

Our Devotion His Glory

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] Good morning. Today's text is John 21 verses 20 through 25. Peter turned and saw the disciple! Jesus loved following them. The one who had leaned back against him during the supper and said, Lord, who is this that is going to betray you? When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man?

Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me. So the saying spread among the brothers that this disciple was not to die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not going to die, but if it is my will that you remain until I come, what is that to you? This is a disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who has written them, written these things. And we know that his testimony is true. Now, there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose the whole world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Heavenly Father, we come once again to the text of John's Gospel. And we ask you again, Lord, that you would pour out your spirit upon us, that you would grant us that divine understanding and wisdom that only you can give, that you would grant us, Lord, the changed hearts and lives that only you can bring about by your power. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Well, good morning, Shoreline.

Wow. Good morning, Shoreline. Can we awake out there? It's good to be back. For those that don't know, I've been away for the last few weeks. And I'd like to thank you all for giving me that time away. We had Brother Reese from Australia preaching here, and then Jim and Matt and Caleb and Ben. And I just so thankful for the men that have been up here preaching. Just so you know, Reese is actually going to be back at the end of October, so we get to hear from him once again. I also just want to say, there are Bibles on the back table. If you're new here, welcome. We're still glad that you're here with us. And if you don't have an actual Bible, there are Bibles on the back table. They are bookmarked to today's passage in John 21. And if you don't have a Bible, you're welcome to keep that for yourself. That's our gift to you. And I just want to start here by sharing a story about a person that I knew. On June 14, 1957, in the city of Chicago, a boy was born, the son of a Mexican immigrant and his wife, and he would become one of nine children. His dad was mostly absent, working to put food on the table, and also getting involved in all sorts of other sinful pursuits that kept him away from the family. His mom, as you and we all can imagine, was extremely busy, caring for nine children in their cramped apartment in the city, and he could basically, you know, therefore do whatever he wanted, him and his siblings. In his environment, inner city Chicago, it was and still is all too common for kids to get involved in gangs, to commit crimes at very young ages, to get into drinking and to drugs, and that was the path for some of his brothers.

But God used the outreach of a local church and a dishrag to rewrite that story. His mom had the kids attend a local church, a WANA program, I think largely just to get them out of the house, and it was there that he found Christ. And several years later, while playing in the alleyway of a bakery to kill time, the manager came outside, threw a dishrag at him, and said, get to work.

[3 : 55] And it was then, at the age of 16, that he became employed. And this responsibility, i.e. the grace of God, kept him off the streets. He would go on to be mentored and disciplined by older men in the church, where he would also meet his wife and get married. Eventually, he would have four children, raising them in the knowledge and discipline of the Lord. You know, he would remain a blue-collar worker his entire life, basically just working in two careers, the first in that bakery in Chicago, the second as a mailman in the suburbs. He never grew rich. He barely had any savings to his name, even unto his death, but he was rich in Christ. And everyone he interacted with knew it until the day of his death, on January 14, 2017. Many of you know that that man was my father, Alex Lusa. And that there is just a tiny snapshot of his story. You know, his unique story of God's

grace in his life. His unique story of devoting his life to follow Jesus, and to bring Christ's glory through his walk and his witness. And that's what today's sermon is all about. So we're looking this morning at the final passage in the Gospel of John.

We've been here for, as everyone's been saying, a year and a half. November 2022 is when we started. Next week, we're actually going to be doing a summary reading of selected portions of John, and that will be the 70th week that we've spent in John. So that will not be a typical sermon, but we'll get to walk through John. And then just so you all know, the week after that, we are going to be jumping into the book of Isaiah for the fall. Isaiah chapters 40 through 55. It's been often quoted in our sermon series in John and just a beautiful and majestic text. But today, today from John 21, the sermon title is this, The Conclusion, Our Devotion, His Glory. Now, if you recall from the past couple weeks, Ben and Caleb have led us through looking at chapter 21 of John's Gospel, which acts as basically an epilogue to John's account of the ministry of Christ. Now, some believe that the Gospel should have ended after that great purpose statement of chapter 20, 30, and 31. But as we've been seeing, the final chapter serves an important purpose in bringing this story to a close. Certainly, this final chapter, it shows Peter's reinstatement to apostleship, which would explain his leadership position in the church all throughout the book of Acts. We'll see today that John uses this chapter to dispel a false rumor that had been spreading through the early church. But more than these, it seems this final chapter is John reminding his readers of some of the key lessons that Jesus taught his disciples during his earthly ministry.

