

Meeting Jesus in the Low Points of Life

Rich Nathan

September 8 and 9, 2001

Renewing Our Spiritual Passion Series

Matthew 3:1-17

I mentioned last week that while I was away on sabbatical, I felt like the Lord dropped a word into my mind while I was praying – the word was passion. And it was a word for me that somewhere in the busyness and hurriedness of my own life and ministry, I had lost my spiritual passion, or at least the fire was burning very low. And I also felt that this word passion, spiritual passion, was a word for the church – that God wants in this season to renew our spiritual passion.

See, if there is anything that I would want this church, all of you, to be characterized by, it would be spiritual passion and internal motivation and enthusiasm – an intensity of love that you do things for others and do things for God, not because you have to, or because you are manipulated or guilted into things. That you serve Christ not as a result of slogans or sales pitches or arm twisting or pressure, or all the external motivational devices that the leadership and management seminars suggest.

Rather, you choose to serve Christ simply because you are internally motivated by the Holy Spirit to do so. That you would be passionate Christians, people who could find your own starter button in the morning so that you wake up and you want to serve God today, this day that you are alive. That you say, “This is the day the Lord has made. And I am going to

serve him and look to him and love him this day.” A passionate Christian is a Christian who is lit up. In the 1970’s we used to call some Christians “on fire.”

“Did you hear what happened to Bill?”

“Yeah, three months ago he was dealing pot in our dormitory, but now he’s on fire for Jesus.”

A passionate person is a person who is white hot. They share their faith not because they have to, but because it just comes out. They are overflowing with a desire that other people know and love Jesus the way they do. They give. They tithe their money out of gratitude for God’s generosity. Passionate people want to pray. They want to worship. They want to read their bibles.

It is not a matter of have to. Oh God is demanding something from me that I really don’t want to do and my life is a continual tug of war between the will of God and my will. But God has come into my life in such a way that he has converted my desires, so that, more and more, I want to do what he wants me to do.

What a happy place to live. That you want to do what God wants. And you don’t want to do what he doesn’t want you to do.

Now, of course, people can be passionate about what doesn’t matter, about things that are trivial, that don’t really count for anything. For example, I like football as much as the next guy. I read Sports Illustrated religiously. I really enjoy watching games on a Saturday or

Sunday afternoon. But what's up with a 50-year old, overweight guy who puts on a dog mask and sits in 20 degree weather with his shirt off and his stomach painted orange and brown, while he tosses dog bones onto the field?

I mean, really, what's going on psychologically with someone like that? Is it some type of catharsis?

Is it that I can put this dog mask on and then I can put the whole week behind me, and the fact that on Monday morning I am going to be back in my little cubicle and there is going to be another huge stack of invoices, which I'm required to read over and put a little red check on the top right hand corner?

And may God allow the Buckeyes to win the national championship. But what is up with people who not only paint their houses scarlet and gray, but they have these little shrine rooms in their homes? These little worship centers with Ohio State football memorabilia, what's up with that?

I just read about people who are so passionate about Star Trek that they are translating the complete works of Shakespeare into Klingon, a totally invented language made up for the Star Trek movies. I mean, there is a Klingon dictionary, a Klingon Language Institute. Listen, this is right off the web. They have a Klingon Language Institute, which is a not-for-profit 501C3 corporation. The Internal Revenue Service granted the Klingon Language Institute not-for-profit status. And its mission statement is to facilitate the scholarly

exploration of the Klingon language and culture. There are people who are spending weeks out of their year writing scholarly articles debating the usage of a totally fictitious language.

I say this with all due respect to these folks, but get a life! I mean, some Americans simply have too much time on their hands.

Passion.

I had the opportunity last spring to see passion immortalized when I traveled to India with Stephen Van Dop, one of the pastors on staff, and another church member who is very involved in organizing missionary activities here, Jim Vagnier. We went to India as a threesome to teach at the training school in Bangalore that our church helped to build. And on our way up to Central Asia, we had an opportunity to stop and see the Taj Mahal in Northern India.

