

Sermon Title: **Some Were Saying, “John the Baptizer Has Been Raised From the Dead”**

Bible: **Mark 6:14-29**

Where & When: at Gilroy UMC on Sunday, July 11th, 2021

Audience: about 30 people (including YouTube viewers)

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, thank you so much for reappointing me to this church. Thank you so much for being an ordained elder with this awesome church. Please use me for this church and for this community. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. John the Baptist’s Death

Today’s scripture reading from the lectionary describes the death of John the Baptist. When people heard Jesus’ miracles and ministries, many of them thought that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. John the Baptist was more popular than Jesus at that time. It makes sense somewhat, because we still have baptism as one of the Sacraments. Baptism was started not by Jesus, but by John the Baptist. Jesus did not baptize John. John baptized Jesus. There were some people who did not like Jesus, or sometimes tested him. Some were even against Jesus. But they were not that powerful. John the Baptist was the strongest rival to Jesus. Many people came to the Jordan river to be baptized. There were many followers of John the Baptist. Maybe, for Jesus, this popular and strong rival--John the Baptist--could be more difficult or more dangerous than Jesus’ enemies. In many times, because of close or dual relationships, friends or rivals can provide more significant influences upon us than strangers or outsiders.

Fortunately and thankfully, John the Baptist knew who he was and what he was. He declared himself as a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord and to make his paths straight. He said, "I am not worthy to untie the thong of Jesus' sandal." When John's followers came to him to ask who the Messiah was, John told them that he was not the one, but Jesus was the one. He was saying to them, "I am not, but he is. Leave me and follow Jesus."

2. Stole as Yoke

After I was ordained as an elder, one of a number of differences is that I can now wear a stole. The stole symbolizes a yoke. It is a great privilege to wear the stole. I am one of many servants. I come to you not to be served, but to serve. Honestly speaking, I want to be remembered by you and celebrated with you. Today, we will celebrate the ordination together, because with your help and support, God molded me to become a better pastor. And we will also celebrate my RE-appointment to Gilroy United Methodist Church. Can you join in this celebration? But please remember that what we really hope is for all of us to remember Jesus and to live with Jesus here and now, day by day. Whenever and wherever I wear a stole as a yoke, I will remember that I am called to serve. Let us celebrate together!!