

# Summer 2020



## John 3:30

‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’

### Reflection

This Summer at A Year With Jesus, for the next six weeks or so, we’ll be spending five to six minutes, five days a week, reflecting over some of our favourite passages from the Bible. Most of the verses will be short enough to commit to mem-

ory and so we're encouraging you to try and memorise the ones that speak most powerfully to you. Yesterday's verse from Mark 13:31 was only thirteen words long but today's one is even easier! Just seven words, from John 3:30,

‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’

These words are from the older version of the NIV and most of the newer versions of the bible today. The new NIV has ‘he must become greater; I must become less’ but I think that

‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’

is a more memorable and more accurate turn of phrase.

‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’

Seven words. And so powerful. They’re spoken by John the Baptist, the greatest prophet ever to walk the earth, one of the greatest preachers to ever live, Elijah returned, calling down fire from heaven through the words of his fearless sermons. ‘You brood of vipers’; ‘Even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees’; ‘the chaff will burn with unquenchable fire’. No one was spared – soldiers, tax collectors, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, even King Herod. The whole region came out to hear him preach and were moved to cry out in repentance and faith “What then shall we do?”.

Jesus called him the greatest prophet to ever walk the earth. His birth was foretold

by the angel Gabriel himself, in the holy of holies in the temple, on the holiest day of the year, next stop for Gabriel – Mary the mother of God. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. He baptised Jesus, the son of God himself. Can you imagine that honour? John was a young man at the height of his powers, who in less than a year had grown a ministry the likes of which no-one had ever seen. They came out in their thousands to hear him preach and he led them back to God.

And yet, at the height of his powers he could speak these seven words that cut me to the heart,

‘He must increase, but I must decrease’.

The reason that these words cut me to the heart is that I'm proud. A lot of the time I'm very concerned with how I might increase in the estimations of others. Not Jesus, but me. But our verse says exactly the opposite,

‘He must increase, but I must decrease’.

Where's John's pride? What's happened in his heart for there to be such an absence of pride? And how can I be like that? Well I think the answer lies in the way John the Baptist sees himself in relation to Jesus. We're told earlier that he doesn't view himself as worthy even to untie the straps of Jesus' sandals, which was one of the lowliest jobs in the ancient world. The role of a household slave.

But here's the rub. Think about this for a moment. Think about these two scenes. Here we have the greatest prophet ever to walk the earth who doesn't even consider himself worthy to untie Jesus' sandals; the same Jesus who in John 13 gets down on his hands and knees, not to untie the sandals of his disciples but to do far more than that, to wash their very feet. Where does this leave us? Jesus says, 'Go and do likewise' in great humility, for his glory and not our own.

## **Think & Pray**

“He must increase, but I must decrease”.

Seven words that have the power to

change lives. As you head out to work today what kind thing can you do or conversation can you have that he might increase? When you come home tonight to your flat mate or husband and children what love can you show them that he might increase. How can you serve them, that he might increase? Think back over your journey with Jesus so far, over the years that you've walked with him, and just look how he's increased and you've decreased. And when pride rises up or sin risks creeping in today remember that he must increase and we must decrease.

Pray that it would be so for you and I. Pray that we'd be humble like Jesus so that he might increase.