



KEY TEXT

John 1:19–31 (NIV)

THE FOCUS

Forgiven people are humble enough to focus on God’s purpose for them.

LEADER NOTES

We want to help students understand that sin comes from focusing on ourselves, and God offers forgiveness through baptism in Jesus to wash us clean.

John 1:19–31 (NIV)

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

WELCOME

Hello and welcome! We're so glad you're here to experience our new series, *Overflow*!

Our theme, *Overflow*, takes inspiration from Isaiah 12:3, which says, “*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*” You can't draw water from a well with a bucket that is full of rocks, because there will be no room for the water. Also, you can't use a bucket with dirt, inside because the water would become muddy and undrinkable. Finally, you can't use a bucket that has any holes in it because, well, ya' know, that's not how water works.

We're going to be using the example of buckets for this series because our hearts are so much like buckets: they are like empty vessels that God pours His love and Spirit into when we spend time with Him in worship or devotion. That's how our relationship with God is supposed to work, but sometimes, other things get in the way.

Over time, our hearts can become dusty, dammed up, and damaged like an old bucket. Maybe we draw water from God's well of salvation one day, but then life happens. Stress, fear, hurt, and harm make our heart a damaged vessel for God's good gifts.

During this series, we're going to look at how God works to clean, repair and refresh our hearts. And hopefully, we'll spend some time with God seeking healing and forgiveness so that our relationship with Him can be fully restored.

MOVEMENT ONE

Our text today comes from the Gospel of John, Chapter 2, verses 19 through 31. This Scripture talks about a guy named John the Baptist (NOT to be confused with the disciple John who wrote this Gospel).

But who is John? And why is he so important to the story of Jesus?

Before Jesus even started his ministry, John had huge following for his ministry. He started preaching in the desert near the Jordan River. He wore weird clothes made of camel hair, and he ate bugs. And despite all his

weirdness, people found him fascinating and his message compelling. People traveled out into the desert to hear him talk and be baptized by him. It was like modern-day Burning Man Festival. In fact, so many people came to hear him, that even after Jesus’ death and resurrection, early Christians ran into John the Baptist’s followers over 1,000 miles away in Ephesus.

John was a big deal, and Jesus even says in Luke 7:28 and Matthew 11:11 that there is no one greater than him! John was such a big deal, Jewish authorities got nervous and sent priests and Levites out to investigate what in the world was going on in the desert.

MOVEMENT TWO

When the priest and officials from Jerusalem arrived, they began to investigate what was going on, and this is what happened.

John 2:19–20

Now, this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”

Sounds pretty simple, right? They asked him, point blank, “Are you the Messiah?” And he said, “Nope.”

What?! Then why were people so drawn to him? Why did he have this huge following? What in the world were people doing out there, listening to a man who eats bugs? I don’t know about you, but my little brother ate a live cricket once on a dare, and he doesn’t have a huge entourage following him around.

MOVEMENT THREE

So the priests and officials pressed John a little harder. They NEED answers.

John 2:21–22

They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

“What do you say about yourself?” That’s a pretty heavy question. It was kind of like John had been called to the principal’s office or was being chewed out by his parents. He’d stirred up all this commotion, and now the Jewish leaders wanted to know, “What do you say about yourself?”

I wonder how I would answer that question today. I’m not sure I’d know how, and maybe you don’t know, either. But this is what happened next.

John 1:23–27

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

If John said he wasn’t ALL THAT, why was his message so compelling? He was not the Messiah. He was not insta-famous. He wasn’t a great warrior or great athlete. He was simply preparing the way for someone else, and he wasn’t even sure who it was yet!

MOVEMENT FOUR

So, why were people coming to see John? Why was his message so compelling? He was offering baptism, a ritual that, in its most basic form, symbolizes God’s forgiveness. These people were having their hearts washed clean. Their empty buckets were being prepared to receive God’s goodness. And John, in the midst of this, remained humble! An amazing example to the crowds of how a follower of God should behave and carry themselves.

Pride and shame are two sides to the same coin. Ultimately, they both are a failure to exercise humility.

You see, if a heart is like a bucket, the dirt that fills that bucket is sin. And sinfulness comes in two main forms. The one we’re most familiar with is Pride. Pride is typically how we talk about the first sin in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God.

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