
Sermon by David Peters

[Click here for the podcast](#)

**Chastain Horse Park
Atlanta, Georgia
Youth Family Social**

Group projects; we've all been in them. Usually in a group project, the different members have different attitudes about the project. One person may understand the entire project objective. Another may only understand a little bit of it. And another member may not understand it at all. One person might be really motivated; others, not so much.

I was in a similar situation. In my AP American Government class last fall, we were given a project where we had to create a notebook based on public policy in the United States. One of the questions given was "Explain the job crisis of 2004 in detail," along with other fairly difficult questions. Now Elizabeth, one of the group members, fully understood the assignment and the questions given. She basically did most of the project by herself. Now she did not entirely take full credit for doing the entire project, but she did take advantage of it though. I think that the majority of us may have also done the same thing. We may be tempted to take advantage and all of the credit for many things.

In today's gospel, John the Baptist finds himself in a similar situation. When he baptized all those people in the wilderness, they all looked at him, hoping that he was the Messiah. They all believed he might be the ONE. I wonder what he was thinking when he experienced this. Maybe he thought "What did I do to make all of these people follow me?" "Why do they think I am the one?" Maybe he even feels astonished that all these people are following him, wanting him to baptize them in the river, and even thinking he is the Messiah. However, John the Baptist does not let all of this attention go to his head. He does not take credit for being the Messiah.

But instead he tells the people, "I baptize you with water, but there is one that is more powerful than I am, for I am not worthy to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire." It seems that John the Baptist is answering to a higher authority, one that is far more powerful than any one person. He is speaking of Jesus, who is more powerful; who will come to baptize the people with the Holy Spirit and fire. John the Baptist mentions Jesus to the people himself. He MUST have been a true believer. He MUST have recognized an authority that was greater than his.

We must not take sole credit for our accomplishments, our power, our influence. Despite the temptation to be the Messiah, there is always a greater and more powerful one to come. For example, where would students be without their teachers? The same question even applies to the teachers. They did not always have the knowledge to teach us students, no; they were students themselves once and were taught by others. Even in the great world of sports, there is usually a greater and more powerful force that deserves the credit rather than a sole person who we usually think of. Last Thursday was the BCS National Championship Football game. Alabama Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban won the game against Texas Longhorns' coach Mack Brown with a score of 37-21. Not only that, Nick Saban is the only NCAA coach to win two BCS championship games with different programs, and he is soon to be the highest paid football coach in the country! Nick Saban must feel pretty good about himself right now. Is he to be given all the credit? Of course not. He did not solely win the 2010 BCS championship on his own, he had the support of the great players on his Alabama Crimson Tide football team. A greater power was at work.

Celebrities also have a greater force than themselves alone to give credit to. Where would Miley Cyrus be without her father, Billy Ray? You don't think she became one of the most well known child actresses and international music sensations on her own, do you? No, she has someone more powerful to give credit to.

There is always someone or something greater and more powerful than us alone, something greater going on than even we understand. God is going on. God is at work, God is coming to show us something greater. And John the Baptist knows this. If John knows this, then the people he baptized should know this as well. If we listen to the Gospel this evening, we should know it too. We should recognize that God has something great to show us.

In a way, I kind of feel like John the Baptist tonight. I am standing here before you preaching this sermon, and I am tempted to take the credit for being the main attraction this evening. But, what I need to realize, what we all need to realize, there is something greater and more powerful taking place.

Our service this evening is called the Holy Eucharist for a reason. The person giving the sermon is not the central part of a service. Even the sermon itself is not the most important part. Simply looking at the way this worship space is set up will give us a clue. This podium is NOT in the center of the room. Instead, we find the altar. The Eucharist does not happen first, but last, leading us out into the world to serve God's children. We gather tonight to be nourished by the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

And, like John the Baptist, I hope to point to something greater that is about to take place, something that will breathe fire and the life of the Holy Spirit into us all. The Holy Eucharist. Amen.

David Peters is a Senior at Meadowcreek High School in Norcross. He is an active participant and leader in our youth group. In addition to weekly Sunday School in the Fishbowl, David has joined us on numerous retreats, mission trips, and other social activities.