

Connection Group Questions
For the Week of September 29, 2024
This Week's Message: The Voice in the Wilderness
Passages: John 1:19-28

The following questions for discussion are designed to help move the Sunday morning teaching to a deeper place in the lives of those who hear it.

Getting-To-Know-Me Question

1. What do you look forward to the most about Fall?

Into-The-Bible Questions

2. **As a group, read John 1:19-28. John the Baptist, the profile of a Spirit-filled witness.**
3. **How would you describe the character of John the Baptist based on his refusal to accept or identify with any prestigious titles?**
 - What does this say about John's ministry that people would even ponder if he were the Messiah?
 - What are some ways or attitudes that we can model this same example?
4. **In verses 19-22, the Jews sent priests to question John. They skip the small talk and jump right in and ask him, "Who are you?" "Are you Elijah?" "Are you the Prophet?"**
 - For a better understanding about their questions to John, read Malachi 4:4-5 and Deuteronomy 18:15 regarding earlier prophecies.
 - Why do you think John's answers were so direct and he didn't offer any history, backstory, or context about himself? Wouldn't it have been helpful in their questioning?
5. **John says he is the one predicted in Isaiah 40:3, "A voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert."**
 - John humbly acknowledges his inferior position as only a "voice," or a messenger. So, what exactly was John's message?
 - What are some essential components in being an effective witness for Christ?
 - How do we engage in conversation about sin with a culture that doesn't believe in it, or recognize the seriousness of it against a holy God? Why are we so fearful to address sin and repentance ... even sometimes with another believer?
 - What are the dangers with trying to appeal to an unbeliever in order to attract and compel them into participating in conversations about the Gospel? Read 2 Cor. 1-5.
6. **In verse 26, John says, "Someone stands among you, but you don't know Him," when the Pharisees questioned what authority John had to baptize.**
 - Since the Pharisees were likely familiar with Jesus, why would John say this?
 - How would you explain the difference between the baptism performed by John and the baptizing Jesus came to do? Read Mark 1:8 and Romans 8:16.
 - What do John's words teach us about the nature of salvation? Read John 3:3-8 and John 6:44-51.

7. **In verse 27, John tells the Pharisees, “He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I’m not worthy to untie.”**
 - Consider for a moment what might be going through the Pharisees’ minds knowing John was an opponent they knew and was offensive to them ... now they have an unknown person to worry about, someone John claiming to be far greater than himself.
8. **In verses 23-38, John’s message is a call to repentance of sin, the same message the holy Messiah will deliver to an unholy people.**
 - What exactly is genuine repentance? What is it not?
 - Why is repentance something that needs to be done in its entirety?
 - How is repentance life-changing? Read Matt. 3:7-8; 2 Cor. 7:10

Application For This Week

John had the determination and boldness to stand up to the Pharisees because he clearly understood his role for what God wanted him to do. He knew that although he played an important role in history as a witness for Christ, he also recognized he was nothing compared to Jesus. This week, take a few moments and ask yourself if you truly have a clear understanding of what the message of the Gospel really is, and the role that God has given you. Are you a “*voice in the wilderness*” that courageously cries out to those who do not believe by pointing them to Christ in the way you believe, think, and behave without any shame or fear?

How Your Group Can Pray This Week

Pray that we are a church that recognizes that genuine repentance is not optional, but absolutely essential and never is just a one-time event. Romans 2:4 tells us it is “*God’s kindness that is intended to lead us to repentance*” and so we should never deceive ourselves into believing that because we are a child of God, we are immune from sin and no longer need to repent. Pray that we never presume that we can come to God with a broken heart of repentance without humbly acknowledging our dependence on Christ’s death as the sole basis of God’s mercy. It is only in His name and for His sake that God promises to forgive and restore us.