The Taj was described by an English poet as “not a piece of architecture, as other buildings are, but a proud passion of an Emperor’s love wrought in living stones.” The Taj was built back in the 17th century by a Mughal Emperor of India in memory of his wife, who died giving birth to their 14th child. And this Emperor wanted to build a memorial, a tomb fitting for the extravagant of his love for his wife and so he employed 20,000 people who worked for 22 years to construct the Taj.

It is absolutely, without a doubt, the most beautiful building I have ever seen. Photographs, postcards, don’t do justice to it. It is a perfectly symmetrical white marble structure several

hundred feet tall. And it has verses from the Muslim scriptures, the Koran, around the doorways. There are these tiny floral designs in Arabic calligraphy. But none of the calligraphy or floral designs are painted on. Instead, they are the result of very careful inlay of semi-precious stones – agate, jasper, onyx, black marble – all of it perfectly done down to the millimeter.

That's passion! Spending an Emperor's fortune, 20,000 people working for 22 years simply so that one person can declare to the world, "Here is what I thought of my now-departed wife. I loved her."

You know, passion doesn't have to be this extravagant. It doesn't have to call attention to itself. You don't have to be a wild, romantic like that 17th century Emperor, or a total screaming lunatic extrovert like the dog pound people in Cleveland Browns' Stadium. Let me tell you a story of passion.

It concerns a member of the church. She doesn't know I'm doing this. But this church member lives in an inner city neighborhood here in Columbus. And she was just written about in the newspaper, Columbus Alive – one of those free, radical newspapers that you see distributed all over town. Her name is Ginette DeArme. Here is what Columbus Alive – this total secular, radical newspaper that is filled often with anti-Christian humor and advertisements – here is what Columbus Alive said about one of our church members.

“Ginette DeArmey, a soft-spoken woman, rents a two bedroom apartment just a few blocks off 4th Street in Weinland Park, the heart of the inner city. Just a short walk from her home, she teaches 4th grade at Weinland Park Elementary School.

“I don’t think you can really impact the community, if you are not part of the community,” she says. “I made a personal decision to come down here. If you want to influence these kids’ lives, you have to be accessible to them all the time.”

DeArmey, a devout Christian whose faith seems to inform her actions [Now, I love that...here’s a secular paper saying one of the most complimentary things that any Christian could ever have said about them – that she is a devout Christian whose faith seems to inform her actions. That her faith actually impacts how she lives and we can see that.] as much as her calling as a teacher, is committed to her neighborhood and to her kids. She, and others like her, are exactly what’s needed to turn the district around [says this particular guy and he may be right.]

“She will literally walk down through a war zone to get to her school [says this person who is doing the interview], but she is making a difference.”

Now that’s passion. Here’s somebody who takes the Christian faith seriously enough to have it address personal, lifestyle choices – where she lives, what she does as a profession, who she relates to – not a wild extrovert; a soft-spoken woman. That’s how they describe her. I would describe her as a spiritually passionate woman.

Here's the question I want to deal with today. How do you keep the flames of spiritual passion alive when you go through life's low points? When you are going through a tough time with one of your kids? Or you are laid off? Or you have broken up with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Or you have lost a parent or lost a loved one? Or you've had a miscarriage? Or you can't get pregnant? Or you don't have the money to pay for school? Or you've done something really stupid to hurt yourself? Maybe you've walked away from your marriage or you've blown off school and failed.

Becoming a Christian does not give us immunity from pain. Do you know that? That if you become a Christian you don't have an escape-from-pain card that you can whip out all the time. The difference between Christianity and a lot of false religions and cults is that the cults always promise you freedom from pain. If you join us, you never have to experience pain again. A lot of people are major pain avoiders. I don't want to feel pain. Christianity doesn't promise freedom from pain. Christians have chronic jaw problems, and family problems, and marital problems, and money problems, and miscarriages, and bad backs. And Christians make stupid choices that end up blowing up in their faces.

But Christianity offers us a way to deal with the pain in our lives. And the question I am going to deal with today is "How do you keep your spiritual passion burning bright during the low points of life?" Let's pray.

Matthew 3:1-5 — In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes

were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People when out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

We read in v. 1: “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the Desert of Judea...” and in v. 5, “People when out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.”

