

## Incredible Me – Day 4

### John the Baptist – “I am called!”

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:1-6; Luke 1:5-15

**Central thought:** “I am called & set apart - God has a plan & purpose for my life!

**Object Illustration:** A Cup – set apart

**Rec. Game with Tie-in:** Reaching for Hearts

#### **Bible Lesson:**

**Overview:** God has a plan and purpose for our lives.

- Facts:**
- \* John was unique...definitely even weird!
  - \* John was “set apart” before he was even born – a Nazarite  
We may mess up, but God doesn’t give up on us!
  - \* God had a plan & purpose for John’s life & ours
  - \* John answered God’s call in his life.

**Intro. Activity:** Blindfold Senses test

#### **Bible Lesson:**

Intro. activity: Blindfold Senses “Name it” test

Ask for three volunteers that will take a “senses” test.

Sight – choose something in the room and have them guess what you spy

Hear – blindfold them ... have everyone clap their hands & volunteers guess what the sound is; snap their fingers; rub their hands together; click their tongues

Taste – blindfolded, have each one taste one item on the tray & guess

Smell – have them smell one of the items each and guess

Touch – have them touch one of the items and guess

We use our senses to “know” the world around us.

Ask students...what is the strangest thing you have ever tasted? touched? smelled? heard? seen?

## 1) John .... a strange one!

Open your Bibles to the first book in the New Testament – the Gospel of Matthew. We're going to "see" & "hear" someone today that may have looked very weird to the people of his day...He wore camel hair and ate locusts & honey...he probably didn't smell to great either living out in a desert! Where did he bathe?!

See if anyone can guess who this is. (John the Baptist)

Have someone read Matthew 3:1-6

John may have looked and sounded strange, but he was fearfully and wonderfully made by God and God had a very special plan and purpose for his life just like he does for our lives!

Turn back to our Psalm for the week – Psalm 139:13-16 – not only did God know & see us before we were even born, He had a plan & purpose for us!

First of all He wants us to know Him through His Son Jesus! He also wants us to point others to Jesus so they will have hope, purpose & eternal life too!

## 2) Let's look how John was "set apart" for a purpose:

Have someone read Luke 1:5-15

Ask: 1) Who was John's father? (Zechariah) take a minute to explain that John the Baptist is a different person from John the disciple that wrote the Gospel of John.

2) Who was John's mother? (Elizabeth) ask if anyone knows how she was related to Jesus (His aunt; therefore John the Baptist was Jesus' first cousin!)

3) Who told Zechariah that they would have a baby & should name him John? (an angel; have them look down to verse 19 and find out the angel's name – Gabriel)

4) What does verse 15 say about John? (he will be great in the sight of the Lord, He is never to take wine or strong drink, he would be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth)

John was "set apart" for a special plan and purpose. When it talks about never drinking wine, that is part of being set apart as a Nazarite. The Bible talks about three people being Nazarites; one was in your devotion this morning (Samson) another anointed David as King (Samuel), and now we see the same for John the Baptist.

### **Object lesson to demonstrate being “set apart”:**

Show students the dirty cup; ask if anyone would like to drink water from it. (hopefully they will say no!; if someone does say yes, tell them okay, but it was dipped in a toilet! ;)

As you begin washing the cup say: The point is for this cup to be used as it should be, it needs to be washed (inside & out) and then it can be put (set apart) in a cabinet and ready to be used for the purpose it was created...to drink from it.

When we come to Christ, God cleans us up (forgives our sin) and sets us apart for His plan and purpose.

You may be thinking, but what if you’ve messed up after Jesus cleaned you up and right now you’re not living your life to please God. Remember the cup...yes, it was dirty, but after it was washed it could be used again.

Remember Samson’s story from this morning’s devotion? He really messed up, but in the end He turned back to God and God used Samson again to defeat their enemies.

None of us are made perfect yet, but God never gives up on us! Anytime we turn back to Him, He will be there with open arms to receive us back and clean us up so we can be used for the plans & purpose He has for us!

### **3) God’s plan & purpose for John**

Divide the class into four groups.

Have the first group silently read Matthew 3:1-3 again – the second group read Mark 1:1-4 –third group read Luke 3:3-4 – fourth group read John 1:23-27.

Ask for a volunteer from each group to read aloud their section of verses as everyone listens for what is the same in each. Explain that each of the four Gospels that tell about the life of Jesus, included God’s plan for John the Baptist’s life.

