

## **The Wild Man**

Matthew 3:1-12

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Matthew 3, beginning in verse 1:

*In those days came John the Baptist . . .*

. . . literally, “In those days comes John the Baptist.” This is archetypal. (In the days of Rachel’s tears—days of sorrow—John the Baptist shows up preaching in the wilderness, the wild-ness) . . .

*. . . preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”*

*Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.*

John was a wild man. For those willing to accept it, said Jesus, he was Elijah. Remember that Elijah (one of the wilderness prophets) lived in the wilderness clothed in a leather girdle. Isaiah, who prophesies, “The voice crying in the wilderness,” walked around for three years prophesying butt-naked . . . buttocks exposed (Isaiah 20:4).

Ezekiel lies on his left side outside Jerusalem for over a year, then on his right side for forty days. And God commands him to eat food baked over human dung. They were God’s wild men, the prophets of old; and John was the greatest of these . . . wild . . . uncivilized . . . uncontrolled by this world. His life wasn’t scripted by this world, defined by this world, or enslaved to this world. He was free, he was tough, and he was dangerous. John ate locusts!

Israel lived in fear of the locust, the “ravager.” (Joel 2: “Before them peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale; like warriors they charge, like soldiers they scale the wall.”) Locusts would devour the sustenance of Israel. But John devoured *them*.

In Revelation 9 demon locusts come from the pit of Hell. They don’t afflict the crops; they afflict the hearts of men.

John yells, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. . . . Make straight in the desert a highway.” Some say that he meant by that, “Get your life in order.” Perhaps he meant more, “Let go of your order.”

Not “get your stuff together,”  
But “forget about your stuff.”  
Not “get civilized,”  
But “get uncivilized.”

John was hardly civilized. “Let go of all your attachments; clean out your heart; get everything off the highway, because somebody’s comin’! Repent, be baptized, wash this world away, get wild!”

Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan were going out to him. Isn’t that weird?

In times of sorrow, folks love wild men. I think we *always* love wild men.

- Like we love lions in the zoo
- Like we love gladiators and cowboys in the movies
- Like we love John Rambo and James Bond (but you wouldn’t want them driving your car)
- Like we love John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd (but you’d be afraid to have them over for a nice dinner party)
- Like we love John the Baptist, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel (but not at family camp . . . “Come on, Ezekiel, just use the oven! That’s gross . . .”)
- Like my kids loved the lion at the San Francisco Zoo (from a safe distance)

We all love wild men, because we all live such constrained lives.

In those days the Jews were constrained and repressed, occupied by Imperial Rome. They were also constrained by an extremely legalistic religious system. And of course, like all of us, they were constrained in their hearts by fear, guilt, and shame. New Testament writers would say they were in bondage to the dragon and his demon locusts from Hell.

In his seminal work Civilization and Its Discontents, Sigmund Freud taught that civilization is dependent upon constrained (repressed) desires. For if we acted on the deepest desires of our hearts, we’d devour each other. Therefore, our only hope for civilization, taught Freud, is repression of desire through fear, guilt, and shame: civilization and its discontents.

Well, John the Baptist wasn’t civilized. But he said, “Heaven is at hand,” and Heaven is the ultimate civilization. So we would suppose that they’re all really repressed up there! That would mean the best party is in Hell, Van Halen style . . . “Runnin’ with the Devil . . .”

I think deep down all guys want to be wild men.

I’ve got to admit: In Jesus movies, John the Baptist was always my favorite character. In Jesus of Nazareth the young Michael York plays John the Baptist . . . lean, ripped, screaming fearlessly in the desert, “Repent!” It was awesome.

In The Greatest Story Ever Told, remember Charlton Heston as John the Baptist? — yelling at Herod from the dungeon, “Herod! Adulterer! Herodias is not your wife but your brother’s!”  
*Awesome.*

John Eldridge just wrote a great book entitled Wild at Heart. He argues every man wants to be a wild man . . . it’s his true nature . . . born to be wild with an adventure to live, a battle to fight, and a beauty to rescue.

[Singing]

Get your motor runnin’  
Head out on the highway  
Lookin’ for adventure  
And whatever comes our way  
Yeah Darlin’ go make it happen  
Take the world in a love embrace  
Fire all of your guns at once  
And explode into space . . .

Like a true nature’s child  
We were born, born to be wild  
We can climb so high  
I never wanna die

Born to be wild . . .

