I. INTRO:
   A. After a performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, the audience gave conductor Arturo Toscanini and the Orchestra a prolonged ovation. Toscanini, filled with emotion, turned to his musicians and whispered, “I am nothing, you are nothing.” Then, in almost adoring tones, Toscanini said, “But Beethoven is everything!”
      1. Likewise, we must recognize that Jesus is everything!
   B. When Jealousy knocks on your door do you open it? - How do you handle it?

II. THE ARGUMENT! (22-26)
   A. (22) He remained with them - spent time with them (NIV) - [Meant: to rub hard or rub through]
      1. The idea is 1 of rubbing shoulders w/others long enough to get into their lives.
      2. Imperfect tense, Jesus kept “spending time w/them & baptizing.”
   B. One of Jesus’ top priorities was discipling 12 men.
      1. This required time, & He took the time.
   C. (23) They came - “they kept on coming” Imperfect indicates.
   D. (25) A debate concerning which baptism is valid, Jesus’ or John’s?
   E. (26) All are coming to Him - Jealousy 101.
      1. They’re asking, What are you going to do about it John, the used to be, baptizer? [His ministry is growing & yours is shrinking, How come?]
      2. There was no real rivalry except in people’s minds.
      3. Understand both ministries were operating on the same turf!
         a) Mt.3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea
      4. Jesus ministry had been up in Galilee up to this time, now he moves into John’s domain.
         a) Reminds us of the strife between the herdsman of Abram & Lot in Gen.13.
            (1) Abram said, Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.
III. **THE AFFIRMATION!** (27-36)

A. **4 ways to keep from Jealousy:** See the Big Picture; Be Secure in who you are; Have Joy to the Full; Have Pure humility.

B. **[1] SEE THE BIG PICTURE!** (27)

C. *God* is in charge, not *man*!

D. A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. Quotes a proverb
   1. If someone is prospering or displaying gifts superior to yours its because *God has given it* to him/her.
   2. What a tragedy when God gives us something we are lusting for...that isn’t best for us. Ps.106:14,15 (Numb.11) *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness* (for meat), *And tested God in the desert*. *And He gave them their request* (quail), *But sent leanness into their soul*.
   3. Old German Proverb, “Jealousy eats nothing but its own heart!”

E. Get the **Big Picture**...& the **Big Picture** is *God* gives each man his gifts...take it up with God if you have a problem!
   1. God’s in control of the blessing department!
   2. Recognize & accept what God has given to you;
      Recognize & accept what God has not given to you.

F. John knew a teachable moment when he saw one. But, How to squelch jealousy?
   1. *When Jealousy* knocks on your door do you open it? How do you handle it?
   2. *What if, like John, you are Outdone, Outclassed, or Eclipsed?*
   3. What kept John from bitterness?
   4. He informed them you can only receive what is given to you from heaven!
      a) He knew *he was from earth*, but *Jesus was from heaven*.
         (1) *Earthling vs. Unearthly/Otherworldly*
      b) *If all ministry* is from heaven, then do we have a right to be jealous of another man’s ministry, gifts, abilities, accomplishments? [Imp insight into John’s character]

G. His response threw **cold water** on his **inflamed disciples**, quenching the conversation & their competitive spirit.

H. So far: [1] See the Big Picture.

I. **[2] BE SECURE IN WHO YOU ARE!** (28,29a)

J. All work is **significant**, but only one is **preeminent**!

K. *Jesus = Word; John = Voice.* *Now, Jesus = Groom; John = Best man.*
L. So, why would you pick this guy as your **Best Man**?

1. He wasn’t *dressed for success* w/camel hair & a leather girdle [that was so last century]
2. He wasn’t your politically correct campaign manager (with his abusive rhetoric).
3. He wasn’t going to make the next cooking show w/his strange diet, living off the land eating *insects, locusts, & wild honey*, like **Bear Grylls** of TV’s *Man vs. Wild*?
4. He was an *unconventional eccentric hermit* living in the wilderness. Yet, had a *uncompromising message* of repentance to prepare peoples hearts for the Messiah.
   a) He was not chosen for *outward* fashion, but *inward* character.
5. He was **John** the unsung hero, an enigma of a man, **sent to:**
   *Clear the way*; *Prepare the way*; then *Get out of the way* for Messiah
   a) **Clear the way** - to remove obstacles from minds & hearts so they’d be ready to receive Messiah.
   b) **Prepare the way** - to promote repentance on the part of the nation so He would be accepted.
   c) **Get out of the way** - to step aside once the Messiah had been introduced.
      (1) This the *toughest* part of his *job description*, & undoubtedly the reason Jesus called him a great man.
      (2) Mt.11:11a *Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist.*
   d) You might think, oh to be the **Best Man**!...**No!** to be the **Bride** of Christ!
      (1) John couldn’t be bride, he died before Christ went to cross (he was OT)
      (2) We are the Bride of Christ, not just the friend!
      (3) Let’s finish Mt.11 *not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

