

John 20:30-31

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[0 : 0 0] is John 20, 30 through 31. Please stand for the reading of God's word. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good morning. It's a joy to be together.

Let's just pause for prayer. Father, we turn to you, and we have just read that you have exalted above all things, your name and your word.

And so in our presence, in these next moments, would we sense that exaltation? Would we make much of the Lord Jesus? Would you glorify your Son? Would you manifest yourself through your Spirit?

Would you lift up our hearts that we may see Christ enthroned?

[1 : 2 6] Go with us, we pray. We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. This morning we come to the universal call of the Christian faith.

It is a message that has been passed down, and this morning we will find out that it is a message that is to be passed out. There are a few places in our Bible that commend our faith in the concision of one sentence, as we find this morning.

It's worth rereading. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

In these two verses, John the writer gives us his purpose for writing. John wants you and I, the reader, to know that he has not written merely a biography, though certainly there are biographical elements to his gospel.

He has not written merely history, though it is historical given the eyewitness accounts and the testimony of documents. For you, the casual reader, you may think it's crafted for entertainment, but it's not.

[2 : 5 9] He's actually telling you more than a story. He's inviting you into a story. He is not only occupied to teach you, he is motivated to transform you.

He is not describing Jesus to the reader. He is actually prescribing Jesus to the reader.

And in these next 25 minutes, I've never gone 25 minutes, but today I'm going to do 25 minutes, my aim is to hold out before you the Christian faith.

And whether you take hold of it for the first time, or you continue taking hold of it, that this morning your countenance would be lifted to behold Jesus in all of his splendor.

My approach is to offer you three verbal snapshots from this text. First, signs that were written, followed by the Son that is exalted, and concluding with a summon to belief.

[4 : 0 8] Signs that were written, a Son that is exalted, and a summons to belief. For those of you, signs that were written, for those of you who have been with us since the start of John's Gospel, we are aware that John has embedded in his Gospel a series of seven miraculous signs that Jesus performed.

These were recorded largely from the first half of the book, chapters 1 through 12. And though John only explicitly records seven signs, of which his disciples bear witness to, he tells us that there's far more.

The concluding verse of his Gospel, and you can turn there since your Bibles are open, chapter 21, verse 25, John concludes with this, Now there were many other things that Jesus did.

Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. See, John could tell you where he was when Jesus turned the water into wine.

But he could tell you more. He could tell you about the one o'clock miracle, when the sickness stopped in the official sun, and he could tell you more. He could tell you how the invalid stood and took up his mat and walked, and he could tell you more.

[5 : 29] He could tell you how there was a banqueting table laid out in the wilderness for 5,000, and he could tell you more. He could tell you that he was on the boat in darkness, in the storm, and how Jesus found them, and he can tell you more.

He can tell you about the social outcast, the beggar, the blind man, how he saw, and he can tell you more. He could tell you that Lazarus emerged from the grave, grave clothes and all, and he can tell you more.

There were many other things that Jesus did. However, John has chosen to give us what he has given us.

And note this, not for lack of information, but for lack of space. That's how he concludes the gospel. If I were to write it all out, you would get TMI, too much information.

There's some sense that the divine editor gave John, and you writers and academicians would know, divine editor gave John, this is your word count. Stick with it. And so he did, and he obliged.

[6 : 46] Of what he saw, he wrote what was necessary, and what was written is sufficient. You see, you and I, the nature of our minds are more. Give me more proof, John.

I need more details. Color it a little bit more. According to Calvin, we have this insatiable curiosity. Vain. And John won't stoop to fill our appetite.

Rather, he gives us what is sufficient, adequate, and enough. Enough for what, you ask? Enough to engender faith and belief.

I can't recall when it was that these sorts of questions appeared on exams. I think they were usually math exams or some sort of quantitative multiple choice test.

And the problem is presented, and then you have the choices, A, B, C, D. And then E would show up. And the answer was, not enough information.

[7 : 50] And in my mind, I'm like, oh yeah, it's always E. That's, the teacher is just trying to mess with us. It's gonna be E. And by default, because I was too lazy to solve the problem, or I didn't know how to solve the problem, I just checked E.

And I think oftentimes that's how we go about these things, or the world goes about these things. Oh, I'm not going to consider Jesus. There's not enough information.

It's the attitude we import into the Christian faith. I won't make a decision. There's not enough information. I'm indifferent on Jesus because he hasn't revealed enough of himself.

And we casually dismiss his claims. We fail to inquire. We're too lazy. And we just check the box. There's not enough information. Yet this is not what John claims.

