

Reflection Questions: Luke 3:15-22

For the message, "Recognizing the Greatness of Jesus" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on January 27, 2019

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Luke 3:15-22

15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, **16** John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **17** His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. **19** But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, **20** added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, **22** and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

A summary of the message: John the Baptist—at the height of his popularity and success—wants us to know that Jesus is the truly great one and he's worth following with everything we've got. As great a person as John was (in fact, Jesus said that of those born of women, there is none greater), he—and everyone else—pales in comparison to the greatness of Jesus.

Key Points:

- Welcome the greatness of Jesus into your life daily
- Adore the greatness of the humility of Jesus
- Make your life one giant sign pointing to the greatness of Jesus

Key Quotes:

- Michael Card, "One who has never and would never sin submits to a baptism that is a sign of repentance. He is not repenting. He is *identifying*. It is the first step toward an eventual death on the cross. Here, with John, he submits to a baptism of repentance for sins he never committed. On Golgotha we will die for sins he never committed so that he can forgive each and every sin."
- Phillip Ryken, "This is the hallmark of authentic Christianity: to exalt the person and work of Jesus.... The whole direction of the Christian life is to make more of Jesus, and less of ourselves."

Bottom Line:

- Like John, we should be so enamored with Jesus that we say, *I am nothing. He is everything.*

Let's get started...

- What grabs your attention in this text? How are you challenged, convicted, encouraged, or surprised by this text? What questions does it bring to mind?

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- For the purposes of our discussion, let's focus in on the words of John the Baptist in chapter 3, verse 16. The New Living Translation paraphrases the words of John the Baptist like this: "I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals." How do his words help us to understand the good news of Jesus? In other words, what kind of impression did John want to make upon his audience?
- How does this passage challenge you to more intentionally place Jesus at the center of your life? What would it look like to say with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30)?
- If you truly grasped what John the Baptist was saying, how would your prayers need to change? What would you need to ask God for? What would you like to see God do in you and through through?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- How does this text help us to see/ understand the kind of faith community we want MHC to be? What would it look like for us a church community if we are to live out this text in our city? What would we be known for?
- When we forget that the focus of our faith should be on the greatness of Jesus, what lies fill that vacuum? What is the cost if we are not transformed by this text or ignore its message?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- How does this text challenge the thinking of our city? In other words, how might it challenge our city's notion that Jesus is just one of the great thinkers of the past?
- How does this text serve as Good News for those outside the faith? What kind of new life / future in Christ is this text calling our city to experience?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways we can turn what we are learning into prayer?