

Respected Achan, Loving parents, and my fellow Students,

My name is Richard Jerry and I am here today to talk about St John the apostle, the author of five New Testament books: the gospel of John, the three short epistles that bear his name, and the book of Revelation. St. John was born to Zebedee and Salome in Galilee on A.D 6, and is the brother to James, another one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. . He lived to an old age and died at the island of Patmos. St. John is the patron saint of love, loyalty, and friendship. His feast day is on December 27th.

St. John was called to be an apostle by Jesus within his first year of public ministry. The calling of John is depicted in Matthew 4: 18-22, where it says John and his brother James were casting their nets by the sea when Jesus came and called them. They immediately left their father, and followed Jesus. John portrays a holy and willing character even from the day he was called to be an apostle. When John immediately follows Jesus, he reveals his inner connection with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had not explained who he was and thus was a stranger when he calls for St. John. Yet, without knowing who Jesus was, John left and followed him. John was able to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit and so must every one of us in our everyday lives. We should be willing to follow Jesus without thinking twice and pray that we recognize his presence knocking at the door to our hearts and let him in, just like St. John the apostle.

John's life serves to remind us of several lessons which we can apply to our own lives. First, the pursuit for truth must always be balanced by a love for people. Without it, zeal can turn to harshness and judgmentalism. As John learned as he matured, if we speak the

truth in love, we, and those we touch, will grow in favor of Christ.

Second, confidence and boldness, not tempered by compassion and grace, can quickly turn to pride and smugness. In his early days with Jesus, at times John acted irrationally and recklessly. But despite his youthful expressions of misdirected passion, John aged well. He began to understand the need for humility in those who desired to be great. Confidence is a wonderful virtue, but without humility, it can become self-confidence, which can lead to boasting and an attitude of exclusiveness. When that happens, our witness of the grace of God is tainted, and others see in us exactly the kind of person they wish not to be. Like John, if we are to be effective witnesses for Christ, our demeanor should be one that reflects a passion for the truth, compassion for people, and the desire to serve and represent our Lord by reflecting His humility and grace.

And lastly, St. John the apostle teaches us that, in life, we don't need to do the big things to please god, and that even the smallest acts of kindness count. John was the only apostle of Jesus to not die a martyr; yet, he was always close to Jesus. John, along with Peter and James, were the only witnesses of the raising of Daughter of Jairus, and the closest witnesses to the Agony in Gethsemane. He and Peter were also the only two apostles sent by Jesus to make preparations for the final Passover meal, the Last Supper. We can see that although St. John did not die a martyr, he was given so many opportunities to witness the glory of god and grow a strong relationship with god, so much so, that by the time of the crucifixion, Jesus had enough confidence in John to turn the care of His mother over to him. From that day on, John cared for her as if she were his own mother.

So, Using St.John the apostle as a model, we should realize that no small act of help is unaccounted for, whether it be opening the door for someone, helping the elderly, or volunteering at the soup kitchen and that every time we do so we growing closer to the almighty god.

Thank you