

GOSPEL PEARLS

You gave nothing to yourself

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A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.' (Luke 3,15-16.21-22)

John the Baptist is great because he makes himself humbly small, by recognising reality, which is that he is only a messenger who precedes the Messiah. He is not proud of the resounding success of his mission when thousands of people come to be baptised by him. Nor does he lord it over his many disciples. As soon as he meets Jesus, he does not hesitate to recognise that the Lord's baptism is far more effective than his. The Baptist's humility should make you seriously question your own. Have you ever considered that everything you know how to do, the opportunities you have had, what good you have said or done, ultimately comes from God because, at least in the beginning, you gave nothing to yourself?