Men want to be wild men . . . and chicks dig ‘em. It’s weird, because mothers want their daughters to marry Mr. Rogers types, but they themselves like wild men. Women say they want sensitive, compassionate men, and then they date Tommy Lee . . . and Russell Crow . . . What was Pamela Anderson thinking?

Chicks dig wild men.

[Singing]

Wild thing  
You make my heart sing  
You make everything groovy  
Wild Thing

Wild Thing, I think you move me  
But, I wanna know for sure  
So, c'mon and hold me tight  
You move me

I think deep down, women want to be the beauty that is rescued. So they want a man strong enough, uninhibited enough, wild enough to storm their castle and set them free . . . to penetrate their defenses and impregnate them with life.

For some of you, that's terrifying . . . for it sounds like rape. For some of you, it's enticing . . . for it sounds like romance. For *all* of us, I think it's both. For if the wild man is strong enough to storm the castle and set us free and give us life, he's strong enough to storm the castle, imprison us further, and give us death.

We all live in a world that is raped. But we dream of romance. Remember, we're all feminine to God's masculine. We are the Bride, and we are or were imprisoned in a castle guarded by a dragon.

Well, anyway, chicks dig wild men, so they marry the wild man. But they're *afraid* of the wild man, so they try to tame the wild man. And after they do, they go see a counselor. They complain, "The romance has gone out of my marriage."

So, Bride of Christ, how's your marriage? How's your walk with Jesus? Is it boring?

Well, like I was saying at first, "all Jerusalem and Judea" were going out to John, because we like wild men, and really there are so very few of them. This world is very effective at taming wild men.

In Scripture the word "world" means more than simply earth. World implies the systems of fallen reality, civilization as we know it. This world and its dark prince are very effective at domesticating wild men. Many are downright stupid . . .

Have you ever watched beer commercials during football games? "I like football and beer and the twins! I'm *wild!*" NO. This very instant you're being tamed by corporate America to the tune of hundreds of millions a year, and all they needed was a sixty second spot during a football game.

I love beer and big juicy steaks. Outback Steakhouse has these commercials with gorgeous babes, beer, and steak, and then the announcer says, "No rules, mate!" Totally wild!

So I took my babe, and I ordered beer and steak. It was awesome! And then I left. They chased me down and said, "You have to pay." I said, "No, I don't. 'No rules, mate!' It's really groovy . . . wild. Thank you so much!" It was a *trap*. They lied to me! And I was imprisoned in the kitchen washing dishes the rest of the night.

Of course, that didn't really happen, because I'm not that stupid . . . yet it happens all the time. It happens on a shallow level and a much deeper level. Not only the world sets traps, but Satan set traps. God warns of the trap. "Adam, don't take that fruit. It's a trap. The day you eat it you'll die." Satan sets the trap. "Eve, it will make you like God. Isn't that a good desire?"

That's how wild animals are enslaved and tamed: They fulfill their God-given wild desire in the wrong way or the wrong place, and their desire is twisted to their shame. They eat old meat lying in a snare, and they're trapped.

Men think they're wild by walking into traps and eating the bait: drugs, adultery, greed . . . "I'm wild!" No, you're entirely domesticated by Satan, firmly enslaved with shame, guilt, pride, and fear . . .

fear that you'll be exposed  
fear that you'll die  
fear that you'll be condemned.

For you have heard the call of the wild, and now you're the Evil One's pet.

When people get frightened enough, they often turn to religion, because the law tells us where the traps are: "Don't steal, don't commit adultery, don't bear false witness . . ." People come to church so I can tell them where all the traps are, so I can motivate them to be careful and cautious, so I can help them repress their desires by reminding them that if they screw up, they are jerks, and God might fry them in Hell. But if they just carefully follow the rules, they can navigate their lives.

Guys don't say it, but they mean it: "Hey, honey, work sucks, the kids are messed up, and I'm getting addicted to porn. Maybe we ought to go to church. I need some repression."

Marx said, "Religion is the opiate of the people."

That is, it is civilization's best shot at repressing the desires of the masses; civilization's best shot at maintaining order over discontent.

That is, religion is the most powerful means of enslaving men to the world.

That is, religion is the great lion tamer.

I think Marx may be right.

In The Revelation the dragon calls forth the beast from the sea and then the beast from the land—the false prophet—who I believe is civil religion. And that beast tempts all of us. So if Satan doesn't trap us with sins, he traps us with sin itself, the belief that we can navigate our way through this world and make our own lives work: the idolatry of the self.

Religious people hate the truly wild man, because he is not repressed by them. Perhaps it's not the things repressed which are the greatest evil, but the fact that we repress them: that is, hide our hearts from the Wild Man.