Namely, that Jesus is Lord, worthy of all glory, right? That only by his divine power will the disciples' labors actually be fruitful. And third, that he has invited them not only to work for him, but chiefly, primarily into a loving, intimate relationship with himself. And today we'll see that love and devotion to Jesus involves walking where he leads us and witnessing to his truth for the worship of his glorious name. So in short, if you're taking notes, devoted disciples of Jesus walk and witness for the worship of his name. So the first point here is walking where Christ leads us. Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. Stop there. Now remember what has just happened.

Peter and six other disciples go fishing all night and catch nothing, right? And then Jesus appears on the shore and he provides for them this miraculous catch of 153 large fish. And he then invites them to this intimate meal of bread and fish around a fire. And after that meal in front of all the disciples, he reinstates Peter, who had denied him three times, to apostleship by asking Peter to reconfirm his love for Christ and by recommissioning him to lead and shepherd the flock, the church. Then if you remember, Jesus proceeds to tell Peter that he's going to remain faithful to follow Christ even unto death as a martyr. And Jesus says to him in verse 19, follow me. Now we understand that call, follow me, to be a call for Peter to live a life of devotion, right? Of discipleship, of apprenticeship as has been used last week to Christ. And that's certainly so. Now likely there's also a double meaning going on here because there's a good chance that Jesus literally meant for him in that moment to start following him along the shore. And then likely that same double meaning is intended here in verse 20, when Peter turns and he sees John following. It just says following in the Greek, but it says following them. So John is following Jesus as well, both literally in the moment along that shore of the

Sea of Galilee and then figuratively as one of Jesus's closest disciples. Now John goes on to tell us that the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you? Now the scene that John is referring to is chapter 13 of this gospel, right? Back in the upper room after Jesus had washed his disciples' feet and had shared a final meal, the last supper with them before his death. And during that meal we see John, the one whom Jesus loved, enjoying this special intimacy with Christ, sitting in the place of honor at the right hand of Jesus.

[9 : 41] We also see in that scene in John 13 a close relationship between Peter and John, because Peter motions to John to ask Jesus who it is that's going to betray him. And perhaps here in the epilogue, John wants us to remember all these things, the humble, servant-hearted love of Jesus, which he then called his disciples to replicate, John's special intimacy with Jesus, and then also Peter's close relationship with John. And it's those last two things that makes Peter's next question seem quite natural and justifiable. When Peter saw John, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man?

What about this man? Peter was just told that his following of Jesus is going to lead him to death, to martyrdom. Well, John is even closer to Jesus than Peter, and John is a close friend of Peter's. So what about him, right? Is John going to undergo the same fate that Peter is? Is John also going to become a martyr for his faith in Jesus? Now, how does Jesus respond to this question, the seemingly innocent question? Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?

You follow me. For maybe the several time, I don't think that's a word, but Jesus mildly rebukes Peter here. Peter's known Jesus's rebuke in the past. Jesus is basically saying, hey, look, if I want John to remain alive until I return, like that ain't none of your business, you know? That's not anything that needs to concern you, if you speak a little more properly than I do. But, and like, what is Peter's business? Peter's business is this, it's you follow me, with you being emphasized in the Greek here, you follow me. Now, you might say, that's a little harsh, isn't it? Like, Peter was just wondering. He had this innocent question that he was just wondering. And, you know, as I've been reflecting about this, I've realized that that's the thing about just wondering, you know? Like, it seems to me that most of the times I claim I'm just wondering. There's actually an underlying motivation of the heart, and usually it's not a good one. Usually it's a sinful motivation. Sometimes that sinful motivation is even hidden from myself until I do a little bit of self-reflection. But it's not hidden from Jesus, right? Like, our underlying motivations of the heart are never hidden to Jesus. And I think right here, he's seen into Peter's heart, and he's seen the self-absorption and the pride in Peter's seemingly innocent question. See, Peter's learned a lot at this point, but he still has a lot to learn.