The area that John the Baptist was baptizing in was the Dead Sea region by the Jordan River. It is about 1300 feet below sea level. Where John the Baptist was baptizing is literally the lowest dry place on the face of the earth. As the NT Wright puts it, you can not get any lower on the face of the earth, on land, unless you dig. And what we are seeing is a physical picture of a spiritual reality. John is bringing people out physically to the lowest point on the earth, because it is there at the lowest point on the earth, that people are going to have a meeting with God.

The fortunes of the Jewish people had sunk to their lowest level ever since they were kicked out of their homeland by the Babylonians 600 years before. The Jews were ruled by a succession of foreign conquerors. It was first the Babylonians; then the Greeks; then the Romans. And even though many Jews were geographically back in the promised land, they felt themselves to still be in exile. They were in spiritual exile, if not entirely in physical exile. But their own land, the promised land, was trampled upon by the pagans, by the Romans. The Jews daily watched Roman soldiers marching in their streets and exacting horrific taxes, desecrating their country with their pagan rituals and symbols.

But even worse than the political oppression and the taxes and the pagan conquerors, what made this the lowest point for the Jewish people was the experience that God had abandoned them and they didn't know when he would return. See, that's the worst. That's the lowest point.

Cancer is not the worst thing that can happen to you. Divorce is not the worst. Even my greatest fear, the fear of losing one of my children or my wife to death – we say that losing a child is the worse thing that can happen, but it's not. The worst thing that can happen is losing God. That's the worst. That's what hell is. Hell is being abandoned by God forever. Being without God forever.

Ever since the Babylonians invaded 600 years before, the Babylonians had broken into the Jewish Temple and had stolen the Ark of the Covenant, which is the holy box that contained the original Ten Commandments, written by God, carried down by Moses from atop Mt. Sinai. Ever since the Babylonian invasion, the Jews had lost the Ark of the Covenant. But even more than that, they had lost the glory of God, the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, in the Temple. In the days of John the Baptist, when Jews went to the Temple and the priest went into the Holy of Holies, it was empty. There was nothing in there. No Ark of the Covenant. No glory of God. Just empty space and the memory of what used to be.

For at least 400 years there were no prophets, no prophecy, no voice from heaven. And all the Jews knew this. They knew that for some reason the voice of God was stilled and there were no signs and wonders, no great miracles that they heard about every week in their synagogues.

This was the low state of the people of Israel when John the Baptist came preaching. And we read about this low state in Psalm 74. Listen to this. Here is the cry of the psalmist on behalf of the entire nation of Israel.

Why have you rejected us forever, O God?

Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?

*Remember the people you purchased of old,
the tribe you redeemed as your inheritance—
Mount Zion, where you dwelt.*

*Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins
all this destruction the enemy has brought
on the sanctuary.*

*Your foes roared in the place where you met with us;
they set up their standards as signs.
they behaved like men wielding axes
to cut through a thicket of trees.*

*They smashed all the carved paneling
with their axes and hatchets.*

*They burned your sanctuary to the ground
They defiled the dwelling place of your Name.*

*They said in their hearts, "We will crush them completely!"
They burned every place where God was worshiped in the land.
We are given no miraculous signs;*

no prophets are left,

and none of us knows how long this will be...

It wasn't just a political low point to which the nation had sunk. It had sunk to a spiritual low point and nobody knew how long this abandonment by God would last.

Have you ever felt the sheer despair of believing that you had been abandoned by God? That what you were going through was bad enough – the crisis in your home, the crisis in your finances, or your health, or the health of a loved one, this law suit, this jail term – what ever it was. Have you ever felt the despair of not only going through something really painful, but believing that you had been abandoned by God?

And into this darkness, an emptiness, an absence of God suddenly like a bright bolt of lightening, cracking in the sky, the voice of prophecy is heard again out in the desert, near the Dead Sea, by the Jordan River. The report spreads that God is talking to us again. We are hearing from God again. Crowds rush out. They leave their jobs; they leave their chores; they leave their studies; they leave the triviality of life. Nothing is more important to these people than to meet with God again. We are at such a low point. We need God.