He is asserting there's too much information. So I've curated it in a way that you can come to faith in the Lord Jesus. In some way, John has actually invited the reader to scrutinize, to test, to authenticate the work.

[9 : 04] He's saying it's not exhaustive, but it's enough. It's enough. There is, as one commentator writes, there is sufficient truth for any sinner to believe and be saved.

And here is the assertion that John writes, that John makes. I've written enough that you may believe. You can examine it and test it and study it.

And in so doing, you'll find that enough is written to engender belief. If anyone makes an honest attempt by ingesting my gospel, you either come to reject or receive it.

You see, the gospel was written to serve as a, one writer puts it, as a textually mediated encounter with Jesus.

That you and I somehow meet Jesus in the text. The truth that we're receiving this morning is textually mediated. And we understand this.

[10 : 11] Our culture is one that is entirely textually mediated. In some contexts, a verbal agreement is enough. A nod is enough. A handshake is sufficient.

But in our context, contracts must be crafted, lease agreements signed, legal documents scanned and copied. Why? Because text matters.

It doesn't matter if someone said it. It matters if it's only in writing. You see, the writing serves as a witness. And that is what we find in John's gospel this morning.

The scriptures are bearing witness to the Son. The words of the children's song are so appropriate here. Jesus loves me, this I know. How do I know? For the Bible tells me so.

There is no other way to know that God loves you. Because if you just think about the circumstances of the day, perhaps difficult circumstances, unforeseen loss, inexplicable suffering, all enough to tell the world that certainly God doesn't love us.

[11 : 29] This is why religious civilizations all the time are appeasing God through sacrifice, through even human sacrifice. They think God is angry with them.

If you were to ask me how I feel every day, Bing, do you feel loved by God? I can tell you most of the time I'm not quite sure. And that is why we need the scriptures.

Because if we go by experience, if we go by feeling, the natural conclusion is that no, God doesn't love us.

Does he? How could he? We don't go by feeling. We don't go by experience. Experience. We go by what is written.

Because you and I need to be reminded that God loves us, regardless of how we feel. It's established by what God has said, and in our case, what God has written.

[12 : 39] These are signs that were written. And secondly, we see a son that is exalted. A son that is exalted.

There were signs that were written, but lest we get caught up in the signs, John presents us with the object of Christianity, namely Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. The signs are substantial.

They're significant. But the son is central. The miracles are certainly meaningful. But the man is the main.

The Christian faith is a Christocentric faith. It is not experience-driven. It is not feeling-driven.

It cannot be emotionally-driven. It is Christ-driven. The signs only reiterate the significance of the man from which they proceed. It's so fascinating, because at the midpoint of the Gospel, since your Bibles are open, in John chapter 12, Jesus has done the seven miraculous signs.

[13 : 46] And according to verse 37, this is so fascinating. John chapter 12, verse 37. John records this.

Though Jesus had done so many signs before them, an audience, people, John notes for us, they still did not believe in him.

The indictment is this, that the people had observed so many things, their conclusion was unbelief. They were still plagued with unbelief.

It's an astounding observation, because as our world, as my heart says, show me more, God, John has already said, he can show you so many things, and you can still walk out in unbelief.

Staggering. He's so perplexed. John doesn't know how to explain it. He actually has to go back into Isaiah to explain, I don't get it. They're seeing all these things, yet unbelieving.

[15 : 00] And here's the warning. Here's the great deception, that you and I somehow need this grand revelatory experience, this supernatural encounter, in order to believe. John wants to dispel that entire notion.

He's saying, what I have given you here is enough. It's all here. experiencing signs does not save.

Only the Son saves. Signs do not deliver us from sin. Only the Son does. Signs are not the foundation on which our faith rests.

Our faith rests upon the Son. The life that is offered is not a life filled with signs and wonders and miracles, but it is a life filled with the Son.

Hence that concluding verse, life in His name. So John gives us his conclusion on Jesus. You need to know that He is the Christ. He is the Son of God.

[15 : 58] The Christ. He is the messianic figure that the whole Old Testament Scripture points to. He is the expected culmination of all the promises that God has made to the people of Israel.

He is the Son of God. The divine Son. Surely He's recognized the Son of Mary and Joseph, but His universal title is He is the Son of God.

He is both the expected one and the exalted one. And here the Son, we need to make very clear, is both the object and the subject of Christian worship and adoration.