And Peter's here, he's comparing himself to John, right? And so Jesus tells Peter, like, no, don't look at John. Don't compare yourself to John. My specific will for your life and my specific will for John's life. They're two different things. They're two different paths. I have a path for you. I have a path for John. You concern yourself with following me. Now, of course, the two paths are going to resemble each other, right? Both paths ought to look like radical Christ-like love and humility and selflessness and devotion to the glory of the Father and of Christ, but they are two distinct paths with Jesus leading the way along both, right? Just devoted disciples of Jesus. They walk where Christ leads them.

[13:16] This has been a particularly good passage for me this week, and just in a struggle that I feel like I've had for the past year, as I've entered into full-time ministry, there's a lot of voices that I hear in my head. I mean, probably my own voice, but a lot of voices that I hear in my head, things like, you know, Mike, you don't have a seminary degree, right? Like all those other pastors out there.

Are you qualified enough to be in that role? You're not wise enough, well-read enough, intentional enough, introspective enough like those other elders of Shoreline. You know, Mike, your dad was a mailman.

We grew up in inner city Chicago. His highest degree was a high school diploma. And Jesus is telling me, Mike, what is all that to you? You follow me, right? I've called you to this, and your job, your task is to follow me in how I've called you. Now, how about you?

Who are you looking at this morning in comparison to yourself when you need to cease those sideways glances and gaze upon Christ? I guess if we're honest, oftentimes it's more just like open-mouth staring than sideways glances, isn't it? You know, we often joke in our community group, and maybe too much in the church in general, about the joys of being in Connecticut, right? I know for all, I don't think I've met a single guy in the Navy that was like, yes, Connecticut, Groton, first choice.

I think usually it was closer to the bottom of the list, and we might be tempted to compare ourselves to other friends, other fellow military members, whoever it is. Well, they got to go to California.

[15:03] Some of you don't think that's a good thing, but they got to go to California. No, they got to go to Hawaii, and I'm stuck here, right? What is Jesus saying? He's saying, follow me. You follow me. I have you on this path. You follow me, right? Moms, you're at home caring for one or several children all day long.

You might be tempted to compare yourself to others who don't have any children, or your husbands who are off in the workplace interacting with adults all day long, right? And Jesus is saying, you follow me.

You know, foster and adoptive families, we have those in our church, and I'm so thankful for their example. You face unique challenges that we don't face, and in the same way, though, in the uniqueness of your path, Jesus is saying, you follow me. You follow me. Now, all of us are on unique paths, right? With nuances to everything about our lives, and Christ is calling us in the circumstances of our lives to follow him, to gaze upon him, to not compare ourselves to those around us. He wants us to cease those comparisons and recognize our path is a matter of the divine will, his will. Let us fix our eyes squarely upon Christ, who leads us in his footsteps, and I can't help but think of the verses from Hebrews chapter 12. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, all those saints who have gone before us, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Looking to who? Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, hey, here's what Jesus did, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. That's where we're headed to, church. The right hand of the throne, maybe not his right hand, but we're headed to glory with God, and let us look at Christ. Now, I want us to remember, though, in light of the context of this whole book, that when Jesus says, follow me, he's not only issuing an imperative, right? This is definitely a command. You follow me. That's a command. That's an imperative. But also, friends, this is an invitation. This is an invitation. He is inviting his followers to share, to participate in the divine life of the triune God. That's what we were saying all throughout the Upper Room Discourse, to share in the divine life of God, to experience the unconditional love, the unshakable joy. I will see you again, and no one will take away your joy from you, Jesus said, to experience unfathomable peace. My peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, do I give to you. Love, joy, peace, in union with Father and the Son through the Spirit. This is an invitation. Like, Christ is not only before us, leading the way. He's also, at the very same time, beside us, strengthening us, sustaining us, helping us through the journey, and he's fellowshiping with us along the way. As it's symbolized there on the shore, Jesus said, come and have breakfast with me. Like, that symbolizes the intimacy that he wants, that he longs to have.

