

Disrupting Religion
Part 7
It's All about Time
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Well, Good Morning Church!

If you have your Bibles you can turn to John Chapter 3. We will be looking at that in a moment starting at Verse 22.

We would love to see as many people as possible at Lakeview Park today. It is a wonderful time when we can gather together surrounded by God's creation and the brisk waters of Lake Ontario and watch 8 people take the step of obedience to being baptized and hearing their testimonies as to how God has worked in their lives. It is a time for us to celebrate what God is doing together.

For the last number of weeks we have been looking at the first year and a half of Jesus' ministry with His first five disciples. Over the last few weeks we looked at Nicodemus and Jesus' conversation with him after He disrupted the temple practices.

Last Sunday we looked at the Samaritan woman and how Jesus spoke into the deep parts of her life and transformed her and a whole village in the region of Samaria.

And what we are going to be looking at this morning is a passage of Scripture that takes place in between those two conversations. When Jesus disrupts Jerusalem and has the Nicodemus conversation, before He goes into the region of Samaria He goes out into the Judean wilderness where John the Baptist is baptizing, and that is what we are going to be looking at this morning.

And I have entitled this message, "It's All about Time" and I trust that by the end of the message you will understand why.

Just to get our minds thinking in line with time I did some research this week to find a few statistics about how we use our time here in Toronto.

The average Torontonionian has a 65 minute commute to work. That's just to work, so 65 minutes there, 65 minutes back. Assuming that we work a 250 day work year, that amounts to 32,500 minutes in traffic - that is just about 500 hours in traffic. Don't you feel better now that you have come to church on Sunday?

The average office worker spends 5 hours and 41 minutes at their desk a day. That is 1400 hours a year that you are spending at your desk. Sometimes that feels like 1400 years, doesn't it?

The average person then watches 5 hours of TV a day. When you run the math on that over the course of a year, we're watching 1825 hours a year of television.

So between sitting in traffic to get to work, being at our desk and then returning home and watching TV, it forces us to ask the question: how are we using our time?

Theophrastus, who was the successor of Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, said this:

“Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend.”

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Baltasar Gracián, who was a 16th Century Jesuit priest, said this:

“All that really belongs to us is time. Even he who has nothing else has that.”

So all of us are entrusted with the same 24 hours a day, every single one of us. None of us can accumulate more time; none of us can lose that time unless we go into eternity.

And what I find remarkable about the first year and a half of Jesus’ public ministry is how He spent His time.

We are looking at the first year and a half of a three and a half year ministry – that’s almost half of His time where He is working to prepare a group of disciples to be leaders within the church.

And with a three and a half year public ministry, Jesus must have been mindful of how precious time was. And His use of it would have to be pretty strategic to prepare a group of disciples to lead the church.

So we are going to look at that whole idea of time here in John Chapter 3 and Verse 22 we read this:

“After this...”

That is, after upsetting the temple system in Jerusalem and the Feast of Unleavened Bread and talking to Nicodemus,

“After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized.

“Now John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized.

“(This was before John was put in prison.)

“An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing.

“They came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan – the one you testified about – look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.’

“To this John replied, ‘A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.

““You yourselves can testify that I said, “I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.”

““The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

““He must become greater; I must become less.

““The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

““He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony.

““Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

““For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

““The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

““Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.””

What I want to look at in our time together this morning is the health of a disciple and the heart of a disciple.

When you study the New Testament there are predominantly two words that we have in the Greek language for the concept of time. They are *chronos* and *kairos*.

Chronos is used 54 times in the New Testament and it refers to the minutes and seconds in our day. It is a measureable resource reference. It is the amount of time that we spend.

And *kairos*, which is used 86 times in the New Testament, refers to an appointed time, an opportune moment. Oftentimes referring to the appointed time in the purposes of God, the time when God acts.

In Mark 1:15 it says this:

“The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.”

Literally what they are saying is the *kairos* is fulfilled, God's purposes have come about.

Now we tend to think of our time with a *chronos* mindset. We think of having 24 hours in a day. We define our week by the number of hours that we work.

We define it by to-do lists that need to get done and work sheets that we do at our offices. And we have to be conscious of our minutes and seconds – that's a good thing; we want to use our time well and be good stewards of it.

