



**SPRINGCREEK  
CHURCH**

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**THE LESSON**  
Pastor Keith Stewart  
August 22, 2021

*The greatest hold-ups in my hang-ups is me*

*There are two kinds of people in life - blamers and learners*

"Make no excuses. Rationalize nothing. Blame no one. Humble yourself." – Beth Moore

*Find a scapegoat – keep the problem*

"It's not about you." – Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life



"The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by his purpose and for his purpose." - Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life

*And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Mark 1.5*

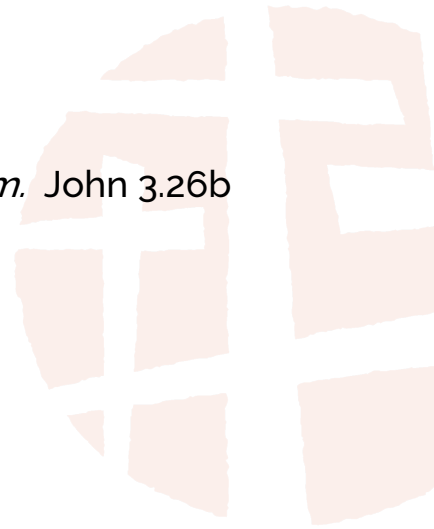
*For Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him. Mark 6.20*

### ***1. THE TRUE TEST OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE***

"The test of our spiritual life is the power to descend..." - Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest

*Now John also was baptizing ... and people were CONSTANTLY COMING to be baptized. John 3.23*

*...well, He is baptizing, and EVERYONE is going to Him. John 3.26b*



"1 out of every 5 churches may end up permanently closing because of the pandemic." - David Kinnamon, Christian pollster

☐ Everything we have is a gift from God

*John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven." John 3.27*

*Have we done what God has asked of us?*

*For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 1 Corinthians 4.7*

☐ Our happiness is found in fulfilling our purpose

*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. John 3.29*

☐ The world needs more of Jesus



*He must increase, but I must decrease.* John 3.30 (New American Standard Bible)

**More of You - less of me**

*And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." Mark 1.7*

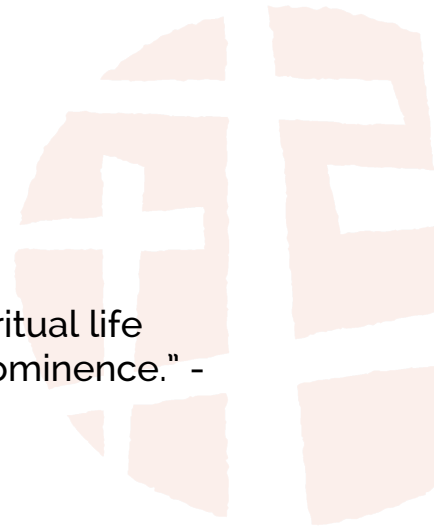
*"Every service which a slave performs for his master shall a disciple do for his teacher except the loosing of his sandal-thong"*  
- *The Mishnah (SBk, 1)*

"I want to simplify your lives. When others are telling you to read more, I want to tell you to read less; when others are telling you to do more, I want to tell you to do less. The world does not need more of you; it needs more of God. Your friends do not need more of you; they need more of God. And you don't need more of you; you need more of God." - Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality*

## ***2. LIVING OUT A SURRENDERED SERVANT LIFESTYLE***

☐ Detachment that leads to attachment

"Solitude is one of the deepest disciplines of the spiritual life because it crucifies our need for importance and prominence." - Richard Foster



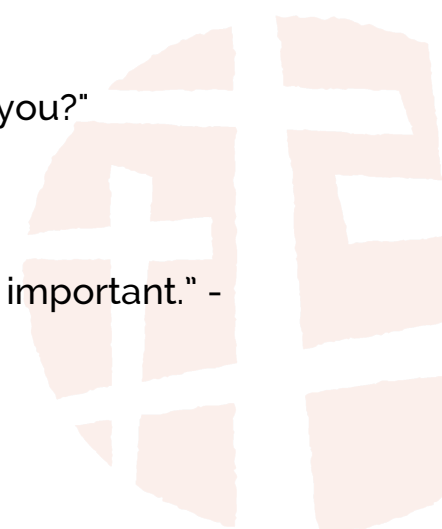
*And when day came, He departed and went to a lonely place; and the multitudes were searching for Him, and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from going away from them. Luke 4.42*

❑ Engage in the spiritual discipline of secrecy

*But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing....but, when you pray, go into your inner room, and pray to your Father who is in secret....but you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret. Matthew 6.3,6,17-18*

- Do I ever feel disappointed when nobody notices my efforts?
- Do I ever get upset when someone else gets the credit for my idea?
- Do I ever find myself doing something so someone will think I am smart?
- Do I ever sulk when my past achievements are forgotten or ignored?
- Do I ever get upset when no one says, "Thank you?"

"The only thing Christianity cannot be is moderately important." - C.S. Lewis



## DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

1. In the introduction to The Lesson, Pastor Keith talked about two kinds of people, blamers and learners. Have you ever gotten mired down in blame? Maybe blamed somebody else for your own reaction? It's not that others can't harm us, fail us or mistreat us. They most certainly do. But we always have a choice in how we respond, what boundaries we put in place, how much we allow what others do to control us, and even whether or not to stay in the relationship. Why is blame so unproductive? What have been some of your biggest learnings in relationships especially in those where the greater fault lay with the other person?

2. God's real work is deeply personal, highly relational, intentionally communal, and profoundly spiritual. Or as we've said it many times here at Springcreek, life change happens best in small groups. Describe a relationship that has been meaningful to you where this has happened or is happening. If you haven't experienced this in a relationship, what qualities do you think should characterize a healthy group where such things could happen?

3. More of You – Less of me. That is the simple prayer Pastor Keith taught us based on the example of John the Baptist. John knew it was not about him and it was all about Jesus. To help us do more than merely say those words, our pastor proposed two spiritual disciplines that empower that choice – solitude and secrecy. In solitude, I detach – detach from noise, demands, roles, busy lives, social media in order to attach exclusively to God. Detachment reorients us and helps us to remember that the world goes on without us. We are not the center. It is not about us. The discipline of secrecy subordinates the desire to be noticed, thanked, or given credit. Once again, it removes ourselves as the center and replaces the center with Christ. Talk about your own experiences with solitude and secrecy - our struggles in attempting them, your learnings when you've engaged in them.