

Someone's shouting

John 1:6-8, 19-28 CEV

God sent a man named John,
who came to tell about the light and to lead all people to have faith.
John wasn't that light. He came only to tell about the light.

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers to ask John who he was. He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah." Then when they asked him if he were Elijah, he said, "No, I am not!" And when they asked if he were the Prophet, he also said "No!"

Finally, they said, "Who are you then? We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us. Tell us who you are!"

John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I am only someone shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord!'"

Some Pharisees had also been sent to John. They asked him, "Why are you baptising people, if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?"

John told them, "I use water to baptise people. But here with you is someone you don't know. Even though I came first, I am not good enough to untie his sandals." John said this as he was baptising east of the Jordan River in Bethany.

Someone's shouting. When we hear someone shouting we know somethings up. People shout for many different reasons but they're always wanting to be heard.

Why is John shouting? To get people's attention. He wants to be heard.

What's he shouting about? About the light of the world. About Jesus.

Can you imagine how this worked? Try going out into a wilderness, a deserted place and start shouting. What's going to happen? Chances are you'll lose your voice before the crowds arrive. What's the use of shouting when no one's there to hear it?

How did people know John was shouting in the desert? It must have spread by word of mouth. One person heard John and told someone else. Two told two more and then four told four - and next thing there was a great crowd of people listening to John.

John didn't put an ad in the local paper. He didn't advertise in the yellow pages or set up a website. He didn't use social media. But his message spread. It spread by word of mouth, one person to another.

Why was he shouting? He shouting because he had a message. He was shouting because he was sent. God sent a man named John.

Why did God send John? God sent him to witness - to speak - to shout, to tell about the light. The light of the world. To tell about the greater one, to tell about Jesus. We might call him John the Witness in addition to his title John the Baptist.

God sent John to witness to the light, to point people to the light. He wasn't to be the light or even take the lime-light but was sent to point to the light. He wasn't sent to be the centre of attention but to draw attention to the one at the centre, the one at the centre of all things, the one at the heart of all things.

Who was John? Who are you, the messengers asked? The messengers of the leaders were sent to ask the messenger from God who he was. Who are you, John? Tell us who you are! They

demanded an answer. John was exactly who God called him to be doing exactly what God called him to do. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He was shouting in the wilderness. He was preparing the way for Jesus. And that's enough.

I wonder what the leaders thought of the report they brought back.

God sent a man named John and God sends and a woman named Courtney, and a man named David. God sends you, God sends us. Can you think of some names of the people God sent to you? God sent people to you to point you to the light, to point you to Jesus.

God sends you to people. How does that make you feel? How do you feel when you're sent?

I remember Dad sending me to buy a file. It was in the olden days when hardware stores had the hardware behind the counter. You had to talk to someone and ask them for what you wanted. Dad asked me to go and buy a 12 inch mill bastard file. I wasn't sure for a start whether this was a joke or for real. It was real and so I went trembling into this shop wondering whether I'd be able to ask for what I was meant to buy. To my amazement the man understood my mumbling and I had the file dad wanted.

We're chosen by God, just like John, and sent with a message. We're to tell about the light. We don't have to be the light, or take the limelight, but tell about the light. To tell about Jesus, the light of the world.

We don't have to go out into the desert or get on a soapbox in the mall. We don't have to shout, in fact shouting might put people off. We just have to tell others what we know about the light, one person to another. The Gospel message spreads by word of mouth and we can also use websites and social media.

Friends we just have to be who God has called us to be, his dearly loved children. We just have to do what he's called us to do, to point to the light, to point to Jesus. In our lives, in our words and deeds we witness to the light of the world. We witness to the love and grace of God to us in Jesus the Messiah, the Christ.

Like John we're not fit to untie Jesus' sandals but we are fit to tell about Jesus. We're called by God, we're loved by Jesus, and we're empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to the love of God in Jesus our Saviour.

Someone's shouting? Are they trying to shout us down? Don't worry speak calmly and point to Jesus whose light enlightens us to be like a city on a hill always pointing to the source of our light, the Light of the World.