So as each of you follows Christ in the unique circumstances of your life, as he leads and guides you, no matter where that path leads, remember that he loves you and delights in you as his child. [18:41] He longs to fellowship with you moment by moment, and he proved, we just sang about this, he proved this, this unyielding desire of his for you through his radical death on the cross, to pay for your sins and to reconcile you to himself. Now there's one more point of application I want to mention before we move on, and that's this. As Christ is calling us to follow him on unique paths, he has also, as Matt just prayed, he's gifted each of us in unique ways for the edification of the church. Now we can make a mistake from this passage and think that, oh, because Jesus says you follow me, we just don't even think about one another. No. No, fixing our gaze on Christ, it doesn't mean neglecting and not caring for those around us. See, it actually frees us up. It frees us up because we are freed from our self-centeredness and our self-absorption to freely love and serve those around us like Christ did.

So we see, you know, Peter here. Peter was uniquely called to build up the church through leadership. John was uniquely called to build up the church through his witness, and Christ used both of them to build up the church because of their devotion to him and in the unique ways that he called them and equipped them, and he calls us this morning to do the same. And so Peter would actually write later, above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling, as each has received a gift. Use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God, whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Christ.

That's 1 Peter 4. And I just want to say, if you aren't sure how the Lord might be calling you to serve the church, spend time reflecting on God's word. Passages like 1 Peter 4, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, passages about the gifts that God has supplied to his church, and reflect on how God's gifted you.

Spend time talking to a spouse who knows you well, or a brother and sister in Christ, or somebody else that knows you talk to a community leader, or me or one of the elders. We want to help one another to serve the church and to use the unique ways God's gifted us to do so. Devoted disciples of Jesus walk where Christ leads them, and secondly, they witness to the truth of Christ. Witnessing

to the truth of Christ.

Now when I say truth of Christ, what I mean is the truth that is Christ, and the truth that is in Christ. Let's head back to the text here.

[21 : 25] So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?

Now, as is evident from this verse here, when John was writing this gospel, Jesus' word, sorry, as is evident from this verse when John was writing this gospel, later in the first century AD, Jesus' words had been misinterpreted, right? And this misinterpretation had spread throughout the church. Now with only a little bit of reflection, you can surmise the impact that this would have had on the early church. If people continued to believe this misinterpretation, and then John died, which he did, he died, if you didn't know. People might have been tempted to think then, look, if Jesus said that John was going to remain alive until he comes, and now John is dead, but Jesus hasn't come, is Jesus ever coming? If Jesus' words have been shown to be false, what other words of Christ are also false, right? Is this whole thing just made up?

