

problem:
rivalry and jealousy in the Christian life.

Text:

Rivalry

John 3:22 ¶ After this **Jesus and his disciples** went into the Judean countryside, and **he remained there with them** (*personal investment*) and was baptizing.

John 3:23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized

John 3:24 (for John had not yet been put in prison).

John 3:25 ¶ Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.

John 3:26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—**look**, he is baptizing, and **all are going to him.**"

(22) after this -

*John contrasts nicodemus' self reliance with the baptizer's God dependence -
the gospel is about God not you*

(24) reinforces that John is not interested in chronology but a message with a meaning

(26) rivalry -

in the OT - Num 12:1-15; 16:1-35

in the gospels - Mk 9:30-41

in the church - 1 Cor 1:10-15

where does it come from?

our worldliness - James 4:1-3 - pride = friendship with the world- murder etc.

Response (John the baptizer)

John 3:27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing **unless it is given him from heaven.**

John 3:28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'

John 3:29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

John 3:30 **He must increase, but I must decrease."**

(27) contrast Nicodemus John 3:4 and the Pharisees 4:1-3 - with the baptizer

(27) the baptizer knew God's sovereignty - Jn 6:65; 19:11

(28) He knew his place- Jn 3:25 (purification)-

Jn 2:1-11 -imagine the best man taking attention from the groom

(29) He rejoiced in it - (2 Cor 11:1-2; Eph 5:29-32; Rev 19:6-9)

Reality (John the evangelist)

John 3:31 ¶ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.

John 3:32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet **no one receives his testimony.**

(1:9-11; 3:11)

John 3:33 **Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. (3:21)**

John 3:34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

John 3:35 **The Father** loves the Son and **has given** all things into his hand.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

(32) no one receives - Jn 1:9-11

(33) God is true -

(34) saved by Words He sent- not our words and the Spirit He gave - Not our spirit or will

(35) saved by the Son He loved- not our love and the choice He made - Not our choice

(36) so then it does not matter who you are; how bad you've been - Whoever believes has eternal life

Main Idea:

we cannot add to the song of grace- its not our song- we can merely adorn it

Implication

Christianity is about amazing grace not amazing faith - Eph 2:1-10;

Application:

no boasting - neither for salvation nor for service - but in the Lord

do not boast in your faith - 1 Cor 1:18-31

Realize that

you are not saved because you are smart or because you understand what the world does not-
you are saved because God saved you -despite you

Action: boast in amazing grace not amazing faith

do not boast in your work - 1 Cor 3:1-7; 1 Cor 12:11, 18

Realize that

you are not useful because you are smart or because you have talent. you are useful because
He chose to use you- despite you.

Action: boast in God's glory not your own

Main Idea: Titus 2:10

we cannot add to the song of grace- its not our song- we can merely adorn it

a musician will sometimes add notes to their finished work - called grace notes - they were not
the harmony nor the melody - they were not essential but an embellishment -meant to adorn a
finished work

my friends we live in His story, in His song

our lives and deeds add nothing to the song of grace - it has already been written - we cannot
add to it- merely adorn it

these are great articles for further study - try to be prepared to discuss

Envy hunts in packs:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/envy-hunts-in-a-pack>

comparison kills service and steals glory from God:

<http://www.stewardshipcentral.org/posts/3-truths-about-comparing-your-ministry-to-others>

discernment is an important fact of the Christian life:

<https://www.gty.org/blog/B140410/discerning-judgment>

There are unique dangers in discernment we must be aware of:

<http://brodane.wordpress.com/2010/03/14/discerning-your-discernment-ministry/>

as a rule of thumb - discuss how these articles might relate to the sermon.