It's like there has been a drought in the land for years that has destroyed all the crops. And suddenly there is this report of a storm front moving into town. And people run out of their homes and out of their businesses. They gather. They see the clouds up in the sky. They cheer. They are dancing in the rain. They are opening their mouths, sticking out their tongues, and lapping up water. They are ripping off their shirts.

What did they see? What did they hear out in the desert?

They heard a man announcing that the 600 year old exile of the Jewish people was over. Everything about John the Baptist's ministry is an announcement that soon, very soon, right around the corner, the 6th century old exile was going to end. John the Baptist says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Turn around, put away your sins, turn to God because God is breaking into our world again. God is coming. The drought is over. The exile is ending.

We see in v. 3 that this is the one, this John the Baptist, "who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."

If you look back in the book of Isaiah, chapter 40, where this prophecy is drawn from, it is about the announcer to the end of the Babylonian exile. John the Baptist is saying, "Put away your sins, put away your petty little agenda for your life. Adopt the agenda of God for your life. God is coming. And I am the one who is sent to announce the good news that the Babylonian, Greek and Roman captivity is over. God is going to deal with the root cause of our exile, friends. He's going to deal with it. The root cause is sin and God is going to radically deal with sin and with the spiritual enemy that oppresses us. And we are going to get set free from exile."

We read about John's funny clothes and his diet. In v. 4: "John's clothes were made of camel's hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey." The reason that John adopted this lifestyle and this dress and these eating habits is that he was living in conscious imitation of the prophet Elijah. We read about him in 2 Kings 1. Elijah was the one who was going to come back from heaven and herald the coming of the Lord. And now, John the Baptist is the 1st century Elijah. He says, "Guys I'm coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. That the one you have been waiting for, the deliverer, the Messiah who will rescue us from this national low point is just around the corner. I am coming to announce the end of your captivity."

And there is John baptizing in the Jordan River. The Jordan, this tiny little river that has so much significance to the Jewish people. The Jordan was the boundary line of the promised land. When Joshua led the children of Israel into the promised land, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the path that they took in Joshua 4 was through the Jordan. The end to exile, that's what John the Baptist was proclaiming. We are no longer going to be wandering around in the desert. We are going to be like the people in Joshua's generation, entering into the land of promise again. Let's get back in the Jordan. Let's wash away our sins and we'll be ready for the coming of the Lord!

You know, whenever a Christian today gets baptized – we are having a baptism in about a month – but part of the meaning of baptism is a person saying to the world, to other Christians, "My own exile from God has ended. Through my faith in Jesus Christ, I have come out from a place of exile, from the wilderness, from captivity, from bondage, and I am now entering into the land of promise." When you get baptized, it's as if you were going

into the Jordan River with Joshua and the nation of Israel, with John the Baptist, with the others who were confessing their sins saying, “I belong to Jesus now. I no longer belong to that old way of life. I belong to Jesus.”

If you have not been baptized as a follower of Christ, when we have that baptism in a month, you need to sign up for it. Enter the Jordan, our baptismal tank, and let other people see that you belong to Jesus.

Well, what is the one condition for meeting with God? What is the one requirement for having a straight path from God right to your heart? Here’s the one requirement:

Being low, being reduced to a place of total dependence, where you honestly say “I have nothing else. I have no other place to turn. I have no other games, no other angles. I am just looking to you, Lord Jesus Christ. I’m pinning my hopes on you.” In the low place, that’s where John baptizes, in the low place. That’s where he announces that the exile has ended. In the low place, that’s where God meets us.

Jesus always said this. You have to get low. You have to be low to meet with God. Jesus said, “Unless you turn and become like little children, get low, get humble, you can never enter the kingdom of God.”

Jesus said he didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He didn’t come to those who were confident about how well they were doing. He came to invite people to

recognize that they were sinners. That they had blown up their lives. He came to gather them up.

Jesus says that a physician doesn't come for those who are well, but for the sick. Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "Give up everything you have and come follow me."

The one condition for meeting with God is getting low. The entrance door to the kingdom of God is a low door. You have to get down on your face to get through the door into the kingdom. That's why many successful people, professionals, business owners and managers don't become Christians. Some people are not willing to get down on their face to go through the low door of the kingdom. In the 1st century, even though everyone in the nation had experienced exactly the same thing, everyone was living with the Roman occupation of their land. Everyone had to deal with the high taxes. Everyone was experiencing the same absence of God. Not everyone was willing acknowledge their lowness.