See if they can tell you who the four writers were: Matthew (disciple of Jesus), Mark (missionary with Paul & Silas), Luke (a doctor, missionary with Paul & Silas) and John (NOT John the Baptist, but John the disciple of Jesus & brother of James).

Ask: What did these say that John was doing? (baptizing, voice in the wilderness, preparing the way for the Lord, preaching, etc.)

What was John’s message that he preached? Look at Matt. 3:2. (repent of sin and turn to God)

Take a moment to demonstrate that repent means to make an about face – to turn away from the direction you are going (our own way) and turn around and go towards God (His way). It’s turning away from sin that leads to death and turn to Jesus Who is THE Life!

Look at Matthew 4:17; Jesus preached the same thing!

Who did each say had spoken words about this plan for John’s life? (Isaiah)

If we turn in our Bibles just a little bit to the right of Psalms, we’ll find a book named after Isaiah. Find chapter 40:3; what does it say? Did that sound familiar?! Wasn’t that the exact same thing it said about John in the Gospels? It was!

God had a special plan & purpose for John’s life way before He was even born! Isaiah was a prophet of God and God had him write about John almost 700 years before John was born!

The really cool thing is that God also had Isaiah tell about Jesus! The whole Bible, both Old & New Testaments point to Jesus as God’s Son & our Savior! Let’s look at a few of the plans God had Isaiah write to point to Jesus.

**Matching prophecies:**

Pass out enough matching prophecy & fulfillment strips so that everyone has one. Give students a minute or two to look up the verses in their Bible. Have them find who has their matching prophecy or fulfillment and sit next to their matching partner. When everyone is sitting again, have someone read their prophecy with reference and other person read the fulfillment verse with reference.

<b>The Messiah:</b>	<b>Jesus of Nazareth:</b>
Will be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)	Was born of a virgin named Mary (Luke 1:26-31)
Will have a Galilean ministry (Isaiah 9:1,2)	Ministry began in Galilee of the Gentiles (Matthew 4:13-16)
Will be an heir to the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7; 11:1, 10)	Was given the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32, 33)
Will have His way prepared (Isaiah 40:3-5)	Was announced by John the Baptist (John 1:19-28)
Will be spat on and struck (Isaiah 50:6)	Was spat on and beaten (Matthew 26:67)
Will be exalted (Isaiah 52:13)	Was highly exalted by God and the People (Philippians 2:9, 10)
Will be disfigured by suffering (Isaiah 52:14; 53:2)	Was scourged by Roman soldiers who gave Him a crown of thorns (Mark 15:15-19)

Will make a blood atonement (Isaiah 53:5)	Shed His blood to atone for our sins (1Peter 1:2)
Will be widely rejected (Isaiah 53:1,3)	Was not accepted by many (John 12:37, 38)
Will bear our sins and sorrows (Isaiah 53:4, 5)	Died because of our sins (Romans 4L25; 1Peter 2:24, 25)
Will be our substitute (Isaiah 53:6,8)	Died in our place (Romans 5:6, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
Will voluntarily accept our guilt and punishment for sin (Isaiah 53:7,8)	Jesus took on our sins (John 1:29; Romans 6:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
Gentiles will seek Him (Isaiah 11:10)	Gentiles came to speak to Jesus (John 12:20,21)
Will be silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7)	Was silent before Herod and his court (Luke 23:9)
Will save us who believe in Him (Isaiah 53:12)	Provided salvation for all who believe (John 3:16; Acts 16:31)
Will die with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12)	Was numbered with the transgressors (Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37)
Will heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1,2)	Healed the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18, 19)
God's Spirit will rest on Him (Isaiah 11:2)	The Spirit of God descended on Jesus (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; 4:1)
Will be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)	Was buried in the tomb of Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60; John 19:38-42)
He will judge the earth with righteousness (Isaiah 11:4,5)	Jesus was given authority to judge (John 5:27; Luke 19:22; 2 Timothy 4:1,8)

Some people may ask, “well how do we know Isaiah didn’t just write about these things after they happened?”

Briefly share the story of Dead Sea Scrolls or in your own words:

[“Writings Hidden in a Cave”  
by Phyllis Martens. (Herald Press Bible School Series, 1989).