The misinterpretation of God's word can have severe and detrimental consequences, and John is writing here to dispel that rumor, right, to draw people's attention back to the actual words that Jesus said. And what's amazing, though, consider this, John did not remain alive until Jesus' return. But have you read the end of the Bible, the book of Revelation? What's amazing is that even though John passed away, towards the end of his life, while on exile on the island of Patmos, John was shown a divine vision of the second coming of Christ, and this vision was captured in the book of Revelation and given to the saints. And what do we see? We see that Christ is surely coming again, and he's going to return in power and glory, and he's going to right all the wrongs, and he's going to fully and finally usher in the kingdom which he inaugurated. And so, church, before that final judgment, let us willingly bow the knee. If you're here and you have not, this is a call to bow the knee to Christ, to King Jesus, to follow him wholeheartedly, lest in that final day he force us to bow the knee to his lordship, and then he'll cast us into eternal judgment and not life. See, friends, that is the truth of God's word. And how many today would misinterpret and distort this truth with devastating effects? What are those effects? That human souls would remain in everlasting condemnation rather than find everlasting life and freedom through faith in Christ. As Paul charges Timothy, 2 Timothy 1.14, let us, by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to us. Let us be like the Bereans in Acts chapter 17. I don't know if you remember that, but they received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. See, we have to know Christ. We have to know the gospel. We have to know the word of God in order to bear witness to it as we're called to do. And that's why John was, he was especially qualified to write this gospel because of his nearness to Jesus. And so John goes on to say in the next verse, this is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who has written these things. Now this second to last verse of John, it brings to a close this theme of witness that's been running all through the book. 47 times in John's gospel, the word witness has been used.

Jesus' very purpose in coming to the world, as he declared to Pontius Pilate, was to bear witness to the truth, to the truth that is in him, to the truth that is him. Remember how he said to his disciples in the upper room, I am the way and the truth and the life. He is the truth. Indeed, in John's prologue to the gospel, he so eloquently wrote that in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. And down in verse 14 of chapter 1, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Every word spoken by the mouth of Christ, every deed performed by Christ bore witness to the eternal truth of God. It revealed in awesome clarity the very Father in heaven. When we see Jesus, we see God. Jesus bore witness to truth.

[26 : 23] And then remember how Jesus, after his resurrection, he commissioned his disciples, saying, as the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. The Father sent Jesus to bear witness to the truth.

And so Jesus likewise sends out his disciples to do the very same thing. And so Jesus had said, if you remember again in the upper room, but when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me, and you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. The apostle John, given his intimate relationship with Christ, given his insight into the heart of Christ, given his firsthand

eyewitness to all the events of Christ's life, was uniquely qualified to bear witness to the truth of Christ through the writing of Christ. And you know, it's John's unique vantage point that he's also able to declare this next thing, and we know that his testimony is true. John witnessed firsthand the events about which he writes. He knows these things to be true. But the text does say we, right? Who's we? We know.

Well, you can read pages and pages on this. There's no agreement on the answer to this, but most likely the we is either an editorial we, meaning it's John writing we as a spokesperson for the disciples, or the we means there was an actual group of disciples, perhaps the elders at the church of Ephesus where he was, that certified as to the accuracy of John's writing. But either way, we know that his testimony is true.

But that was written in the first century AD. It's 2024. Like, how can we know so many years later that these things are true?

And you know, we could talk about manuscript evidence. The insane amount of early manuscripts that we have of the Gospels that blows away any other historical work, and the agreement that exists between them. Actually, Andrew Beal preached a great message about manuscripts, I think back in like August of last year. Refer you to that. We could talk about that. It would be edifying. We could talk about how 300 prophecies spoken and written hundreds of years before Christ's birth were fulfilled through his death and resurrection, and the astronomical odds that this would happen purely by chance.

[29 : 10] We could talk about how hundreds of early disciples bore witness to the resurrected Christ they saw him, and how so many of those followers went on to be persecuted for their faith, many of them dying as martyrs like Peter. We could talk about how the Gospel and the Church has unstopably advanced for the last 2,000 years, often in the midst of fierce opposition, fierce persecution.

We could go around the room and tell stories, like Jordan's story that she just told, like my father's story, of how the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ has been sovereignly and powerfully at work in each of our lives, revealing to us, revealing to us in our day, the certainty of these Gospel truths. And we're going to get the chance to do that next week. So come with a story to share with your church. Friends, John knew that his testimony was true. The rest of the 12 knew that his testimony was true.

