



The evangelists describe this 'Voice' – the voice of John – standing on the River Jordan banks, with a crowd of people intently listening to him announcing someone who is all important – far more important than he – whose baptism will be no mere rite of repentance – it will immerse a person in the life of God Himself – thanks to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

So you see, with the words of Isaiah the prophet – and John the Baptist, the proclamation of God's coming in this age of darkness – or in any age for that matter, becomes rather concrete doesn't it.

Now why does this 'voice' CRY OUT? Because not only is God's absence coming to an end – it is coming to an end SOON – the signs are given – the voice – the wilderness – the Messenger before Him.

And behold – Christ comes – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And the Kingdom of God begins to take effect in the hearts and lives of men and women and boys and girls. Do you get that message of hope?

Ha! but His own people didn't recognize Him – they didn't even receive Him – they crucified Him – but even that did not stop Him. He rose from the dead! BUT He's gone away – there is an absence of God in the world. His voice – His mercy – His kindness.... "I don't believe it!" you say.

Oh! Let's be honest – real honest. How many of us – when things go wrong – when we're lonely – when something is eating us away – right here – when there is no one to turn to – how many of us don't cry out "Where are You – God?" – "Why don't You answer me?" – "Help me!" – "Come to me" – "I can't stand it any longer!" – "I can't stand being cut off!"

It would seem there is an absence of God in the world. And in this absence – the words of the evangelist come to us:- "There was a man sent from God whose name was John" Ah! now we are getting a little nearer the truth that I said at the beginning – we discover it in:

## (2) THE ABSENCE OF GOD & THE WITNESS HE HAS SENT:

If you take note of that first chapter of St. John's Gospel, you will notice a number of times he uses the word "was". But in the Greek, they have different meanings. The Greek language is very colourful.

This is how John starts his Gospel:- "In the beginning was the Word – and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The Greek word used here is the tiny word *nv* which means WAS ALREADY. That is, Jesus was already in the beginning.

But John goes on to say:- "Without Him was not anything made that was made...". The Greek word for was now changes to *egeneto*, which means something that came into existence. This is the same word used in the 6th verse of John's Gospel...

"There WAS a man sent by God..."

*Egeneto* is an aorist verb denoting that something HAS occurred – in the past – but there are NO limitations as to its continuance...So this colourful Greek word which also has so many meanings is interpreted here – as – "CAME" — "There "CAME" a man sent by God" (*NIV*)...BUT this type of man is continually coming — continually being sent by God — GOD IS continually saying to this person – or that person:- "I send you here" — "I send you there".

So we have NOW – here, this evening – an important truth in both the ancient and modern sense:-  
“There comes to us, a man, sent by God, whose name is Douglas Carty”.

The only thing that has changed between the ancient and the modern, is the name – the preaching place – the dress – and the style of preaching Everything else remains the same — the purpose of God.

If such is the case, then to discover Douglas Carty’s purpose in being here tonight – we need to discover the purpose of John the Baptist – who is the forerunner of every Minister of the Word.

### (3) THE PURPOSE OF JOHN:

John was sent from God – his mission was of Divine origin...Like John, every minister who is called, is conscious of the meaningful words of Jesus; “You have not chosen Me – I have chosen you.” John then, recognises the GREATNESS of Jesus, and to this he bears witness. Consequently he is called to speak out – with authority – directly – to the situation of his own time – and to the conscience of his hearers.

Oh, don’t take it out – on this man – Douglas Carty when he proclaims faithfully – the Word of God – when your heart is stirred and you feel hurt – and the absence of God...Take heed for he has been sent to bear witness to the Truth – the only thing that will set you free...

He has come to introduce you to ONE who is greater than he – whose baptism will immerse you in the life of God – and I am not referring to the speaking of tongues – but the life and power that sustains you in body mind and spirit in every area of your life and affairs – every day – and every moment...

He has come to announce that the absence of God for you, is coming to an end – the Kingdom of God is in our midst...There comes to us a man sent from God – YET the responsibility does not rest entirely on Douglas Carty or any other member of the Clergy...You need to put our name there too! It also includes YOU! The Church is called to bear witness to the truth – the presence of God in the world. Do not leave all the responsibility to Douglas Carty...alone.

Catch the vision of a ‘Team Ministry’ – Team up with your Pastor who is your leader and friend – and go forth into the world to bear witness to the TRUTH that sets you free. Comfort My people, is the Lords command – show them the hand of mercy – be loving – be friendly...that is the way to make the presence of God – REAL.

### CONCLUSION

Let there come alive in this Parish – men and women – called of God – you can’t go wrong – for you are a people who have been sent to bear witness to Jesus Christ – SAVIOUR.