One day a Bedouin shepherd boy was wandering through the bare hills near the Dead Sea, looking for a lost goat. The steep sides of the hills were full of caves. The boy threw a stone into a cave and heard something break. The shepherds found the stone had hit an earthen jar in which a scroll had been stored. In the caves, they found more writings in jars.

One book, Isaiah, was made of 17 leather sheets sewed together to make a roll 24 ft. / 7 m long. There were copies of every Old Testament book except Esther. These became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Until then, the oldest copies of the Hebrew

Scriptures (Old Testament books) available were made in the ninth century. The 2,000-year-old Dead Sea Scrolls were made 1,000 years earlier! Yet scholars found very little difference between the early and later copies. The scribes had been very careful all those hundreds of years.]

The discovery of the scrolls prove that what was written in the book of Isaiah was indeed written hundreds of years before John or Jesus were born showing that we can believe and trust the Bible to be God's Word and 100% accurate!

The Book of Isaiah is referred to as a miniature Bible. How many books does the Bible have? (66). Look at how many chapters Isaiah has. (66)

Isaiah wrote about that too; Isaiah wrote about God saying He would be with us and would be our Redeemer (Avenger);

The whole Bible, both Old & New Testaments, point to Jesus as our Redeemer.

David was right in Psalm 139...God knows everything! God knew about John the Baptist's life and He knows you and all about your life.

Let's turn back to Psalm 139 and read verse 16 –

“You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.”

Think about all the people in the Bible we have talked about this week. (See how many they can name from this week – even from morning devotions & worship.)

God had a special plan & purpose for each of their lives.

**God has an 'incredible' plan & purpose for you too! ☺**

Let's look at one more thing about John before we leave:

#### **4) John answered God's call to be a witness**

Isaiah said that John would come to prepare the way for the Lord, for Jesus. He did that by preaching that people should repent (turn from their sinful ways and do an about face and turn to God). We know that John also baptized Jesus (not because He had sinned; Jesus NEVER sinned), but to set an example of obedience. It pleased God.

God called John to be a witness and tell others about Jesus.

John 1:6-8 tells us “God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light.”

We have all probably seen court scenes on TV where a witness is called up. What is the witness supposed to do? (tell about what he/she saw or heard)

We are called to tell what we have seen, what we have heard, what we have touched, what we have tasted and even smelled... yes, the Bible says, “Now He uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume.” in 2 Corinthians 2:14...all that we know...all that we are...we are to share Jesus!

It was not an easy thing for John to do. Many thought he was strange. Many became angry with him. In fact, John ended up being beheaded even before Jesus was crucified. John knew that by sharing Jesus, he was sharing life...Eternal Life!

God calls us to tell others about Jesus too.

After Jesus had risen from the dead and had appeared to many people (500 at one time! 1 Cor.15:6), the last words He spoke before ascending into Heaven are recorded in Acts 1:8...let’s look at it.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

We have learned this week that God created us to be “incredible”!

We learned that God has chosen us and made a way for us to choose life, to choose and accept what Jesus did for us as He paid for our sin on the cross.

We learned that Jesus came to redeem us and be with us all the way; we are not alone! It’s not automatic though. We must humble ourselves and realize we are a sinner and we need Jesus. Then we say “Yes!” to Him and invite Him into our lives as LORD & Savior.

And today we learned that God has an incredible purpose and plan for our life too! When we have Jesus, we are made new; we are set apart to live an incredible life for God and to share the hope and love of Jesus with others!

Wow!!!! We have reason to celebrate!!

**PRAYER TIME:**

Open up a prayer time by giving prompts for students to pray single sentences out loud.

**Praise** – ask for those that want to pray out loud, “I praise You, God, because...”

**Pray for others** – “I pray for ... and ask you to be with them.”

**Thanks** – “Jesus, thank you for ....”

Ask all to pray by repeating the following after you (or write your own for them to repeat).

Thank you, Father, for making me to be incredible for You! Help me keep living for you even as I go home from camp. Help me to share Your love with others. Thank you, Jesus, that you are always with me and I am never alone. And thank you that I can do incredible things because You are in my life!

### **Game Tie-in: Reaching for Hearts**

Before students arrive, tape miniature candy bars with heart cutouts high up on the walls out of reach (even jumping). Give them the challenge to reach the candy bars with no help from any furniture or another person. After a few minutes let them get in groups of two or three to help each other. Relate this to how God wants us to help others reach the Good News found in Jesus!