesus. "That's My Boy! That's the One! He's My eternal Son, but He's also the perfect man. He's everything I wanted man to be. He's everything that I could have ever dreamed." That's why you have God, as it were, almost losing His composure. Not losing His composure, but think about it. The voice out of Heaven, at the baptism, there Jesus is accepting the mission. There Jesus is saying, "Yes, it's necessary to fulfill all righteousness. Yes, I am going to take this mission that the Father has given Me." When the Father sees that, what does He say? A voice comes out of Heaven, "This is My Son, Whom I love, with Whom I'm well pleased." It's as if God can't contain Himself when He says, "That's My Boy. That's the One."

And then again at the transfiguration when Peter makes that mistake and says, "Let's make three tabernacles." God says, "No, this is My Son." Moses and Elijah, no. Yeah, I'm redeeming them. They are precious to Me," and the wonder of it is, we're so much more precious to God than we can imagine, but we will never be as precious as Jesus. He says, "This is My Son Whom I love, with Whom I am well pleased." He's done everything He was supposed to do. He has fulfilled all righteousness. Listen to Him.

This idea of the lavish love of God is there in the language. Verse 35, He's given all things into His hand. You see that? He's not holding anything back. In fact, the word order in the Greek text says, "The Father loves the Son, and all things has given into His hand." It puts all things up front to say, "The emphasis is not that He's given, He's given *all* things into His hand. There's nothing He hasn't given to the Son. Everything belongs to the Son." In fact, you add that to what he said earlier in Verse 34. He gives the Spirit without measure. This word in the phrase is emphatic. Without measure, literally the word order there is, "For without measure, He gives the Spirit." He says, "I want you to see, it's no measure." In fact, actually in the Greek it says, "No measure," or "Not measured, He gives the Spirit." John is saying, "Do you not understand that when God looks at Jesus, He lavishes love on Him. He is the supreme apple of His eye." We can't get in the way of that. Just stand back and marvel and join with the Father in glorying in Who Christ is. That's what you and I are created to do, to look back and say, "Yes, He is fairer than the sons of man. We need to have tongues that are the ready writer," just like the Psalmist said. "You are fairer than the sons of men. Everything You do You do well. None is like You." That's what the Father said. He lavishes every good thing on Jesus. He gives the Spirit without measure, and He expects you and me to do the same.

It's interesting in John's Gospel, he records an event that also Matthew also records in John 12. This is an example of the lavish love that you and I ought to have for God's Son, and that when we lavish love on God's Son, we are doing exactly what the Father wants us to do, and He is so pleased. When you lavish love on Jesus, the Father comes down and makes His abode with you. When you lavish love on Jesus and you lift Jesus up, the Holy Spirit comes right alongside you and says, "Yes, that's what I'm here to do too. Let's do it together." You want the fullness of the Spirit, you lift up Christ. You want the fullness of God's power in your life, lift up Christ because that's what God is about, lifting up His glory in the Person of His perfect Son! So lavish, there's nothing too lavish for Jesus.

John 12:1 ~ Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.

This was the last week before He's to be crucified. What an amazing dinner party! Can you imagine the emotions? The text tells us a little bit later that there are all kinds of people around. They're not invited to dinner, they're just outside because Jesus is having dinner with a man that was dead for four days. Isn't that neat that