But the *chronos* mindset can crowd out the *kairos* events that are taking place among us. We can be so *chronos* focused that we are not recognizing God's opportune time that is taking place around us.

However with these two words as the dominant New Testament words referring to time, John, the author of this Gospel, uses a third word for the expression of time. Now this third word for the expression of time is only used once in all of the Gospels and it is in the passage that we just read. And it appears later in the book of Acts.

So clearly the disciples learned something through this type of time and applied it in the book of Acts, but it only appears once in the Gospels.

And it is a fascinating word; one that I believe has profound implications for us today.

In John 3:22 John writes this:

“After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized.”

Some time refers to a period of about 4 to 6 months. Although it is just one verse and seems very brief, Jesus spent about 4 to 6 months in this region baptizing with His disciples.

And the word that John uses here in his Gospel is *dia tribo, dia tribo*. *Dia*, which means through; *tribo*, which means to rub.

To rub through – Jesus spent time with His disciples to rub through. That's the type of time that John uses to signify what is taking place in this period.

Now that was a Greek word that was often used for leather sandals or leather shoes. You know when you get leather shoes, you get those new nice leather shoes and you put them on, and you are walking around and by the end of the day, by the end of the week, by the end of the month, as you are breaking them in, you probably have blisters?

It is because you are *dia triboing* that new leather. You are starting to break it in. All of your foot sweat needs to soak into the leather and break it down. You need to rub through; you need to break it in.

Maybe feet isn't the best analogy – you guys just are giving me blank stares. Let me use a culinary term. I come from a culinary background; I worked as a chef for a number of years before meeting Jesus and entering into ministry.

And I love to cook a nice steak dinner. I believe the God of the Old Testament that He delights in burnt offerings, that pleasing aroma to the Lord, so I just want to be godly and accommodate. And so one of my favorite meals to cook is a New York strip loin steak. It is well marbled; it has got just enough healthy fat to it to make it delicious.

But what I do is I take Montreal steak spice in a liquid paste form that LaGrille puts on (free advertising right there), La Grille puts on; I take that Montreal steak spice and I apply it liberally to my New York strip loin.

What I am doing is dia triboing that steak spice into the meat. I am rubbing it through. I am grounding it in. I am wanting the flavors of that marinade to soak into my steak.

And when you put it on a hot grill, yes it is true – just a pleasing aroma arises. I have lost half the room right now – you are not even listening to me; you are just thinking of this beautiful steak that is sizzling.

And what we need to do is dia tribo the marinade into the food. Now if you are a vegetarian, I tried my hardest this week, but I am sorry I have no analogy for you. I just can't relate.

And so John draws our minds to this concept of Jesus spending time dia triboing with His disciples. And what you notice when you look at the first four chapters of the Gospel of John, just the first year and a half of Jesus in His ministry with His disciples, we note the fact that disciple-making requires time. Disciple-making requires time. It is all about time.

Sometimes it is chronos time, spending moments and minutes and measuring that time. Sometimes it involves kairos moments where we see God and His opportune time coming to fruition and we see evidence of Him working and it is a godly moment that we experience in time. It is not just a chronos moment. And then it is also a dia tribo time that disciple-making requires.

When you study the first few pages, first few chapters of the Gospel of John, you see Jesus' relational priorities in the amount of time He spends with His disciples.

When John the Baptist declares Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Andrew and John follow Him and when He turns around and says to them, "What do you want?" they say, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" Jesus immediately invites them to spend the day with Him.

And by the end of the day they are convinced that He is the Messiah. Andrew goes and gets his brother Peter and then they have five followers by the end of John Chapter 1. And the first thing

Jesus does, the next event that we see Him involved in with His disciples is at a family wedding in Cana of Galilee where He turned the water into wine.

Jesus invited His disciples into an everyday life moment, a family wedding. In fact that was the place where He revealed His glory to them.

Right after that wedding we read in John 2:12:

“After this wedding he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed a few days.”

So what we note in John’s Gospel is that Jesus includes His disciples in His family life. They get to spend a few days with Him. It doesn’t define that He is preaching the Word or doing miracles; they are just spending time with Jesus.

They are seeing how He treats His mother. They are getting to witness His relationship with His brothers and sisters. They are getting to glimpse what Jesus is like in everyday life moments.

