

He Must Increase

By Peter McArthur

issachar.org

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (Jhn 3:30)

All true spiritual insight is gathered up in this one little sentence.

John the Baptist had an insight into the person of Jesus Christ – which was to fulfil the Father’s purpose.

Who must increase? Jesus. Who must decrease? Us. Simple really, but so hard to apply.

But when (and if) we apply these seven little words a wonderful transformation can happen. We begin to learn that everything (past, present, and future) can be explained by this fundamental principle.

It explains everything the Father HAS done, IS doing, and WILL do. What a breadth of thought this is!

Let’s take a closer look at John 3:30.

The word “must”. It literally means “it has to be” or “it is necessary”.

The word “increase”. It means “to enlarge and fill, to give increase.” In other words

Jesus is to go on increasing. His authority and influence will spread unhindered. What a thought.

The word “but”. Here it simply means “now”. So the text would read “Jesus must increase; now I decrease”

The word “decrease”. Means “to be less in rank, to be inferior in dignity, to decrease in popularity and in authority.”

So filling all this out the text could read like this:

“It is necessary that Jesus should enlarge and go on increasing.

Now it has to be that I must be less in rank and decrease in popularity and my own authority.”

Or at least something akin to that.

Notice that the divine (biblical) order is for Jesus to increase first, and then we decrease. The world sees it the other way round. The natural way of thinking would be to say, “As I choose to decrease then Jesus can come in and fill up the empty places and so then He can increase in me.”

That’s fleshy thinking. It is soulish, but it’s not how the Father thinks or works. The Word clearly and quite bluntly says “Jesus must increase FIRST, and then you decrease”.

It's as though we need Christ to exceed more and more within us, so that we realise there's no more room for "me" inside, only Him. Jesus first; then us.

This is a remarkable and wonderful truth. It doesn't say "Jesus MIGHT increase". It firmly says "He MUST". It's a certainty; He has to increase.

Truth is truth whether we know it or not, whether we believe it or not, whether we agree with it or not.

"...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus..." (Eph. 4:21)

It's a process that Jesus is increasing. It MUST be so, therefore it IS so!

"He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." (Eph 1:9-11)

But the issue is – we must decrease. The Father's purpose is for Jesus to increase and for us to do the opposite. Die to self, to ambition, to our own plans even. A horrible thought for most of us. But, it's the way forward and the way of the upward call for the prize in Christ Jesus.

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have the pre-eminence in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him." (Col 1:17-19).

Notice that extraordinary phrase, "in ALL things that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence." This is truly a monumental text. We should think soberly and deeply on its truth.

The reason there needs to be an increasing and a decreasing is so that FULLNESS can have its perfect way.

"...His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Eph. 1:23)

"He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things." (Eph. 4:10)

So there it is. Seven little but great words. Apply it and see the transformation that comes from obedience.

Grace and peace,
Peter McArthur
issachar.org