

Introduction to the Gospel of John

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Preacher: Matthew Garrett

[0 : 00] There we go. It's good to see everybody today! The more we know, the better.

But what we need is to know Jesus. We need to know you. We need to know you by your spirit dwelling in us. And this is what's essential.

And this is what the book of John is really about. So Lord, we come to this book today seeking to know the God who wrote it through this man, John. So Lord, I pray you'd speak to us and Lord, in spite of me and my shortcomings, speak to your people through your spirit and by your word because you love them and change our hearts.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, usually when I'm preaching the first sermon of a beginning series on a new book that we're going to be studying together, I spend most of that session just all kinds of background information who wrote it and when was it written and how was it laid out. And I want you to know, I did my homework like usual. In fact, here's my pages of notes like I usually have. And I did my 8 to 12 to 15 hours of preparation.

[1 : 45] And I often will spend 3 hours just on the PowerPoint. Y'all ever noticed all those pictures and everything? I throw in the PowerPoints. You know, it's crazy. So, and I did that this week.

I mean, I had it. About 12 slides. And last night I was, one more time I thought I'm just going to review this again and I was praying and just felt God speak to me and say, those folks don't need all this head knowledge.

You can know, do you know who knows this Bible probably better than, well, not just probably better than anybody in here. The devil. Head knowledge and you can go to hell.

John himself says, the reason I've written this, and it's right there at the bottom of that slide I put up. These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God and receive eternal life.

And none of the rest of this stuff, you're not going to have an exam at the gates of heaven. What are the seven signs in the book of John? What are the seven?

[2 : 52] It's an amazing book as I studied it. Only the Holy Spirit could put this together like this. There are so many sevens, sevens and sevens. And of course, if you know Hebrew background and Bible background, seven is that number that means completion, perfection, wholeness.

What's the Holy Spirit trying to say through the author? He's trying to say, Jesus is the perfect, whole, complete plan of God for your salvation. And by putting all those sevens in there, the Jews in particular would be seeing what he's trying to say.

Now, how God did that? Did John, when he was writing it, maybe he did, did he think through seven I am statements? Or did the Spirit just do that?

Did he come? There are seven witnesses in this book that talk about who Jesus is. There are seven major interviews in this book. There are, I mean, it just goes on and on the number of beautiful sevens that God put in this book.

But all that really matters is that you know the God who wrote this book who loves you and this is his love letter to you. Now, this is a marvelous and wonderful book, this book of John.

[4 : 10] Some say it's the most important book in the whole Bible. I suppose if you were going to put me in prison for the rest of my life and say, we'll let you have one book of the Bible, which one do you want?

That'd be a tough choice. For me, I probably wouldn't choose Leviticus. I know somebody that told me it's his favorite book and I thought, you're nuts. But, you know, it would be hard to pick a better book than the book of John.

It really lays out the heart of Jesus, the way he spoke, the things he said. Why did he only include seven signs?

I don't know. Jesus did, depending on how you want to count them, somewhere between 37 and 40 miracles. The others are recorded much more in Matthew, Mark, Luke. John just picked seven. He's got a specific thing he's trying to show us. Who is this Jesus? Jesus. Now, the only other little background information before I share what the Lord has laid on my heart with you today is in this next slide.

[5 : 19] There you go. So, as you know or you're finding out, we've talked about it a little bit and sent you an email about it and so forth. We're going to give every person in the church who says, yes, I would happen to my slide.

Brother, if you can jump back to that one again, it's a crazy slide. Well, let's just jump back and forth to it a few times if it'll work. He isn't showing up here at all. Yeah, it's not showing up back there either.

There you go for a look. Is it showing up now at all? Not at all. Okay, look back there. There it is. Day by day, the disciple Jesus loves. And, so anyway, our sermons are going to accompany the daily devotional readings.

We have the books out here in the foyer. They're free. All we ask is that you, if you take one of the books, you're saying, I'm going to do my best to keep up with the readings.

Now, to make it a little easier because I know how hard life can get, you will, did it just suddenly pop up now? I saw a light flicker on some people's glasses out there.