And one of the dominant themes in the first year and a half and throughout Jesus’ ministry is that He spends vast amounts of time with His disciples. It is a shared life, not just a shared study or a shared gathering that Jesus made disciples in.

It’s a time spent together, learning together, serving together, laughing together, feeling overwhelmed together. When they were at the temple in Jerusalem certainly the disciples must have felt that, and they are experiencing Jesus in community.

And it’s the same today. When I worked at Urban Promise, I tabulated a while back how many short term mission trips or retreats I took with the various people that we served alongside. And it came to about 86 retreats and mission trips in 17 years.

And it is profound how, when you go on a mission trip with others, the group that just returned from Taiwan and Lebanon and certainly the group that is in Kenya right now, they could all tell you the reality of this. When you go on a mission trip or you go on a retreat, the very process of being together, experiencing Jesus together, you dia tribo when you are locked in a 15-passenger van and you go on a mission trip together.

We used to take students from Bible colleges down to Camden, New Jersey on missions trips at the end of their academic year. And when you sleep in a church basement together – and Camden has a large amount of rats in their population – you would strategically sleep in the middle of the room and then position all the students around you as a perimeter so that if a rat wandered into the room, it would hit a student first. And when you heard the scream you would know that hostiles have entered the territory.

(So I have a little bit to learn about servant leadership.) But when you go on these trips together you’re seeing people in the everyday moments of life. You are getting to see the good, the bad,

the ugly. You're getting to see them at their best. You're getting to see them when they are tired. And you are dia triboing the whole time.

Jesus is using the circumstance to rub in, to break through. Just like a pair of sandals He needs to rub in and break through into every area of our lives and He does this with His disciples in a community.

Now you see this dia tribo principle at work even in our friendships. I want you right now to think of one of your best friends. And as you think of your best friend, because you have spent so much time together, probably because you have had so many conversations and rubbed off on one another and rubbed through on each other and break into each other, you probably know their mannerisms. You know some of the expressions that they commonly use. It's true in our natural relationships.

If you know Stephen Zodige – if I spend too much time with Stephen Zodige, I start saying the word “yada-yada-yada” because Stephen, when you are in meetings; he will be describing something. He will be like, “Yes, it's like this, and then you know what it's like yada-yada-yada,” and then he'll go on.

And if I spend a lot of time with him it starts to rub off into my language and I will be in meetings where I use the word “yada-yada-yada.” I don't ever say that word but when I am spending time with someone it starts to rub in, it starts to break in. And you get to know one another's tendencies.

One of my favorite things when I am in Toronto is to be in a coffee shop or a restaurant and see an older married couple who are just sitting at a table. And a friend of mine witnessed this couple sitting at a table in McDonalds a number of months ago.

And when you look at a couple like you see on the screen behind me, one of the beautiful things that you see is that certainly this couple has journeyed together. Certainly they have experienced chronos time together. They have probably experienced kairos moments in their lives and certainly they have experienced the reality of dia tribo where they are constantly in community, experiencing the phenomenon of having every conversation and how we break through, how we rub up against one another's personalities in the journey of the two becoming one flesh.

Now this is the mystery. I did not know who this couple was. My friend took this picture a number of months ago. He saw them in a McDonald's coffee shop and was just so captivated by the love in their expressions as they stared into one another's eyes. They weren't even talking; they were just staring at each other. They have been married for 64 years.

Now think of every single moment in those 64 years - when you have been married that long you have had virtually every conversation. You know the other so well. You can communicate just by staring at one another. You don't even need words.

And if you ever have those moments where you see a couple like this in a coffee shop, it's the most beautiful witness.

Now I mentioned that I didn't know who this was and I talked about them in first service, put up their photo and then their daughter and their grandson came up to me in between services.

It turns out that this is a story of young love. They knew each other in church when they were junior high ages, fell in love in their teenage years, got married, and have been faithfully walking with God their whole life.

And you can see it in their expression. I didn't even know they were Christian, but my friend, when he witnessed this; he saw such love, he saw such a *dia tribo kairos* moment because the love of Christ was shining through both of them.