Jesus came to have dinner with him? To have table fellowship? “Before I go, I want to go have dinner with Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha.” What an amazing Savior! So He comes over and while they’re reclining at the table, Mary took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus. Matthew’s Gospel tells us that she also poured it on His head. Matthew 26, she poured it on His head and then it dripped down onto His feet so that she’s anointing His head and His feet. John emphasizes the feet because of the humility of the act here. Look, Mary is anointing His feet, and what does she do? She wipes His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples who was intending to betray Him, says, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denari and given to poor people?” That is the unbelieving question. That is the one who doesn’t understand anything about Who Jesus is, isn’t it? Denari was a lot of money. It was about 11 month of wages, almost a year. We might say \$20,000 to \$30,000. She has taken a \$25,000 bottle of perfume and she’s poured it out on the head and the feet of Jesus. Now think about what motivates that though. Can you imagine what was going through Mary’s heart and her mind? “My brother was dead. I was hopeless and alone. Martha and I were going to be destitute. And then Jesus came. He tarried so that we could see His glory more because He didn’t come when they sent somebody urgently to tell Him, but He didn’t come right away. He waited so that we could see His glory, and we’ve seen His glory. Because my brother got up and walked out of the grave. We took the burial clothes off of him and Lazarus is there eating today. Jesus, I’ve just got to do something to worship my Savior.” So she takes the most precious family possession that people like that could have ever owned, and she lavishes it upon Jesus. Judas says, “What about the poor?” Jesus said in Verse 7, “Let her alone so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. Let her keep doing what she’s doing, she’s preparing me for the day of burial.”

Matthew 26:7 ~ For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me.

Some unbelievers read that kind of thing and immediately start accusing, “Why would He be so insensitive?” It’s because you don’t have a clue about what was happening right here. This is an apex moment in the history of redemption. This is a moment unlike any other moment on the timeline of all the seconds and minutes that have passed from the beginning of creation until the end. This is a moment where Jesus, The Messiah, the One supremely anointed is about to go to walk hard, final steps to Calvary, and this woman who loves Him, who has just seen His resurrection wants to lavish love upon Him. There was never One more worthy of

lavish, love, expensive, extraordinary, sacrificial giving than Jesus! And Jesus' is there speaking in all wisdom and righteousness says, "You won't always have Me." She had an opportunity to minister to the physical body of Christ. She touched His head. Her hands might have lingered on His head just thinking, "Oh, I love Him so much." She went down on the floor and she wipes His feet with her hair, using her hair like a towel, delighting in the presence of One so wonderful.

I love what Matthew tells us. John writes about 85 A.D., about 40 years after Matthew. He knew that his readers already had Matthew to fill in some gaps. Matthew tells us that Jesus also added this: After He says, "You won't always have me," He says, "I tell you the truth, wherever the Gospel is preached, what this woman has done will be proclaimed." Do you see that? God the Father, tells the Son right then, "You tell them that that's exactly what they needed to do." The Father says, "Mary, what you have done, I will never let be forgotten. You lavished love on Jesus Christ and all Heaven celebrates with you." The irony is, when you decrease like John the Baptist was doing, when you decrease to let Him increase, you actually, in God's economy, actually increase in your value, in your significance, in your dignity. Because to lift Him up, to be poured out, to let your life be spent always to lift up Jesus. Emptying yourself out is actually filling yourself up with His favor, and His joy, and His goodness. That is what God has called us to do because He is supremely, preeminently worthy. Supreme in His Person. Supreme in His Word. Supreme in His anointing. And supreme in His relationship. With a Savior like that, how can we be distracted by the things of the world? How foolish we are. We ought to be every day trying to find out more about this wonderful Person, Jesus Christ. Love Him more truly. Serve Him with more abandon because He is worthy. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we marvel at the glory of Your Son. Forgive us for light thoughts of Him. Forgive us for disrespecting and dishonoring Him, and sinning against Him. Lord, if we saw correctly, we saw rightly, we would lay down everything for Him, every moment, and delight in doing so. Lord, keep purging us of all foolishness. Keep increasing our clarity and vision so that we can see that's the one thing we want to do is to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His tomb. We just want to look at Jesus. We just want to please Jesus. We just want to serve Jesus. We just want to lift up Jesus, Lord. Let that be the heartbeat of every person here. More and more as the day draws near, that we might be lifting up Him. Father, there are some here today who haven't given themselves to such a worthy Savior. God, open their eyes. Don't let them perish like Judas, in the presence of such grandeur, and majesty, and goodness, and infinite love, to live in the dark, to live isolated, to live miserable by their own

choice. God, let them see in Jesus, He is a tender Savior. He is exalted but He is also humble, and gentle, and meek, and mild. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not extinguish. Help every sinner to run to Christ. Even today, immediately, grant them grace. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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