[6 : 23] So, oh, wow, he found a different slide for that. That's good work. I didn't create that one. the only thing we're asking is that you will do your best to read and we'll do about, at first I had said we'll do five readings every week.

That was before I got the book. It won't work because sometimes he does three and four daily readings on one scripture and it just doesn't split up well every five.

It doesn't split well. So, we'll let you know every week which ones to read. this week it's the first five. So, between now and next Sunday you've got seven days. Read five daily devotionals.

It'll take you and with the scripture that goes with it. It's going to take you 15 to 20 minutes a day.

And so, take a book if you're willing to say I will do my best to do that.

If you miss a day catch up later in the week. It'll be okay. And that way then when the preacher comes on Sunday he'll be speaking from what you've been reading that week. he won't try to cover everything you've read.

[7 : 29] He'll share the part that God has laid on his heart. So, any comment, question about how we're going to do this daily devotional part of this?

And John already shared with you the miracle of getting these books at the last minute yesterday. I've been working on this since October and they came to my house yesterday about 3.30. And just really a blessing.

Well, instead of all kinds of head knowledge that, and yeah, let's go on to that next slide. Instead of all kinds of head knowledge that I've written down here that's wonderful and beautiful and I love it, let me just share with you some of the key scriptures in the book of John that we're going to be hearing together.

Just listen to some of these beautiful things. Most of these are quotes of Jesus. In John 3, you must be born again.

That message has been lost in the history of the church so many times. We've gotten so distracted. I don't mean just this church. I mean the history of the church and have somehow at times gone through a century where nobody even preached about being born again.

[8 : 47] And Jesus said it's essential. You must be born again. The spirit of God must come and renew you. You must receive Christ or you will miss eternity.

You will miss God's plan. What's probably the best, most famous scripture in the whole Bible? John 3.16. I guess if you could only have one verse that would be a good one to have.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, his one and only son, that whoever would believe in him, trust in him, receive him, follow him, they would not perish, but they would have eternal life.

Listen to some of these other things that Jesus said. Straight quotes from Jesus, straight from the book of John. John 7. If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

John 10. I and the Father are one. John 13. A new command I give you that you should love one another.

[10:01] Wow, that was a new command. They had kind of forgotten that. We should love one another. John 14. Such a beautiful verse. my peace I leave with you.

My peace I give you. Not like the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Jesus, this book has so much comfort, so much wisdom, so much joy.

It's so full, it's so spiritual. John 15. Greater love has no one than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friend and you are my friends if you do what I command.

John 16. I have much more to say to you, more than you can hear, but when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into truth.

Jesus is saying you can't get it all in one quick Bible project, eight minute video, but the spirit will be with you when you're born again and he will daily guide you into that greater truth as you need to know.

[11:14] He will guide you. He will be the voice that follows you as Isaiah said that will say turn to the left or turn to the right, this is the way, walk in it. That's the promise of God.

That's the Holy Spirit you should know that comes through Jesus Christ and receiving him and believing his word and walking with him. That's that daily presence of God.

That's the new life. John 17. Father, Jesus is talking, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may these also be in us that they may be one as we are one.

and then the world will know you sent me. My goodness, if the whole church could become one, the world would know that Jesus Christ had to be from God because there's nothing else that can unify and bring people together.

We could do so many more. I'll just share one more. John 20. Jesus said, as the Father has sent me, I'm sending you. so in this one book, we have so many wonderful things here.

[12:30] And I like that the very end of it, you know, again, like I said, I really did a lot of study of this week, overview here, there, different stories, et cetera. It's got this weird little ending story.

The other three gospels end with the ascension. Jesus goes into heaven. This one ends with a second fishing trip and a breakfast. strange. And so, you might, you know, you're going to see it again.

We're going to get to this. We're going to preach through all this. You'll hear this in more detail if whoever preaches that week chooses that story. But the guys haven't seen Jesus. He's been resurrected.

They've talked to him. They've touched him. He's, you know, it's me. I'm really alive again. And now he's kind of disappeared for a while. They don't know where he is. And they're waiting. He told them to go wait in Jerusalem.

They're waiting. And then they kind of get the urge. Peter, you know, oh, restless Peter. Scott, you still got a crush on him?

