



### Coffeeville First Baptist Church By Craig Baker, Pastor

I have little doubt that we live in the most self-centered time in human history. If you do not believe it just consider much of what people post on social media. It is as if there is a competition to see who can bring the most attention to themselves.

While we give the younger generation a hard time for such things, if we are honest there is this voice inside all of us that sometimes shouts, "Look at me." When things happen in life we ask, "How does this or that affect me? What does that mean for me? What will people think of me? How is that fair to me? Why does that good thing never happen for me?"

That self-centered attitude is too often prevalent in our churches. The attitude towards the church of many people is, "I want it my way. If you do not do things the way I want, I will just go somewhere else, stop being involved, or stop giving my money." Even among ministers we sometimes find a puffed up, look how great I am, and it is all about me attitude.

My point is this. We do not like to admit it, but we are all selfish, self-centered, and think too highly of ourselves to some degree. With that in mind, I want to share part of John the Baptist's story with you as consider the second must of the Christian life. The story is found in John 3:22-30. Just so that there is no confusion, John the Baptist who we read about

in this passage and the Apostle John who wrote this Gospel are not the same people. I will also refer to John the Baptist as John TB.

If there was ever a man who could boast, it was John TB. Jesus said that of all the men born of women there was none greater than him. Yet, we find that, despite having a massive following of people, John TB knew his purpose was not to glorify or raise himself up but to point people to Jesus. In this passage John tells us that Jesus had returned to the Jordan river some time after He was baptized by John TB. Like John TB, Jesus was attracting a large following of His own, and not far from where John TB is preaching and baptizing people, Jesus began to do the same. No doubt many who had been coming to see John TB were now going to Jesus, and some of John TB's followers were upset by this. The probably thought, "How dare this man come and imitate John TB and try to steal his followers."

They confront John TB with the news as if he was not aware of what was going on, and in response John TB makes a profound statement. Speaking of Jesus, John TB said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." You see John realized and understood two important things about himself. He realized who he was, and he realized who he was not. John's words that day by the river would have certainly left a lasting impression on all who heard

them. When he was on the verge of losing everything; all his admirers, fame, and recognition. Everyone was leaving him going to Jesus, and John TB simply said, "He must increase, and I must decrease." You see, John, this great messenger of God, taught us an important lesson that day. He taught us that nothing in our lives is too great a sacrifice to bring glory and honor to Jesus, our Lord and Savior. John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

God does not exist to make a big deal out of us. We exist to make a big deal out of Him, but too often we get that backwards.

Imagine for a moment that I am your tour guide leading you through an art museum, and as we come to each masterpiece, I stand not off to the side or behind each painting but directly in front of each one. When those of you in the group comment on how beautiful the paintings are or how great the artist was, I say, "Thank you. I appreciate your compliments. I did my best."

You would think that was ridiculous because I did nothing. I am just the tour guide. My purpose is to lead people to the paintings and let them see for themselves the greatness of the master artist.

Likewise, our purpose as believers is to lead people to the Jesus, our Lord and Savior, so they can see for themselves His greatness and His glory. We must decrease and He must increase.



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