

A GREAT SERVANT

(Matthew 11:9-11)

I. John was selfless.

- a. John always knew that his work was not about him but of One greater.
- b. He was quick to mention this:
 - i. John 1:26-27;
 - ii. John 3:30.
- c. The reference in John 1 is from the early part of his ministry, before Jesus began his.
 - i. He was drawing great crowds.
 - ii. Multitudes of people were coming to hear him.
 - iii. So much so, the council sent out representatives to question John (John 1:22f).
 - iv. He could have tried to draw people to himself but he didn't.
- d. The reference in John 3 is later in his ministry, when the crowds were dwindling and there were more following Jesus than him.
 - i. His pride wasn't hurt.
 - ii. He knew this was what God intended to happen.
 - iii. It could have been very difficult for John to accept his lessening in popularity if he hadn't been the man he was.
- e. As Christians, this is a quality that we must possess.
 - i. Philippians 2:3.
 - ii. Ephesians 4:1-3.
- f. There is a song that is not sung as much as it once was entitled "None of self and all of thee".
 - i. This hymn, by Theodore Monod, starts out with "all of self and none of thee".
 - ii. It moves to "some of self and some of thee".
 - iii. The third stanza deals with "less of self and more of thee".
 - iv. Finally, in the fourth stanza we sing the title of the song.
- g. I wonder why we don't sing this song like we once did?
- h. I honestly believe that it is because that song hurts many of us because we live in and are affected by such a selfish society.
- i. The Christian life is one of "none of self and all of thee".
- j. John the Immerser vividly portrayed this noble characteristic during his ministry.

II. John was soul conscious.

- a. Nearly every mention of John deals with his preaching.
 - i. He knew his role was that of a preparer of souls.
 - ii. Only through his preaching could he do this and that is what he did.
- b. He knew the groups that came to him and he addressed their spiritual needs.

- i. Luke 3:10-14 bears this out for us.
 - ii. But notice the verses previous to this (Luke 3:7-9).
 - iii. He knew his audience well.
 - iv. He knew what they each needed to hear and he made sure they heard it.
- c. He was tender with the ones who needed tenderness and he was harsh with those that needed harshness.
- d. John knew each soul who heard him needed to be ready for the Messiah so he constantly pointed them to Him.
 - i. Matthew 3:7-12.
 - ii. John 1:25-36.
- e. He knew that peoples only hope was the Savior so he always spoke of Him.
- f. We need Christians who are soul conscious.
- g. We meet people every day who are on the road to destruction.
 - i. Each person has a soul that is going to spend eternity somewhere.
 - ii. Are we concerned about their souls the way that John was?
- h. I read that William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, once told some students, "If I had my choice, I wouldn't send you to school, I would send you to hell for 5 minutes and you would come back real soul winners."
- i. Remember what the rich man wanted Lazarus to do after he had spent time in torment?
- j. However, I believe if we could go to heaven for even less time, we would come back real soul winners, after seeing the glory that awaits.
- k. The great commission has been given and we need Christians who are soul conscious to be able to fulfill it.

III. **John was steadfast.**

- a. It did not matter who came to John, he would not stop preaching.
- b. It did not matter the station in life of his audience, he was going to tell the truth.
- c. When the Pharisees came, he preached what they needed to hear.
- d. When he had the opportunity, he told Herod what he needed to hear (Mark 6:16-18).
- e. John was going to preach the truth no matter who was present to hear it and he was not going to change the message or soften it.
- f. This morning, we discussed the need to stand fast in the gospel.
 - i. We can't cede one tenet to Satan.
 - ii. We must stand in and stand up for the gospel message.
- g. The Hebrews writer said... (Hebrews 3:14).
 - i. The beginning of our confidence refers to when we first obeyed the gospel.
 - ii. When one first obeys, he or she believes it all and wants to do all of the commands of God.

- iii. Sadly, as we age and things get more difficult, that is when we tend to not stand the way we once did.
- iv. If we want to be partakers of Christ, enjoy the benefits, privileges, and presence of Christ, we must stand like we did in the beginning.
- h. I recently talked with a preaching friend and he told me of another preacher who said, “If I could get five brethren to really stand with me, we could get things changed at this congregation”, referring to the congregation where he preached.
- i. We need brethren who are steadfast in the gospel.

IV. John was sacrificial.

- a. Matthew 3:4 tells us of his dress.
- b. We never read of a wife of John the Immerser.
- c. His parents were older when he was born so by this time, they were probably dead, so it seems he had no family.
- d. Everything John did was to fulfill the role given him by God.
- e. Ultimately, he sacrificed his life because of the role given him by God.
- f. John was willing to sacrifice comfort, status, and his life for God.
- g. John had great crowds as mentioned earlier.
 - i. He was willing to sacrifice those crowds to Jesus.
 - ii. His pride hindered him in no way whatsoever.
- h. You and I are called to take up our crosses and follow Jesus.
 - i. We are called to sacrifice for the kingdom.
 - ii. What sacrifices have we or are we making for the Lord?
- i. I know some have sacrificed friendships, and even family relationships, because of obedience to the gospel.
 - i. For that sacrifice you are to be commended.
 - ii. That took courage.
- j. There may be some who have sacrificed a job or position because of a refusal to do something unethical or illegal.
 - i. That took courage to do that.
 - ii. It’s called for by God, but it is still sacrificial.
- k. We need to be sacrificial in our giving.
 - i. The Macedonian brethren gave out of their poverty.
 - ii. Jesus gave it all for us.
 - iii. We should be willing to sacrifice of our finances for Him.
- l. We need brethren who are sacrificial like John.