[13:33] Scott kind of likes the character of Peter in The Chosen. And anyway, so I tease her about that. Peter, restless, emotional, passionate Peter, he finally says, I'm going fishing.

So I forget how many, seven or eight of them decided to go with him. One of them is the author of the book, Whoever is the disciple Jesus loved, that tradition says was John, the son of Zebedee. Anyway, so they're out there, they fish. This happened, remember, when they first met Jesus? They fished all night and caught nothing. And now it's three years later, and it says it happened again, they fished all night and came up as zero.

You ever done that, Sandy? Sandy? Sandy's our number one fisherman here, if y'all know that. And you can fish all night and catch nothing.

Well, remember the first time when they met Jesus and he said, cast your net here. And it was a waste of time, but okay. They caught so many, the nets were breaking.

[14:37] They couldn't haul them in. So this time Jesus is on the shore and they're out there and the sun's coming up and he yells, they can't tell who it is, he's a football field away. And he says, have you caught anything?

Nope. He says, throw your net on the other side of the boat. Boom. The net is slammed full again. And John, the author of the book, says, it's him.

Boy, they can't wait to get to shore. They get there. He's got some fish already cooking. He says, go over and get some more of those you just caught. And what's interesting this time that's different, the net didn't break.

And then Jesus spent some time with him. And I pondered on it this week and I sort of sensed the Lord saying, you've been following me for almost 50 years and you've been preaching right at 30. And a lot of times you have worked all night and caught nothing. and at times you've done what I told you and you hauled in a big bunch and the net broke and three, four, seven got away.

[15:48] I said, Lord, what's the secret? And it was like, just listen to me. Follow me. Keep the focus on me, not on the work. Don't focus on the fishing, but focus on me and hearing my voice, following me, and I'll show you where to fish and when to fish, and the net won't break.

It'd be better to catch three good fish that walk with the Lord and grow than to catch a hundred that get away. I don't need fruit that falls off the vine, do you?

I want the fruit that remains. Again, out of the book of John, Jesus said, if you will remain in me and that my words remain in you, you will bear much fruit.

And we just kind of miss that. We kind of think, it's all about getting ready for vacation Bible school. It's all about we got to have a new sound system. It's all about let's prepare the next big dinner. It's all about this project. It's all about that project. It's all about the work. work. It's all about the work. It's all about you must be born again. The great God sent a great Savior to save great sinners like you and me.

[17:08] And he's all we need. And that's what this whole life is about. Hallelujah. And I hope you will not have come to church here and sat in our ministry and not gotten that.

Oh my goodness. Let it never be. God forbid. it. And so let's keep our eyes and our focus on him. And then I'll end with that you know I'm always using powerpoints.

This time I thought I'll tell you. Open your Bible or your phone however you do your Bible to the book of John. And let's go near the end because he says exactly why he wrote the book.

There were already three gospels written. Why would the Holy Spirit want to write another one? This was the last one written. Let's go to John chapter 20.

And then to verse 31. Let's get back to verse 30. Y'all with me? John 20 starting by verse 30. Many this is you know whoever this author is John.

[18:17] Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. he could have done more than seven conversations more than seven miracles more than all just he says there's a lot of other stuff in the next chapter he says I think if I tried to write it all I couldn't put it in if you had all the books in the world I don't think you could hold it.

And he says so I've selected here. And so he says now here's why I wrote it. These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name.

When we get to heaven it's not going to be can you explain all of the feasts in the Old Testament it's not going to be can you explain the layout of the temple and what was the show bread for and where was the Holy of Holies and what was the mercy seat and it's not going to be what was the correct order of serving communion that you might remember I messed up last month and it's not going to be there's so many things it's not going to be it's going to be is your name written in the Lamb's book of life that's the whole exam and how does it get written there Jesus writes it there I say in his blood he says I have engraved your name on my hand that refers to the nail your name on his hand receive it and don't lose sight of it learn a lot of other stuff but let

Jesus and his word and his spirit and his constant presence seeking him daily let that be the heart of our faith and our life forever in Jesus name amen and now we're going to be blessed with partaking in this holy meal again brother john