



SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Friday, September 9, 2022

Scripture: John 1:19-23

TITLE: Tear Down the Walls

The more I travel the more I appreciate the word of the construction crews who prepared and built the roads. A number of years ago for a family vacation, we visited the Black Hills. There is this road that leads to Needles Eye Tunnel. It's a very narrow tunnel that had to be dug out from the rock. Trees had to be removed to and from the tunnel. There was a lot of important work that needed to be done. I don't know who did it. But they were faithful preparing the way while remaining faceless.

There was another person who prepared the way for the Messiah while remaining humble. Who is that?

Let's turn back to John 1:19-23 (ESV) for the answer.

And, this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

John the Baptist was the forerunner for the Messiah. 400 years prior Malachi prophesied that Elijah would come back to and prophecy. Instead, the prophet would be Elijah-like. Many Jews today still are waiting for Elijah. So they leave an empty seat at the Passover Seder.

But this prophet already came. It was John the Baptist. The priests and Levites – assistants of the priests, came to find out who was John but he kept answering "no" to their questions of identity. Finally, he says, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness." In other words, I am no one. I am a hollow reed for God's Word. He is like the unnamed narrator of the story you read or listen. He was the megaphone for God. He was not an a-lister and didn't want to be.

And what was his job? To "Make straight the way of the Lord" just like Isaiah said. What does that mean? He was to remove the obstacles that prevented people seeing the Messiah correctly. He was to tear down the man-made and Satan ordained walls. John was sent to shine a spotlight on the Messiah – Jesus Christ.

This is our job today. So here's my challenge for you today: Tear down the walls. Help remove the obstacles so people can see Jesus clearly. We can accidentally or intentionally create

obstacles that prevent people from seeing, desiring, or pursuing Jesus. So today, live intentionally. Speak kindly. Scatter seeds of the Gospel. Engage in meaningful dialogue with people so they might see Jesus up close and clear.

When we make straight the way of the Lord, we will win the day.