

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Always give the credit to Jesus

*Third Sunday of Advent – John 1.6-8, 19-28*

Eight days to go and then it's Christmas. There are two figures particularly linked with this time of year. One is so famous we've all seen hundreds of pictures of him; the other one we don't even know what he looks like.

One appears on thousands of Xmas cards; the other doesn't appear on a single one.

One is fable; the other is fact.

One is mentioned nowhere in the Bible; the other has a vital role in the gospels.

One is Father Christmas; the other is John the Baptist, whom we remember on the Third Sunday of Advent.

Isn't it fascinating how we have edited John the Baptist out of the Christmas story and replaced him with Father Christmas?

Why? Perhaps it's because John the Baptist reminds us that we are sinners and must repent if we are to accept Christ as Saviour – whereas Father Christmas makes us feel good and gives us goodies and makes no moral demands on us at all.

Another reason is that John the Baptist always diverts attention away from himself to Jesus – ***'I am not the Messiah, I am not Elijah, I am not the prophet...'***

It is just as well that John the Baptist isn't on any Christmas cards – he would be quite upset to be there in the limelight instead of Jesus.

True ministry always draws attention away from ourselves to Jesus.

But how about us? When we do things for church, do we sometimes feel a bit hurt if no one notices? I don't think John the Baptist would feel like that. He is the kind of person who wanted no praise, but all the attention to go to Jesus...

You may know the saying, 'There is no limit to what you can do so long as you don't mind who gets the credit.'

As Christians the key thing is 'There is no limit to what you can do so long as HE gets the credit'

John the Baptist came to bring hope to a dark world, where Judea was under harsh Roman occupation, and where the voice of prophecy had been silent for 400 years since the time of Malachi.

Our job is to be like John the Baptist, not drawing attention to ourselves, but pointing to Jesus, who is the light of the world. ***'He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.'***

**Mark Ireland, Archdeacon of Blackburn**

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