John looks up and sees the Scribes and Pharisees. (You could translate that Pastors and Bible Study Leaders.)

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell*

*you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

John did not mean “Navigate the world,”  
but “Die to the world.”  
Not simply “Repress your passions,”  
but “Surrender your passions.  
Don’t simply “Manage your sins”  
but “Confess your sins.”  
“Bear the fruit that befits repentance,”  
tears, mourning, lamentation.

Jesus taught in John 11, “John wailed and you did not lament.” You did not repent. You did not mourn over this fallen world. You did not weep Rachel’s tears.

So John was wild, but not wild enough.

Verse 11:

*“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”*

“But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire . . .” (Malachi 3:2).

When you truly see Him, you will mourn. Then your mourning will turn into wild dancing. You will die and then live.

The Wild Man’s name is Jesus.

If you’re new, you may be thinking, “Jesus? Wild? Get out! I’ve seen Him on the flannel graph in Sunday School. He’s meek and mild and boring.”

Dorothy Sayers wrote:

The people responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus never accused him of being a bore—on the contrary: they thought him too dynamic to be safe. It has been left for later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround him with a yawning ho-hum atmosphere of tedium. We have efficiently trimmed the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified him “meek and mild,” and recommended him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies.

I told you John the Baptist was always my favorite in Jesus movies. That’s sad. But Charlton Heston and Michael York were so animated, virile, dynamic, powerful, courageous, alive, and

free! And then you'd meet Jesus, and He always looked stoned or repressed. (Max von Sydow on drugs).

Well, Jesus was more wild than John.

- Jesus gave the Scribes and Pharisees the worst tongue-lashing.
- Jesus baptized not with water but the Spirit that is fire.

Jesus was more wild than John. Not even death could contain Him. In fact, Jesus was the first truly wild man. Ever since Adam, humanity had been enslaved and trapped. Jesus is the new Adam, and none has ever been so wild.

He is the Lion of Judah!

In The Chronicles of Narnia He's Aslan the Lion. The children ask if He's safe, and Mr. Beaver exclaims, "Safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

The Lion of Judah is not a tame lion, but He's good. The problem is His Bride is not good, so He makes her nervous. When she's afraid, she tries to tame Him, and make Him safe, controlled, and predictable.

My wife had a dream. A lovely woman was asleep in her bed. In shock, Susan then saw a great lion. She thought it would eat the woman. It put its immense teeth next to her throat and then licked her face and lay down beside her. As it lay there, a demon entered the room. And the lion jumped up and ate it.

John ate locusts; Jesus eats demon locusts from Hell. And He serves dragon meat for dinner. Jesus is *more wild* than John. If John prepared the highway, Jesus rides His Harley down it, and He wants you on the back.

Jesus not only leaves civilization, He leaves the throne of Heaven, naked of all His glory. He sneaks into the dragon's castle where His Bride is sleeping in bondage. He makes Himself His Bride's baby, and traps her with love. And He sets a trap for the Evil One himself.

The Lion is a Lamb.

Having all power, life, and glory in perfect freedom, He lays it all down. He takes the poison fruit of His Bride; He bears her dead heart; He embraces the fallen world with love; He "becomes sin for us" and yells to the dragon, "Do your worst!"

The Lamb is slain and descends into Hell, into the belly of the dragon, bearing every sin, every wound, every sorrow, every tear of the one He loves. There He fires all of His guns at once and *explodes* into space! That is, on the third day, He rose to baptize us with His fire—His Spirit. He is *the Wild Man*, and He makes us wild too.

You see:

He not only forgives us our sins;  
He gives us His Spirit.  
He not only crucifies our old hearts;  
He gives us new hearts.

Christianity is not just repressing your old desires but dying to your old desires and getting new ones. Or better yet, baptizing your old desires with fire until they're pure like gold.

John said, "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand" — the great civilization. But nobody there is repressed. Nobody says, "Another day with a harp . . . \*sigh\* . . . I really ought to be good . . ." Everybody does exactly what they want, and what they want is exactly good.

I would imagine they get up and say:

I think I'll feast at the Great Banquet! I'll eat all I want; I'll drink all I want, for all I want is good! Then I'll go to the king's chamber and make uninhibited love and never be ashamed, for "his banner over me is love." I'm bound in an unbreakable covenant!

Then I'll sit on my Father's lap resting in His arms without fear. I'll sing to the praise of His glorious grace forever, because I *want* to. It is absolute ecstasy!

