

**THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

“The crowds asked John the Baptist what they should do? Whoever has two cloaks should share with those who have none. Whoever has food should do likewise. Tax collectors? Stop collecting more than is prescribed. Soldiers? Stop extorting, stop false accusations, be satisfied with your pay.”

(Luke 3: 10ff)

We think we know pretty much everything we need to know about John the Baptist. He preached a baptism of repentance. He prepared the way for Jesus. He pointed Jesus out as the Lamb of God. He castigated King Herod for marrying his Brother's former wife. He had his head cut off for doing so. End of story.

But that is not the whole story. John had a message about how to live in this world. Share your things, clothing and food. Look out for the other person. Don't gouge people when you have the opportunity. Why is that wrong? Because the other person is still a person. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The counsel in the Scriptures is not: Do unto others before they do unto you. How cynical is that. The underlying viewpoint is repugnant as a way for a human being, called to be holy, is to live.

Soldiers lived by a “Might makes right” kind of philosophy. They did whatever they pleased to get whatever they wanted. John the Baptist challenges them on living like that. Stop lying. Stop bullying. Be content with what you have, don't always be greedy for more. Treat people like people, not things.

Everything John preached squared up with everything that Jesus preached. Why? Because they both preached the Truth of God. And the truth is one. It is the same. It is not different for different people. The truth applies to everyone. And not just back then. The truth is still the truth. The truth applies now as it did then. No matter what our culture aficionados claim. Can you hear that truth? That is the question of the week.