It's Harold and Lorraine Edwards. They are at Sheppard Lodge right now, a beautiful couple. It turns out in our own congregation – I asked Reg this week who are the longest married couple in our congregation and it's Hazel and Timothy Starr. They can't be with us oftentimes week by week because of frail health but they have been married for 68 years.

And so it's just beautiful when we witness *dia tribo* in our natural human relationships, but do you ever think of your relationship with Christ this way? Do you ever envision a relationship with Christ that is just like that married couple sitting in that café?

Paul describes Christ's relationship with the church using marriage as his illustration in Ephesians Chapter 5. He is giving a command to husbands how they ought to love their wives but he uses all kinds of language to display Christ's love for His bride, the church.

And Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, to cleanse her, how He feeds and cares for her and He presents her to Himself a radiant bride without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."

Paul uses this beautiful description about Christ and the relationship He has with His bride, the church.

And then Paul makes a profound theological statement at the end of Ephesians Chapter 5. He goes back to creation, back to Genesis Chapter 2. And Paul writes this statement in Ephesians 5:31:

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

"This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church."

That's the mystery of the ages - the two becoming one. That's the type of relationship that Christ longs to have with you His church. As you *dia tribo* with Him, the two become one.

When God looks at His bride, He sees one, He sees Christ. It is a profound mystery that Paul speaks about. When we *dia tribo* with Jesus we begin to share that type of love relationship with

Him. When we dia tribo with Jesus, when we abide in Him, He breaks us in, He starts to transform us. Who He is becomes made evident in our lives.

When we spend time with Him, His thoughts become our thoughts, His ways become my ways, His desires become my desires, His priorities become my priorities. His compassion becomes my compassion, His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control become evident in our lives. When we dia tribo with Him, when we spend intentional extended periods with Him, we become more like Him, the two become one.

And Paul describes it this way in Galatians Chapter 2:20:

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

As we abide in Him, He works in us and through us. As we dia tribo with Him, He starts to break us in, He starts to rub into areas of our lives where we need Him to refine us.

And so it is not just chronos time or kairos time with Jesus; it is also the dia tribo that we are to experience.

And if I took your smart phone, if I took your work schedule and I threw open your day timer, would your schedule describe that you carve out that time with Jesus, the most important relationship that you can have on this planet? Does your schedule reflect prioritizing time with Jesus?

And if you are here this morning and you look back over the last months and years and you feel like you have wasted a lot of time, I am not saying this to beat you up, I don't want you to feel guilty (too much), but Mother Theresa stated this:

“Yesterday has gone, tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today, let us begin.”

And so if you haven't structured that time, don't worry about yesterday; it's gone. Tomorrow is not here. Just take care of the moments and the years will take care of themselves.

So that speaks to the health of the disciple and here is where John in his Gospel contrasts these two moments. The beauty of dia tribo was taking place on the banks of the Jordan. Jesus is spending intentional quality time where He is breaking in, where He is rubbing through into their lives. And this is happening with His disciples on the banks of the Jordan.

And then across the river is John the Baptist. His ministry is still going. And as the profound beauty of dia tribo is taking place on one side of the Jordan, on the other side of the Jordan there is a debate that is raging.

We read in Verse 25 that an argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing.

Jesus is there with his disciples. Jesus is baptizing; crowds are going to Him. God is at work among them. And we see this other group may be distracted with their eyes fixed on chronos time, debating and arguing over ceremonial washing, of all things.

God is across the river preaching to the people. God is across the river dia triboing amongst the people and this group is disputing ceremonial washing, which all has to do with how you become clean before God. Do you see the irony of it?

We can be in Jesus' presence. He can be among us and two groups are experiencing two different aspects. One has experienced Jesus rubbing into every area of their lives and breaking them in like a leather pair of sandals and breaking through, becoming more like Him. And the other group is debating and arguing.

And it shows how easily we can miss the kairos and dia tribo moments of God if we are not tuned into who He is and what He is doing.

I imagine this group that is debating probably thought that they were having an important theological discussion. It probably mattered to the parties involved who are arguing about ceremonial washing. They didn't think it was a trivial waste of time. They may have even thought that they were debating the will of God and that they were right in line with what God wanted them to be talking about, that they needed to defend this truth in this argument.