In Heaven, no one is repressed. Heaven is a wild, uninhibited dance of absolute joy. Jesus said, "I came that my joy might be in you." Heaven is at hand, and we can begin to live there *now* by faith in Christ Jesus. "For freedom Christ has set us free," wrote Paul. "Let us not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

If you've put your faith in Christ as your Savior and Lord, He's given you a new heart and an immeasurable greatness of power. You are a dragon slayer! The Lion is in you. So Satan's only hope is to tame you with lies. The lies appeal to your old heart full of fear, so you'll shut down your new heart full of love. And love is God.

Our old heart says, "Be cautious . . . be anxious . . . be afraid . . . don't screw up! Stay in control at all times." It worries, "Should I go here? . . . should I go there? . . . should I take this job? . . ." Every move is calculated and measured.

Have you ever tried to dance like that? It's not fun and it's not wild. So occupied with yourself, you can't hear the music.

Over the years, praying with people who've had visions and get prophecies, I've been amazed at the questions Jesus won't answer. They'll ask and I'll ask for details or formulas and instructions (dance steps), and He'll answer, "Trust me. Follow me." Once a friend asked, "Should I see a certain person, go on a certain trip?" And Jesus said, "Use your new heart, the one I gave you."

I always want instructions.  
But He wants me to use my new heart.

- It's scary using your new heart. It's unpredictable and unscripted.
- It's scary being free. Who knows what will happen?
- It's a frightening thing to love from the heart without constraint. For in this world it can get you crucified.

The wildest men are hanging on crosses in the Sudan. They're singing in prison cells in China. They already have one foot in the kingdom of Heaven, even while the other is still locked in chains.

It's frightening to love. But love is stronger than death, and nothing is more wild. For love is God, and God is not *at all* repressed. And God is in you.

Children of God, stop listening to shame. Stop running in fear.

Gordon Dalby tells about a man plagued by fear and a recurring nightmare in which a ferocious lion kept chasing him until he dropped exhausted and woke screaming. He went to his pastor, and the pastor invited him to recall the dream even in all its fear.

Hesitantly, the man agreed and soon reported that indeed, the lion was in sight and headed his way. The pastor then instructed the man, "When the lion comes close to you, try not to run away, but instead, stand there and ask him who or what he is, and what he's doing in your life . . . can you try that?"

Shifting uneasily in his chair, the man agreed, then reported what was happening. "The lion is snorting and shaking his head, standing right there in front of me . . . I ask him who he is . . . and—Oh! I can't believe what he's saying! He says, 'I'm your courage and your strength. Why are you running away from me?'"

Men, stop running from Jesus. He wants to make you wild. Don't be tamed by fear, but let "the love of Christ constrain you." Use your new heart. The law helps you know when you're *not* using it. Are you looking at porn? Are you cheating in your business? Are you having an affair? Are you greedy? Then you're not using it.

Don't panic. Don't just repress it, but confess it. Then use your new heart. Jesus didn't come to only forgive us our sins and say, "Try again. Try *harder!* Be more repressed next time," like some college football coach from Hell. Jesus came that we might have *life* and have it abundantly.

John came to help us die to the old world; Jesus came to give birth to the new one. In Matthew 11 Jesus teaches, "John mourned, and you didn't lament. We piped, and you would not dance." But when the Wild Man hangs on His wild cross, "He draws all men unto himself." We mourn, and our mourning turns into dancing. We die with Him and are resurrected with Him. We're "born again to be wild."

Yeah Darlin' go make it happen  
Take the world in a love embrace

Fire all of your guns at once  
And explode into space . . .

Like a true nature's child  
We were born, *born again* to be wild . . .

Women, don't be afraid of wild men like Jesus. They're the ones you long for, so wild they'll hang on a cross and sacrifice everything for you. And they won't settle for just your body. They want your freely-given, naked heart. That's not rape; it's romance. Yes, it's scary, but it's good.

I read about a repressed nun in her mid-30's who never smiled, laughed, or danced. In prayer she had a vision of a large ballroom filled with people. . . .

I was sitting by myself on a wooden chair, when a man approached me, took my hand, and led me onto the floor. He held me in his arms and led me in the dance. The tempo of the music increased and we whirled faster and faster. The man's eyes never left my face. His radiant smile covered me with warmth, delight, and a sense of acceptance. Everyone else on the floor stopped dancing. They were staring at us.

The beat of the music increased and we pirouetted around the room in reckless rhythm. I glanced at his hands, and then I knew. Brilliant wounds of a battle long ago, almost like a signature carved in flesh. The music tapered to a slow, lilting melody and Jesus rocked me back and forth. As the dance ended, he pulled me close to him. Do you know what he whispered? . . . "Christine, I'm wild about you."