Not everyone said, "You know, I've come to the end of my rope. I'm personally at a low point." Not everyone in the nation was willing to say what was proof. V. 7-10 *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

See, some of us can never simply acknowledge that we've come to the end of our rope. There's always another few feet of rope. Things are terrible, but how many more disasters do you need to go through before you give up, before you cry out, "Help, Jesus. I give up my agenda. I will adopt the agenda of God for my life." But there are people today like the Pharisees and Sadducees who no matter how many low points they go through, they don't give up. They don't fully turn to Christ.

There's always another game to play, some other angle, some other plan apart from total surrender. That was the great problem of the Pharisees, friends. Even though everything in their lives had screamed out, "We are miserable. We are failing. Life is awful. We are oppressed. We are going under water for the third time. Our lives can't get any lower." They still denied their sin. They denied their pain. They kept insisting that everything was fine between them and God. That they had not been abandoned. "Hey, we're not doing that badly," they said. "We are children of Abraham. We've got this God-thing covered."

Do you know anyone like this? Do you know someone who has come to a low point in their life where God wants to meet them there, where the only possible solution is to call out to Christ to save them, to really cry out and surrender and give up your agenda for your life and adopt his agenda? But instead, they won't face the facts. They just live in total denial. "Oh, I'm doing OK. Not everything is falling apart. I'm doing OK. Things between me and God are just fine."

Do you know anyone about whom you say, "What's it going to take to wake you up to your need for Christ? You are completely out of touch with your spiritual condition. You are

completely out of touch with the state of the world we are living in.” Do you know anyone like that?

The Pharisees’ claim is one that continues to be made today. “I’m OK with God. I’m OK because of my parents, my grandparents, because I was raised in a Christian home, my mother used to take us to church every week, I was baptized as an infant, as a Catholic, Lutheran or Episcopalian. My great-granddad was a Methodist Circuit Rider. My first cousin is a nun.

I call all of this and what’s going on with the Pharisees in vv. 7-10, salvation by heritage. No one, not the Pharisees in the past, not you who are sitting in this church today, not your son, not your daughter, not your spouse, not your mother, not your father – no one is going to be saved because of their religious heritage. No one is going to be saved because of the great family they grew up in or the fact that your parents had a close relationship with Christ, or who your dad was or who your mama was. God has no grandchildren. He only has children.

It is like marriage, friends. Just because your parents were married, doesn’t make you married. To be married, you need to choose, you need to say, “I choose to take you as my wife. I choose to take you as my husband.” That’s the same thing with a personal relationship with Christ. You need to choose. Christ is not going to ask you, “Well, where was your father at with me? Where’s your mama at? Where’s your sister, your brother, your spouse, your boyfriend?” It’s where are YOU at?

It's amazing the things that people rely on to deceive themselves into believing that all is right between them and God. There are a lot of people in America who are right now relying on a little prayer they prayed at a church service, with a friend, or at a college meeting, 20 years ago. Maybe some of you are in this special place where you prayed a little prayer to receive Jesus, but you never met the biblical condition for salvation, which is repentant faith. You've never turned away from their agenda for their life; their control of their own lives; and adopted the agenda of God. Never, at no point along the way, have you ever said, "You know, I'm going to relinquish control, I'm going to surrender to you, Jesus." That's false security. Praying a little prayer that doesn't accompany with it repentant faith will not save a person.

It's just amazing to me the silly things that people rely on to secure peace or security. You have some little statue on your dashboard, or some little trinket that they hang around the mirror in their car, something that they wear around their necks, or some little crystal. Instead of a little statue, instead of a little crystal, why not turn to Christ? He's so much more capable of saving you, of rescuing you.

Let me ask you a personal question. Have you come to the end of your rope? Are you tired of playing games? Are you willing to give up the other angle that you have for fixing yourself and simply turn your life over to Jesus Christ and adopt his agenda for your life? He's not going to ask you to look like me or like some other Christian that you know. He has a unique and special agenda for you. But he wants your life – your whole life. Have you come to the place where in as much sincerity as you know to say, you say, "I am willing to put away my sins and put my life in your hands"?

