

One Greater Than

John 3:25 – 30

I. Intro

- A. Last couple weeks focus on number one (1); God’s One True Word; One Path to God – through Christ**
- B. Today – passage will help understand message title better; **READ John 3:25 – 30****
- C. Putting faith/trust in Jesus Christ we experience a second birth/new birth; God’s Spirit takes up residence within us (don’t totally comprehend how works), and a reconciled/restored relationship with our Creator begins**
- D. John 3, well-known story, Jesus and Nicodemus**
 - i. Jesus’ words to Nicodemus: John 3:3 (ESV)**

3 ... “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”; also - **John 3:6 (ESV)**

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- E. That’s salvation, what follows is sanctification – growing and maturing in holiness and in the image of Christ; our relationship with God grows deeper – doesn’t happen overnight**
- F. Soon after this second/new birth we discover an inner struggle going on inside of us**
 - i. Paul’s words: Romans 7:18-20 (ESV)**

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
 - ii. Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)**

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- G. Because of sin in us, growing spiritually isn’t quick, and it isn’t easy; misconception of many people who come to faith in Christ – that their life will be so much better/easier**
- H. The dilemma that comes with salvation and sanctification – “self” is still hanging around; Paul describes this dilemma - Galatians 5:17 (ESV)**

17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you

from doing the things you want to do. (comforting to know Paul dealt with same temptation struggles we do)

- I. **Key to winning this internal battle, two-part statement made by John the Baptist in passage – REFER v. 30**

II. **Us Becoming Less**

- A. **Illustration:** Billy Graham story about an Eskimo fisherman, had two dogs – one white, one black. Every Saturday afternoon, fisherman bring dogs to town and have the race against one another and take bets from people on which would win – some Saturdays the white would win, some Saturdays the black, but every Saturday the fisherman won. When asked how he knew which dog would win every Saturday he replied, “It’s simple. I starve one and feed the other. The one I feed always wins because he is stronger.”
- B. Every person has two natures (like Paul, one that wants to do good and the other that many times ends up doing bad), and the constant struggle between the two for control over “self” – the one that will ultimately win out is the one we “feed”
- C. Upon trusting Jesus Christ as Savior, and Lord (Master), you exchanged your old way of living for a new way of living; problem – too many keep “feeding” that old way of living
- D. The key to becoming less:
 - i. **Romans 6:6-7 (ESV)**
 - 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.
 - 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin.
 - ii. **[SLIDE] If the old “self” has truly been crucified, then quit feeding it; when temptation comes say to ourselves, “I’m dead to that”**
 - iii. **Romans 6:11-13 (ESV)**
 - 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 - 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.
 - 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

III. **God Becoming Greater**

- A. **Greatest truth from today’s passage – More of God causes less of self**
- B. **Galatians 5:16 (ESV)**

16 ... walk [*live*] by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

C. Analogy: Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, (Not speaking about drinking specifically but using analogy of being filled with wine vs. filled with Holy Spirit)

D. Remember – Acts 2, Holy Spirit first came upon disciples, people thought they were drunk; when someone is drunk, or driving while drunk, we say, “Under the influence”; [SLIDE] being filled with Holy Spirit means we are under His influence, his control, his power

E. Question: If God’s Spirit is living in us, does being filled with the Spirit mean we’re getting “more” of Him? No

i. **When the Spirit is living in us, He is in us completely – not just a portion/percentage of Him, or a little when we first become a Christian and as we grow spiritually His presence increases**

ii. **Billy Graham’s words: [SLIDE] *It’s not how much of the Spirit we have, but how much the Spirit has of us***

iii. **Being filled with the Spirit is not about greater amounts, but about greater control/influence**

F. Very important key in giving God’s Spirit greater control of our lives – as believers/followers of Christ it’s not about seeking an experience, it’s about seeking God

i. **Merely seeking an experience our motive/desires are driven by how we’re benefiting from the experience; when feeling we’re no longer benefiting then we remove ourselves from the experience**

ii. **But seeking God Himself, focus on being *crucified with Christ* and daily surrendering to Him, we want more of Him; *He must become greater*, not my experience must become greater**

G. When it comes to “self” and Jesus Christ and Spirit of God, there is One Greater Than and one less than

IV. Close

A. All of scripture is clear that we as disciples of Christ are to be filled with His Holy Spirit

B. That’s what a crucified life with Christ looks like, allowing the Holy Spirit in us to work and to have greater influence on us

C. As we allow the Spirit to have greater influence on us, the spiritual battle between flesh and spirit becomes more intense – we can’t fight this battle on our own

D. We must walk/live/keep in step with God’s Spirit who lives in us - the One that is Greater Than