For John, it's represented by that penultimate declaration by Thomas just in the preceding verses. You want to know who Jesus is? He is both Lord and God.

Lord and God. It is impossible to exalt Jesus too highly. It is impossible to esteem Him too greatly. It is not feasible to honor Him too significantly.

[17 : 08] You cannot make too much of Jesus. And this is what John is trying to say. I'm going to add all these things up and I'm going to present to you the most outrageous individual so that you might believe in Him.

John, throughout his book, has recorded that he was able to witness the majesty of Jesus. He never underplays Jesus' significance. significance.

He's always given way to Jesus' centrality. He is both the Son of God and the King of Israel. Eternal Son, no beginning and no end. He is the central figure of His gospel.

So we see signs that were written. A Son that is exalted. And lastly, a summons to belief. These are written that you may believe.

That is really a summary for the whole evangelistic plea of the Bible. This is written so that you may believe. For John, there is only a life tethered to Jesus.

[18 : 24] It's a life that's inaccessible through any other means. For John, the Christian life is received through belief. It is the highest commendation that Jesus gives according to verse 29.

The most blessed life is he or she that having not seen believes. And this is the one great act that John is calling us toward.

Belief. The only application of his gospel is belief. For the writer, there is a single act, a single action, a single plea, a single reply that would be adequate.

And that is belief. There is only one appropriate response. Belief. That's why it's mentioned over a hundred times in his gospel that you may believe. And John understood this.

It's so interesting because there's these places, a few places in the book of John where he actually jumps out of his narration and gives you the editorial comment.

[19 : 28] He gives you his voice. He gives you his interpretation. He says, you need to know this. One is here in these verses that I've given you all this information.

This is what I'm asking you to do. Another occurs at the cross as he's in the shadow of the cross and the spear is driven through Jesus' side.

And in 19, verse 35, he says, I saw witness and I saw it and I bear witness. My testimony is true and I'm telling the truth.

Why? So that you may believe. He's trying to move you and I toward belief. What does belief look like?

What should it look like? How do I actually know I believe or I am believing or coming to believe? Well, he's embedded these characters throughout his gospel.

[20 : 30] Belief looks a little bit like Thomas. One who is buried in disbelief and is transformed immediately into a professing believer.

He gives us a snapshot of Joseph of Marimathia, a wealthy man expending his resources to bury a temporary corpse. Belief looks like prideful Peter submitting to the foot washing of the Lord Jesus.

Believing is the once blind social outcast finding belonging in the presence of Jesus. Believing is the shameful Samaritan woman blurting out Jesus to all who would listen.

believing is the fearful and skeptical Nicodemus inquiring of the Lord asking what he was unsure of.

These are all snapshots of belief and John has left them for us. for if we're able to identify with them in any way we get a sense that we are believing or coming to believe.

[21 : 48] In return for belief it's life offered by the Son. More specifically life offered in his name it's a life sourced in the Son as John has shown us it's life that is tethered like a vine and a branch.

It is life supplied with heavenly bread for sustenance. It is life preserved and protected by Christ the Shepherd. It is described as an abundant life an internal life.

It is a life to be had now and forever more. It is a life secured by the Son on behalf of the sinner. It is a life lived under the peace and pleasure of God.

And I think that's what humanity needs to know. That we are not at odds with God.

That because of Christ we are given peace with God and I'll close with this. In my days of non-pastoral work I was in engineering and I had a dear friend who your friend and roommate who had not set foot in church for quite some time and I went to a school that was very socially active in the not in the social justice kind of way but just in the social type of way and he really lived to the fullest worldly speaking.

[23 : 23] And I remember I finally convinced him to go to church and we were about to cross the threshold of the entrance and I was with him and another friend and he just said you guys going first and I went where are you going?

and he said I'm just going to walk through the door alone because I think I really might get struck by lightning or something. And that comment stuck with me because as he engaged in the joys and the offerings of the world he was plagued by the thought that he could not have peace with God.

And I think the plea that John gives us this morning is that you can have peace with God for the son secures life on behalf of the sinner.

And so that's the offer to you this morning. That's the offer to you every single day of your life that the son that God offers you peace through his son.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

[25 : 08] how do I know this these written words attest to an exalted son purchasing your salvation.

Well Father we come to you this morning and we're thankful for your word. we're thankful that we are not led by circumstances or feelings or experiences though they are meaningful and real we are led by a written word that rings true that endures forever.

Though the grass withers and the flower fades the promises of your word are true. And so Father would you seal it upon our hearts this morning as we respond in song to you.

We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen.