



Grand Prelate's Monthly Message

JUNE 2024

June 24th is St. John's Day, when we commemorate John the Baptist, one of Freemasonry's patron saints. John served as a forerunner of Christ, preparing the world for the coming of our savior. Now, in all truth, if John were a member of your family, he would probably be that member that you invite to a gathering with the secret hope that he would decline. That was because he was different. He was a man who spoke his mind, truthfully and without concern of the cost. He wore odd clothes, ate bugs, and had taken a Nazarite Vow, dedicating himself to yield to God completely. Yep, he was different than most. I do not imagine John being smooth at a dinner party. He strikes me as someone who knew the one thing he was about, and he was committed to doing that one thing: to prepare the way of the Lord. And, by God's grace, he was able to focus his life on doing that.

As we reflect on John the Baptist, there are three things about his life that we can all take to heart and learn how to practice in our own lives:

His humility: Having your life call being spoken of in ancient prophecies could be an overwhelming thing to deal with. But John carried it all with a sense of dignity and self-awareness. He clearly understood who he was, and more importantly, who he was not. As others flocked to him, he took the chance to give glory to God rather than himself. When Jesus came to seek baptism from him, John was astonished by the honor of it. And when his disciples reported that people were beginning to go to Jesus for baptism instead of him, John's reply reveals a man who knows his place and is content with that. He told them, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove his sandals. He himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).

His faith: As a child of a priest, John obviously spent his youth learning about God. His parent's faith was a solid foundation, but John went farther, learning more about God and making that faith part of his life. John was filled with knowledge and passion about God's saving grace. His journey of faith equipped him to proclaim his message, even when doing so would put his life at risk. Such faith and courage only come from knowing that Christ is the Lamb of God, and therefore, we rest secure in the salvation He has purchased.

His obedience: John chose to live out his calling and live according to God's plan for him. He knew the urgency of the message he spoke. He stood firm throughout everything, even when it cost him his life. He knew and accepted that glorifying God was worth everything.

The message that John the Baptist shared is one that the world still needs to hear. If we are willing to cultivate those qualities that John displayed, God will use us to share Christ's love with others and give each of us a more impactful ministry to those around us.

Always and All Ways in Christ
Rick Saunders
Grand Prelate