

# “OUT-REACHING”

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most common verses of the scripture used to diffuse ‘shying away’ from speaking about our faith and sharing the ‘Good News’ is Romans chapter 1 vs 16. This is where Paul made the unwavering declaration of his ‘unashamedness’ to preach the Gospel of Christ because it is God’s power to save those who believe in Jesus. How daring and direct he was to make such statement at that time of chaos and eventful change in Paul’s life! Paul had recently made a drastic switch from being a ruthless persecutor of Christians to a proud, dedicated and unashamed follower of Christ. Paul did not consider his friends’ or colleague’s ridicule, labeling him a hypocrite and a fainthearted Pharisee; he made the switch anyway. He later went ahead to become one of the greatest disciples of the New Testament. The same manner of courage was typical of John the Baptist’s method of preaching his message, and Jesus later said of him, no man ever lived greater than John the Baptist. (Matthew 11:7-12 NIV)

***“As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: “ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it.”***

### Characters Required for Successful ‘Out-Reaching’

Matthew gave account of the ministry of John the Baptist addressing him as *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.”* John had a message he was convinced and passionate about as recorded in Matthew’s account (chapter 3:1-10). He prepared the people for Jesus ministry with a unique ministry of his own, courageously calling people to repent and live out what they claim to believe. He confronted Pharisees, common people who lived hypocritical lifestyle (Maxwell et al. 2007). It is our turn to prepare the way for Jesus second coming by preaching the gospel. The below shows Johns character in his ministry, and this gives us a good lead-in to out-reaching the lost.

### **Q: What set John the Baptist apart and made his ministry so successful?**

- a. John’s message was *clear* (vs 1-3)
- b. John cared more about his *integrity* than about his image (vs 4-6)
- c. John had stronger *convictions* than his critics (vs 7-10)

### **Q2: What characters helped made him more courageous? What can we learn from his character today?**

1. *His mission was deliberate*: His job was to prepare for the coming of the Lord
2. *His message was decisive*: He said, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (Matt 3:2)
3. *His motive was direct*: He had Elijah’s voice crying in the wilderness.
4. *His manner was different*: His clothes came from camel hair; he ate locusts and wild honey
5. *His principles were deep*: He believed people must exhibit the fruit of repentance
6. *His method was daring*: He directed people to confess their sins and be baptized.
7. *His mind was discerning*: He perceived the pretenses of the Pharisees.
8. *His ministry was developing*: He drew people from all over Judea in preparation for Jesus. (Maxwell et al. 2007)

### **Prayer:**

And now Lord, grant us Your chosen ones [full freedom] to declare Your message fearlessly, while You stretch out Your hand to cure and to perform signs *and* wonders through the authority *and* by the power of the name of Your holy Child *and* Servant Jesus. (Acts 4: 29 – 30 AMP)

### **Reference:**

Maxwell J.C; Elmore T.: *The Maxwell Leadership Bible, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2002, 2007 (pg 1180)*