And it displays how traditions and religion can become our focus and we miss the sense of relationship that He is calling us into. It is so easy for this to happen in our lives.

As I mentioned, each year for a number of years we would take Bible college students down to Camden, New Jersey for a mission trip. And I always loved packing up a student body that had studied theology for their first year, load them into 15-passenger vans - cramped quarters because we wanted to be frugal with our resources - travel down to a very difficult city, often rated the most dangerous city in the USA, sleep on a church basement floor with cockroaches and rats.

One time it was so bad we had to sleep on little square desks and push them all together because there was such an infestation. But it is beautiful to watch students who have studied theology all year, so full of God's truth, so full of their theological understanding of who Jesus is – to watch their theology meet real life circumstances. To watch them wrestle with the complexity of the truths that are absolute and we fully understand, wrestle with the complexity of bringing that truth to bear on lives where everything seemed so broken.

What does it mean to love God and love others and the complexity of that? It was beautiful to watch them in a van and in a church basement and serving others during that time and watching their theology get dia triboed where they are not only getting the mind of Christ but also getting the heart of Christ.

You see we can be so focused in our theological exercise and our desire for pure doctrine that theology and doctrine sometimes – just sometimes – become lord. And we are so locked into them, we're so locked into being right. We are not so much concerned with righteousness; we just want to be right, and that theology actually becomes lord.

And we miss the whole relational nature of what Jesus is doing with His disciples. He is *dia triboing*, He is imparting His very self into every fiber of who they are.

And I am not saying that theology isn't important; I believe theology is essential. I stand for sound doctrine because it is vital for the health of the believer and the church. What you believe about God has such a profound impact on how you live your life.

But when I look around the Christian society today in our own culture, sometimes I see debates raging over things like ceremonial washing. I see debates raging in our culture online, and oftentimes the passion and intensity of the statements Christians are making about their own brothers and sisters in public forums doesn't reflect the way Jesus revealed we are to treat one another.

Some people come alive as they debate theology. But sometimes when you listen it seems more about their ego than it is about loving God and loving others.

We can be busy debating and disputing theology. Meanwhile Jesus is moving amongst us, *dia triboing* amongst us, and we are missing it because we are locked in our dispute.

And Jesus is *dia triboing* and this group is debating. And as they debate, the group that is debating the ceremonial washing attempt to draw John the Baptist into their dispute, and they do it by appealing to his ego. Look at Verse 26:

“They came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan – the one you testified about – look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.’”

They see what is happening and they come to John and why are they saying this to John, why are they so concerned that everyone is going to Jesus? “John, your ministry is diminishing. The numbers are shrinking. People aren't coming out. They seem to be going to that guy you testified about. You know the one you said was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world? They are all going to Him. John, your ministry is disappearing. What do you think about that?”

And John's reply is so profound due to its humility and its simplicity, but also its complexity.

“To this John replied, ‘A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.

““You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’””

Look what He said in Verse 25:

“The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

“He must become greater; I must become less.”

This is a profound statement similar to what Paul is talking about in Ephesians Chapter 5 that John the Baptist introduces here.

And what he says as they try and lure him into this discussion, as they appeal to his ego saying everybody is going to Him; he simply says, “Dear disciples I am only carrying out the function that God has asked me to do.”

He then reminds his disciples of the relationship God longs for with His people and he says to them essentially, “Fellas, it’s not about ceremony, it’s not about ceremonial washing; it’s about matrimony. The bride belongs to the bridegroom and the friend who attends the bridegroom hears his voice and oh how joyful he is when he hears his voice. And I have heard the voice of the Bridegroom and the bride is going to Him. He must become greater; I must become less.”

John sees what is happening and he knows it is time to fade into the background. His mission has been accomplished. He was sent like the best man to prepare the bride to meet her husband. And now that that has taken place, now that he has announced the coming the King, he must become less.

As we mature in Christ, our lives become less about us and more about Him. We love celebrating who He is. We are not so much concerned about our own lives or our own comfort; we just want to point to Him.

When we dia tribo, our joy comes from hearing His voice and living a life that becomes about His greatness and our less-ness.

I appreciate hip hop music, of all things (there you go – we have one – one in a room of 1200 people). Now I love multiple forms of hip hop. I think it is a beautiful art form.

