

## HE MUST INCREASE, I MUST DECREASE

### John 3:22–4:3 (ESV)

#### John the Baptist Exalts Christ

<sup>22</sup> After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. <sup>23</sup> John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized <sup>24</sup> (for John had not yet been put in prison).

<sup>25</sup> Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.

<sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." <sup>27</sup> John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' <sup>29</sup> The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease."

<sup>31</sup> He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup> He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. <sup>33</sup> Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. <sup>34</sup> For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. <sup>35</sup> The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. <sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

#### Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

4 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John <sup>2</sup>(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), <sup>3</sup> he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. What is the *real* issue that John's disciples have with Jesus baptizing in verse 26?
2. Tell about a time when someone you knew was doing much better than you in their career, their marriage, their finances, etc. How did that make you feel? Did you have a desire to compete with that person?
3. Have you ever witnessed Christians who are jealous of the work that God is doing through others? Is it hard to see God working through other people, and not through you? What is it about our human nature that compels us to try and outperform others?
4. Is competition always good or always bad? How can we know the difference between healthy good competition and unhealthy competition?
5. In your own words, summarize John the Baptist's response to this controversy.

Gospel of John  
Westgate Church of Christ  
Sunday Jan. 19, 2020

6. If John is the friend of the groom, and Jesus is the bridegroom, who is the bride?
7. What is the role of the friend (best man) in the wedding ceremony? What does this say about the role of John the Baptist?
8. In verse 30, John the Baptist makes a powerful statement about his position in relationship to Jesus. Who must increase and who must decrease?
9. Are we most interested in building God's kingdom or our own kingdom? What are some ways that shows through in our lives?
10. In what ways is Jesus superior to John the Baptist? What is John the Apostle encouraging the readers of this gospel to do with Jesus?
11. What is the result of believing in Jesus?
12. How many times does the Apostle John use the words "eternal life" in chapter 3 alone? What is the key to gaining eternal life? Is this important?
13. What is the opposite of believing in Jesus from verse 36? What does this verse tell about the result of not believing?
14. Notice from v. 36: What is the default state of mankind? (cf. John 3:18)