

HE>i

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 **Baby Dedication:** Isaiah Nicolas Vivar (b-day last Sun). Nick & Joanna Vivar.
- B. Slide3,4 **Larry:** Xmas refugee outreach. Youth Ministries.
- C. Slide5 **Christmas Eve Services:** 3,5,7pm
- D. Slide6 **Christmas Gift Cards:** bring *1 gift card*, of any amount, to Christmas Eve service.
 1. **Stores:** Target, Walmart, Kohl's. **Any fast food:** McDonald's, In-n-Out, Chipotle.
We will bless **Local Org's** we work with them.

II. Slide7 **Intro:** HE>i [He is greater than I]

- A. Slide8a Today *the brightest comet* in 2018 can be seen. Nicknamed, *The Christmas Comet*
- B. Slide8b 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.
 1. This morning we are going to meet **a man** who choose this same road of **humility**. **John The Baptist**.
 2. Slide9 **Pride is a cancer to the human soul**. It took **Lucifer** out of **heaven**. It took **Adam** out of **the garden**. It took **king Saul** out of **the kingdom**.

3. Here, **pride** is knocking on John's door, **but** *John the Bap* isn't answering it.

III. Slide10a **THE INCREASE (22-26)**

- A. (22) He remained with them - *spent time with them* (NIV). *relaxed w/them* (msg).
1. **Remained meant: to rub hard or rub through.** 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*.
 - a) One of Jesus' top priorities was discipling 12 men.
 - (1) This required time & He took the time.
- B. (25) A debate concerning **which baptism** is valid, Jesus' or John's?
- C. Slide10b (26) **All are coming to Him - Jealousy 101.** *Jealousy the green-eyed monster.*
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?**
 - a) There was no real rivalry, except in people's minds.
 2. Understand both ministries were operating on the same turf.
 3. 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, **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.**
 - b) John handled it the same way.

IV. Slide11a **THE DECREASE (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. Slide12a **#1 SEE THE BIG PICTURE (27)**
- C. Slide12b **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. **Slide12c** 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**.
[Earthling **vs.** Otherworldly. **Terrestrial vs. Extraterrestrial**]
 - b) If **all true ministry** is from heaven **then** do we have a right to be jealous of another's **ministry, gifts, abilities, accomplishments?** [Important insight into John's character]
 - c) His response threw ***cold water*** on his inflamed disciples, quenching the conversation & their competitive spirit.
- G. **So far:** *See the Big Picture.*
- H. **Slide13a #2 BE SECURE IN WHO YOU ARE** (28,29a)
- I. **All work is significant, but only one is preeminent.**
- J. Jesus = Word. John = Voice. **Now**, Jesus = Groom. John = Best man.
- K. **Slide13b** 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.
1. **Clear the way** - to remove obstacles from **minds & hearts** so they'd be ready to receive Messiah.
 2. **Prepare the way** - to promote **repentance** on the part of the nation **so** He would be accepted.

3. **Get out of the way** - to **step aside** once the Messiah had been introduced.
 - a) This, the **toughest** part of his job description, & undoubtedly the reason Jesus called him a **great man**.
 - b) **Slide13c** Mt.11:11a *Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one **greater than** (my cuz) **John the Baptist**.*
 - (1) **Wait!** I can see **Moses the Sea-Part'er**. **David the Giant-Killer**. **Elijah the Fire-Caller**. **But John the Water-Dunker**...**WHY** is he the greatest?
 - (2) These big miracles were done *by God*. **Humility** was a character trait. It's not what he **did** but who he **was!**
 - (3) **You want to be the greatest in His kingdom? be humble. come as a child**
 4. You might think, *oh to be the **Best Man**...No, to be the **Bride of Christ***.
 - a) **John couldn't be the bride of Christ**. He died before Christ went to cross. (he was OT)
 - b) We are the **Bride of Christ**, **not** just the friend.
 - c) **Slide13d** 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**.*
- L. **So far: See the Big Picture. Be Secure in who you are.**
- M. **Slide14a #3 HAVE JOY TO THE FULL** (29b)
- N. **Slide14b Joy** comes from being obedient, **not** from *getting glory*.
- O. **The friend of the bridegroom** - Best man, a liaison between the bride & the bridegroom.
1. This was an important role participating in the ceremony, but not the center of attention. (we've all witnessed that at a wedding, someone else *stealing the attention*)
 2. **The friend of the bridegroom** 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*.
 3. 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.
 4. Sometime later when the union was consummated, the groom came out & announced the fact w/a **shout**.

- a) **Key:** Upon hearing the groom's voice, the friend of the bridegroom would *rejoice greatly*. His job was done. His joy was full. He could now *step out of the way*.
- P. This joy is fulfilled - My joy is *filled to the full*.
1. John Piper, *John's Life was "a joyful tragedy"*.
- Q. So far: *See the Big Picture. Be Secure in who you are. Have Joy to the Full*.
- R. Slide15a #4 HAVE PURE HUMILITY (30)
- S. Humility calls attention to **Christ**, *not self*.
- T. Slide15b C. S. Lewis spoke of **humility**, *to play great parts without pride and small parts without shame*.
- U. **Asaph** wrote, *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*. Ps.75:6,7
1. **Jealousy & Envy** are often used *interchangeably*, but there's a difference.
 - a) Slide15c **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. Slide16 **Jealousy & Envy** are like *muggers in a dark alley* waiting to do us in. *Rob us of our joy. Work us over. And leave our spiritual lives for dead*. Swindoll
 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.
- V. Slide17a (30) He>i - *He must increase, but I must decrease*.
1. This is a God's **must**. The **must** of a divine plan.
- W. **Jesus** must become *greater & greater*, while we must become *less & less*.

1. **Slide17b** *If you become a necessity to a soul, you are out of God's order.* Oswald Chambers

a) Pastors, CM counselors, SS workers, youth leaders **did you hear that?**

2. As a **worker**, your great responsibility is to be a **friend** of the Bridegroom.

3. Are you still increasing?

X. **Decrease** - congrats John... *mission accomplished*.

Y. **Slide17c Pointer Illustration**: Growing up in parochial school, my teachers/**nuns** had a **3' long wooden pointer** (which 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**.

1. **John was just the pointer**, **Jesus** was what he was pointing to.

2. **The bible is a pointer**, pointing us to **God**.

Z. **Slide17d** (36) John ends with an **altar call** that would shake even the most complacent off the proverbial fence.

AA. **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.

BB. **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 who **believes in Him** is **NOT** condemned.

V. You may often see Jesus Christ wreck a life before He saves it.