M. So far: [1] See the Big Picture; [2] Be Secure in who you are.

N. **[3] HAVE JOY TO THE FULL!** (29b)

O. Joy comes from **being obedient**, not from **getting glory**!

P. The friend of the bridegroom - Best man, a **liaison** between the bride & the bridegroom.

1. He would **arrange the details** of the wedding. Send out **invitations**.
   Make the **announcements**. **Preside over** the wedding feast.
   His special duty...was to **guard** the bridal chamber.
2. He would **let no one into** the bridal chamber except the **bride**, who would secretly slip away from the celebration (7 day feast) to join the groom.
3. Sometime later when the union was consummated, the groom came out & announced the fact w/a shout.

4. Key: Upon hearing the groom’s voice, the friend of the bridegroom would be happy & relieved. His job was done. His joy was full. He could now step out of the way!

Q. This joy is fulfilled - rejoices greatly; my joy is filled to the full!

T. Humility calls attention to Christ, not self!
U. Moses dealt with the same thing in Numb.11:25-29 (read)
V. The Asaph wrote(Ps.75:6,7) For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.

1. Jealousy & Envy are often used interchangeably, but there’s a difference.²
   a) Envy begins w/empty hands, mourning for what it doesn’t have.
   b) Jealousy begins w/full hands, but is threatened by the loss of its plenty. (its the pain of losing what I have...to someone else)
   c) Envy is when: a peer is promoted; a newcomer passes you on the way up the corporate ladder; when you’re a senior sitting on the bench, & a sophomore is in the starting line-up; when a new business starts up & overshadows yours overnight
   d) Jealousy is when: loyalties shift; when close friends abandon us for others; when retirement comes & our authority is handed to a replacement.

2. Jealousy & Envy are like muggers in a dark alley waiting to do us in; rob us of our joy; work us over; & leave our spiritual lives for dead.

3. Are you going to let it happen to you? - Only way to stop it is to walk down another street, the well lit street of Humility, a street lit not by its own light, but by the light of another, whose sandal we are not worthy to untie!

W. (30) Jesus must become greater & greater, while we must become less & less.

1. Its what the Rev. Richard Baxter (1615–1691) said on his deathbed, when someone was remembering the good which many had received by his preaching and writings, Mr. Baxter replied, “I was but a pen in God’s hand, and what praise is due to a pen?”

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¹ William Barclay; Gospel of John; pg.143
² Charles Swindoll; Killing the Giants; pg.23
2. Pointer Illustration: Growing up, my teachers/nuns had a 3’ long wooden pointer (in Catholic school was used for others things, Smack!!!). When a teacher used one (properly), you didn’t stare at the pointer, but at what it was pointing to.
   a) **John** was just the pointer, **Jesus** was what he was pointing to.
   b) **The bible** is just a pointer, pointing us to God.

X. (36) John ends with an “alter call” that would shake even the most complacent off the proverbial fence!

Y. If **baptism** were necessary for salvation, then this is the place for the bible to say so; but nothing is said. Instead, the emphasis is on believing.

Z. So, was this just a discussion about which baptism was right? No, John taught his disciples that their relation with God’s Son had **eternal consequence**.
   1. Those who believe & obey Jesus have eternal life; those who don’t are in sin & have the abiding wrath of God on them.
      a) **Wrath** (ὀργή orge´) - denotes God’s abiding opposition to sin.

AA. **Wrath** was removed on the cross...for those who believed.
   1. Wrath of God abides on those who do not believe - “you are not like a city ready to be attacked, you are a city already besieged.”
      a) You do not stand at the bar of justice **awaiting** your sentence; Your sentence is **passed already**, you are now **this day** condemned!
      b) BUT...he was believes in Him is NOT condemned!

BB. Every young student knows of **Isaac Newton’s** famed encounter with a **falling apple**. Newton discovered and introduced the laws of gravity in the 1600s, which revolutionized astronomical studies. But few know that if it weren’t for **Edmund Halley**, the world might never have learned from Newton. It was Halley who challenged Newton to think through his original notions. Halley corrected Newton’s mathematical errors and prepared geometrical figures to support his discoveries. Halley coaxed the hesitant Newton to write his great work, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Halley edited and supervised the publication, and actually financed its printing even though Newton was wealthier and easily could have afforded the printing costs. Historians call it one of the most selfless examples in the annals of science. Newton began almost immediately to reap the rewards of prominence; Halley received little credit.
   He did use the principles to predict the orbit and return of the comet that would later bear his name, but only **AFTER** his death did he receive any acclaim. And because the comet only returns every 76 years, the notice is rather infrequent. Halley remained a devoted scientist who didn’t care who received the credit as long as the cause was being advanced.

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3 Warren Wiersbe; Outlines of the NT.