

Refrigerator Notes 17 December 2017

Unmask: Who Are You?

John 1:6-8; 19-28

1. For the past two weeks, we have been looking at the actions of John the Baptist through the eyes of the Gospel of Mark.
2. This week, we look at John's character through the Gospel of John.
3. John's gospel opens with a fresh word, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
4. Having heard that fresh word, there is another anointing of that Word in the Gospel of John. "A man who was sent by God and his name was John the Baptist" – a servant.
5. The Jews wanted to know if John was the real deal or not, specifically, was John the Messiah or was he an impersonator.
6. John confessed "I am not" the Messiah or Elijah or a prophet.
7. The priest and Levites wanted to expose John for who he was, hence unmask his identity
8. The question that the Jews were asking, then "Who are You?"
9. The conundrum or mystery is "what can we learn from the life of John the Baptist by unmasking his deeds in this Advent season of JOY?"
10. John 3:28 tells us, "You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.'"
11. John rightly recognized that the sinless Son of God needed no baptism of repentance and that he was certainly not worthy to baptize his own Savior.
12. There are several lessons we can learn by unmasking the life of John the Baptist; First, he believes in Jesus Christ and spent his days "preparing the way" for the Lord's coming (Matthew 11:10).
13. John's faith prepared him for his hardships and it kept him steadfast (on his course), until the time when he could say, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). As believers, we can all have this steadfast faith as we wait for the return of Christ.
14. Second, anyone can be a strong and serious witness for Jesus Christ but John's life is an example to us of the seriousness with which we are to approach our Christian life and our call to ministry.
15. We should pattern our lives after John, by first examining ourselves to be sure we are truly in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Then, like John, we are to know and believe "to live is Christ.
16. John lived his life to introduce others to Jesus Christ, and knew the importance of repenting of one's sins in order to live a holy and righteous life (as we should do likewise).
17. And as a follower of Jesus Christ, he also was unafraid of calling out people (such as Herod and the Pharisees) for their sinful behavior, which we are afraid to do because we don't want to be judgmental.
18. Third, John shows us how to stand firm in our faith no matter what the circumstances or conditions. Paul reminded Timothy that "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).
19. Yet, his message was unchanging, bold and strong even in the face of death John did not waver – nor should we.
20. As Christians, we all will have our faith put to the test and we will either falter in our faith or, like John, cling to Christ and stand firm in our faith to the end.