We rely on such silly things – our resumes, our degrees, our bank accounts, our success in business, our looks, and our ability to get a boyfriend or a girlfriend. All of that can be taken in a moment. But they can never take Jesus from you. Never. No one can take away your relationship with Jesus.

You know, this business of getting low, of meeting Christ at the low points – that’s where Jesus meets us – it’s always at the low points, this business of getting low is not a one time thing, it is not a circumstantial thing. It’s not “I’m going through a tough time” thing. You may be going through the greatest economic boom of your life. You may be totally healthy. You may have just run a marathon. Going through the low door is a controversial and conscious choice. It’s a lifestyle that we Christians are to adopt. It was modeled for us by John the Baptist in v. 11.

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

John the Baptist is a prophet, a holy man, a man who was totally sold out for God. He is white hot. He is burning with passion. We ask, “What’s the secret, holy man? How do you remain so fervent, so focused and so on fire for God?”

He says, “My secret is I live in this continual state of recognizing that compared to who is coming, the Christ, the Holy One, I’m not even in the position of the lowest slaves whose job it is to take his master’s sandals and wash his feet. What ignites me is not something that I’ve found in myself.” John the Baptist, when he looked at himself, he said, “I’m at a low place. I am needy. I am dependent. I am not in control. I don’t have all the answers. I’m looking to one greater than me – to Jesus.”

What ignited John the Baptist was what he found in Jesus. He found this Jesus to be awesome. To be the one who carried on him the Holy Spirit and who was willing to give his Spirit to empower us.

He saw in Jesus the great judge of the world. V. 12 *His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Let me try to press this home for you as I close. A few weeks ago I was sitting at a Starbuck’s, while I was on my sabbatical. A fellow from the church came up to chat with me. He sat down and talked. He said that he had been in the church for 1-2 years with his wife and family.

I said, “How are you doing in connecting?”

He said, “Well, my wife says that I struggle with self-worth issues” and he described a kind of tough background.

I said to him, “Are you having trouble connecting with the church or with Jesus?”

He said, “Well, my wife says that I am struggling with these various issues in my life and I’ve got some shame issues from the past that I need to overcome because I really struggle with just feeling worthy of Christ’s love.”

So I said to him, “Can I be frank with you?”

He said, “Sure.”

I said, “You are not worthy of Christ’s love. Right now you are like a guy who is drowning in quicksand and you are trying to build some platform underneath the surface to stand on – some platform of self-worth and worthiness. You aren’t going to be able to build that. You have to just reach out your hand, while you are sinking, you’ve got to reach your hand and say, “Jesus, save me.” Or let me illustrate it a different way. You are like a guy who is standing on line at a ticket window waiting to purchase a ticket to get into the game. But, friend, the line that you are standing in, the line of trying to find something in you, some self-worth that will make you feel good enough about yourself before you surrender your life to Jesus, you are going to be standing on that line forever. That ticket window is closed. I think God sent you to me today so that I can walk you by the hand to the ticket window that’s open that really sells tickets that will really get you into the game. And the window that’s open offers you salvation simply through repentant faith in Jesus.” Simply asking Jesus to save you and rejecting your agenda for your life and adopting his.

See, the rest of this chapter talks about the greatness of Jesus. When we are low, when we are sinking, or when we choose like John the Baptist, to get low as a lifestyle, from that position, then, we look up to the greatness of Jesus. He's the one who pours out the Holy Spirit on our lives so that we can live for him. He's the one before whom we are going to be judged. He is the one who identifies with us in baptism. He is the Son of God, the one approved by God as his unique Son.

John the Baptist found the secret to the perpetual renewal of his spiritual passion. Choose to get low, to be dependent upon Christ and then look to him. He is great. He is awesome. He is all that you need.

I'm going to close today by asking Candy Johnson, who is the Worship and Arts Coordinator in our Children's Ministry to come up here and share a testimony about how Jesus met her when she was at a low point in life.

Meeting Jesus in the Low Points of Life

Rich Nathan

September 8 and 9, 2001

Renewing Your Spiritual Passion Series

Matthew 3:1-17

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