Bride of Christ, He's *wild* about you. He wants you to be *wild* about Him too. So He sat at table . . . an adventure to live, a battle to fight, and a beauty to rescue. And having given thanks He took the bread, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way after the supper He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins, the forgiveness of many. And I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom."

There *is* no party in Hell. But Jesus has invited you to a party greater than your wildest imaginations.

So if you're here today and thought to yourself, "Well, Christianity is just about repressing your old desires," *you're wrong*. It's about being born again. And if you've never asked Jesus into your life, do it now. If you've done it a thousand times you can still pray this prayer with me:

"Lord Jesus, I believe, help my unbelief. I confess to you my old heart, my sin. Thank you for taking it to your cross and forgiving me. Give me your heart, Lord Jesus. Come live your life in me. I choose to trust you. I want you. Be my Lord. Holy Spirit, baptize me with your fire. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer for the first time, or maybe you've prayed it a million times, Jesus asks you to come to His table and take His body and His blood. Isn't that wild? That's the thing He asks you to do, to ingest His body and blood—His life. And as you do, worship Him. He is wild about you. Amen.

[Communion]

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“Lord Jesus, we confess to you that you have not given us a spirit of timidity but a Spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. Lord Jesus, I have to confess to you that so many times I've listened to my old heart and moved out of fear and timidity. Lord, even times when I'm wild it's a cover-up for my fright, fear, and insecurity.

“Lord Jesus, we confess that we want to live out of our new hearts. Help us, inspire us. Lord, let us be the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord,’ and people would look and think, ‘Those guys *aren't* really repressed.’ Thank you, Jesus. It's in your name that we pray.”

If you're saying, “I'm going to go be *wild!*” even better, say to yourself, “I'm going to go love God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength, and my neighbor as myself.” In the process, if things get wild, keep your motor running. You're right where God wants you: on His highway. Above all of God's creatures (more than fish, lions, dogs, angels), you were born and born again to be wild. You were born to be *free*. You were born to be the image of God. And He's not repressed.

So, by way of benediction . . .

[Band plays “Born to Be Wild”]

Get your motor runnin'  
Head out on the highway  
Lookin' for adventure  
And whatever comes our way

Yeah darlin' go make it happen  
Take the world in a love embrace  
Fire all of your guns at once  
And explode into space

I like smoke and lightning  
Heavy metal thunder  
Racin' with the wind  
And the feelin' that I'm under

Yeah darlin' go make it happen  
Take the world in a love embrace

Fire all of your guns at once  
And explode into space

Like a true nature's child  
We were born, born to be wild  
We can climb so high  
I never wanna die

Born to be wild  
Born to be wild

### Further Reading

“Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the LORD.”

-Malachi 3:1-3

A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. . . . Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

-Isaiah 40:3-8, 30-31

Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not.” Thus says the LORD: “Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. . . . Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

-Jeremiah 31:15-16, 31-34

“And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned incense to them and decked herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. . . . And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD.”

-Hosea 2:13-14, 19-20

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings’ houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.’ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, ‘We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

Matthew 11:7-19

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“Ooh! said Susan, “I’d thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will, dearie, and no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver, “if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver. “Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good.”

-C. S. Lewis

Some women want a passive man if they want a man at all; the church wants a tamed man—they are called priests; the university wants a domesticated man—they are called tenure-track people; the corporation wants a . . . sanitized, hairless, shallow man.

-Robert Bly

The greatest danger to Christianity is, I contend, not heresies, heterodoxies, not atheists, not profane secularism - no, but the kind of orthodoxy which is cordial drivel, mediocrity served up sweet.

-Soren Kierkegaard

And the more I considered Christianity, the more I found that while it had established a rule and order, the chief aim of that order was to give room for good things to run wild. . . . This is the thrilling romance of Orthodoxy. People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe.

-G. K. Chesterton

“I make my presence known in water, wind, and fire. I am Spirit, without shape, form, or face. Those who seek safety try to summon me like a tame lapdog. They crave security instead of growth. They have no tolerance for mystery, certain that they can know everything knowable. The weak-kneed do not love Danger. They are afraid I will call them to become what they are not. They call me Comforter for all the wrong reasons and are surprised when no comfort comes to them.”

-Brennan Manning

Every man dies; not every man really lives.

-William Wallace in Braveheart

All my animals I make my pets.

-Curt Cobain

So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

-Luke 5:16