I love Christian hip hop and there is a song that Lecrae came out with a number of years ago. And I believe it represents what John the Baptist is trying to say to his disciples who are busy disputing their theology while Jesus is on the other side of the river dia triboing with others.

What he is trying to call their attention to is the heart of a disciple. And so we are going to listen to some hip hop – I know that is a bit of a stretch – don’t worry I chose a song that you probably should understand all the words, but just in case you don’t, the words will be on the screen so that you can follow along.

But I believe this articulates what John the Baptist is saying to his disciples. I also believe it articulates what Charles Price held before us for 15 years as he taught at this church. Listen to this song.

*I could play the background
I could play the background
'Cause I know sometimes I get in the way
So won't You take the lead, lead, lead?
So won't You take the lead, lead, lead?
And I could play the background, background
And you could take the lead*

*It's evident you run the show, so let me back down
You take the leading role, and I'll play the background
I know I miss my cues, know I forget my lines
I'm sticking to your script, and I'm reading all your signs (Aye)
I don't need my name in lights, (Aye) I don't need a starring role
Why gain the whole wide world, If I'm just going lose my soul?
And my ways ain't purified, don't live according to Your Word
I can't endure this life without Your wisdom being heard
So word to every dancer for a pop star
'Cause we all play the background, but mine's a rockstar
Yeah, so if you need me I'll be stage right
Praying the whole world would start embracing stage fright
So let me fall back, stop giving my suggestions
'Cause when I follow my obsessions, I end up confessin'
That I'm not that impressive, matter of fact
I'm who I are, a trail of stardust leading to the superstar.*

Yeah!

What John the Baptist is calling his disciples' attention to is this same thing that Lecrae is articulating in that song: "I can play the background. He must become greater; I must become less. Fellas, it's not about us. It's not about our debating, it's not about our disputing, it's not about us. It's all about Him. I want to play the background in my life. I want people to be captivated by who He is. All I want to be is pointing out the greatness of who Christ is. He must be pre-eminent. I must disappear."

And why is John the Baptist so adamant about this? He makes seven statements about who Jesus is that are profound.

In Verse 31 he says this:

"The one who comes from above is above all."

Later in the verse he says,

“The one who comes from heaven is above all.”

Verse 32 he says,

“He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony.

“Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

“For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

“The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.”

John the Baptist is saying, “I can play the background. It is not about me; it is all about Him.”

Why? “Because He is from above. He is above all. He is the One God has sent. He is the One who speaks the very words of God. He declares what He has seen and heard firsthand because He is from heaven.

“And God has given Him the Spirit with no limits. He has placed everything, every single thing, every single thing on the planet, in the universe, in all of the cosmos; every single thing has been placed in His hands. That’s why I can play the background, fellas because it’s all about Him.”

John reminds his disciples that it is not about ceremony; it is about matrimony. And as we spend time with Him, as we spend *chronos* and *kairos* and *dia tribo* with Him, we become more and more in love with Him, and His greatness begins to shine through. Our lives become mostly about Him and less about us.

Look at this picture of this couple again. What a beautiful couple as they stare in one another’s face as they have spent a lifetime of *dia tribo*, as they have served in the church alongside one another as their daughter indicated to me, as they were faithful as greeters and elders and in Sunday school, as they served alongside one another, they experienced the greatness of who Christ is.

And in a McDonald’s café they shone the light of Christ to those around them just by gazing at one another.

That’s the type of relationship I want with Jesus, don’t you? It’s not simply a religious set of rules to be obeyed; it is a relationship - the two becoming one - that He invites us into.

We are going to close with a song, “Be Lifted High. Lord, in our lives be lifted high.”

Let's pray together before we sing that song together.

Father we acknowledge that in our day and age all kinds of things can crowd out our time. And Lord we remember the words of Mother Theresa – yesterday has gone, tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today; let us begin.

Lord, let us begin as Your people to spend chronos, experience kairos and certainly dia tribo moments. As we abide in You, spend our time with You, Lord may we stare into Your gaze, may we experience communal living and shared life together and grow into Your likeness. We ask that You would make this true in our lives this day, this week ahead. As we gather later today to celebrate what You have done in people's lives, may we as a community experience You being among us as Your disciples.