**You Wouldn’t Have Liked John The Baptist If… by David Diestelkamp**

If you struggle to listen to a preacher because of the way he dresses, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. His clothing was rough and was neither stylish nor formal (Mt 3:4; 11:8).

If you don’t like a preacher because of his awkward social habits, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He ate an odd diet of locusts and wild honey (Mt 3:4; Mk 1:6), “neither eating bread nor drinking wine” (Lk 7:33), and his disciples fasted often (Lk 5:33).

If you don’t like the inconvenience of traveling to hear preaching, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He preached in the wilderness and not in urban areas (Mt 3:1).

If you insist that a preacher be from a certain region of the country or have a special education, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He “was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel” (Lk 1:80).

If you don’t like lessons about real repentance that hold people’s feet to the fire, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He primarily preached on repentance and even refused to baptize those who had not repented (Mk 1:4; Mt 3:2-3, 7-9)

If you don’t want to study about divorce or have unscripturally married people told they are wrong, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He did exactly that with Herod (Mt 14:3-4).

If you want preaching to be politically correct and never offend anyone (including the government), you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. His preaching offended the king (Mk 6:17-18) and addressed social, tax, and military issues (Lk 3:10-14).

If you don’t want to hear about caring for the poor, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He taught about giving your second shirt to one who has none and sharing your food with the hungry (Lk 3:11).

If you aren’t comfortable with people confessing their sins, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. People regularly came to him confessing their sins (Mt 3:5-6).

If you are resisting being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He preached “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3).

If you don’t want to be baptized by immersion, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist (literally John the Immerser) because John immersed people (Jn 3:6, 16; Mk 1:5, 9; Jn 3:23).

If you don’t like to think about God’s coming judgment, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist. He warned of the wrath to come as an ax that is ready to cut down a tree (Mt 3:7-9).

If you aren’t interested in the kingdom of God, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist’s primary kingdom theme (Mt 3:2).

If you don’t want criticism of religious leaders and false teachers, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist who called them a “Brood of vipers!” (Mt 3:7-9).

If you insist on miracles in order to believe, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist who “did no sign” (Jn 10:41).

If you are impressed with leaders, preachers, or writers because they are popular with other leaders, preachers, or writers, you wouldn’t have liked John the Baptist who was rejected by the Pharisees and the experts in the law (Lk 7:30).

We think, “No, no, I would have gone to John and listened to him.” But if you let even one of the above things stop you now from listening to the gospel preached, you would have let it stop you when you smelled John, had to walk to hear him, or get wet in the muddy Jordan River.

Jesus said, “…among those born of women there is not risen one greater than John the Baptist” (Mt 11:11). Jesus said John “…has borne witness to the truth” (Jn 5:33) and was “…the burning and shining lamp” (Jn 5:35). How could anyone not have liked this guy? How could anyone not have listened to him? But it is often the same today. People won’t look past the man to see the message. Jesus said there was no greater prophet, but I’m not optimistic that we would like him.