The early church knew that his testimony was true. And millions of saints since have known and borne witness to the accuracy of his testimony. Now, one of those was Saint Athanasius, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt in the 4th century AD. And his childhood, Athanasius witnessed many believers martyred for their faith under the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian, whatever. Maximian, you know, one of those Roman names. Athanasius became a prominent and highly esteemed leader of the church. And even after Constantine took the crown and established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, he still in Egypt faced slander and persecution and even exile several times throughout his life and ministry. But what he saw in the midst of all this is he saw the gospel sweep through his land and people that he knew and turn hearts to Christ. And in his book, *On the Incarnation*, he writes this defense of the resurrection of Christ. Now, this is a long quote, but it is worth it. And I want to just give you a caution. As I read this quote, you might be tempted to fist pump or to shout amen or to say hallelujah or things like that, and you are welcome to do that, okay? It's going to happen in your hearts. You can just let it out, all right? I mentioned before, my dad was Hispanic. I'm Hispanic. I'm all for a little bit more participation interaction. So, this is Athanasius from his book *On the Incarnation*.

[31 : 43] In a word, then, those who disbelieve in the resurrection have no support in facts. If their gods and evil spirits do not drive away the supposedly dead Christ, now stop. He was writing the very pagan culture. There was a lot of idolatry. There was paganism. There was sorcery and witchcraft.

There is so much idolatry in our age today, that's a whole separate conversation. It manifests itself in all sorts of different ways. So, when I say gods and evil spirits, know that that is very much alive today. It just looks different. Start over. In a word, then, those who disbelieve in the resurrection have no support in facts. If their gods and evil spirits do not drive away the supposedly dead Christ. Rather, it is he who convicts them of being dead. We are agreed that a dead person can do nothing, yet the Savior works mightily every day, drawing men to religion, persuading them to virtue, teaching them about immortality, quickening their thirst for heavenly things, revealing the

knowledge of the Father, inspiring strength in face of death, manifesting himself to each, and displacing the irreligion of idols, while the gods and evil spirits of the unbelievers can do none of these things, but rather become dead at Christ's presence, all their ostentation barren and void. By the sign of the cross, on the contrary, all magic is stayed, all sorcery confounded, all the idols are abandoned and deserted, and all senseless pleasure ceases as the eye of faith looks up from earth to heaven.

Whom then are we to call dead? Shall we call Christ dead, who affects all this? But the dead have not the faculty to affect anything, or shall we call death dead, which affects nothing whatever, but lies as lifeless and ineffective as are the evil spirits and the idols? The Son of God, living and effective, is active every day and affects the salvation of all, but death is daily proof to be stripped of all its strength, and it is the idols and the evil spirits who are dead, not he. No room for doubt remains, therefore, concerning the resurrection of his body.

Man, what a powerful quote there. Christ is risen. This word is true, and John and millions of saints have borne witness to it, friends. And if you're here this morning, and you have not until, and you have until this moment doubted the truthfulness of Christianity, I pray that today would be the day that you come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name. And for those who already believe, may our faith in Christ and his gospel be strengthened this morning, and may we, like the Apostle John, like Saint Athanasius, like so many who have gone before us, with hearts filled with love for Christ first, and then for others, may we faithfully and boldly testify to the truth that is and is in Jesus. You see, John had an exclusive role in bearing witness to Christ. That was part of his journey, right? That's part of the path of him following Jesus.

But all disciples of Jesus, all of us, are called to bear witness to the truth with the help of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out on the early church. And you know, all the saints who have gone before us, that have departed from this world, they're now in heaven cheering us on, right? That cloud of witnesses to continue that great work that began with Christ himself, and it's passed on to each new generation of saints. You follow me. And this following involves witnessing to the truth of Christ, which we do by word and deed, which we've talked about many times throughout this study of John. [35 : 39] Devoted disciples of Jesus walk where Christ leads them, and witness to the truth of Christ, and all of it, church, is for the worship of his glorious name. Worshiping Christ for his glory.

And here's how John concludes this gospel. Now there are also 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. Now I have to say that all the engineers in the room are like, now wait a minute.

There's about 57 million square miles of surface area of the earth, and the average size of a book is about... I'm sorry, I had to. I was an engineer, you know, for a long time. What is John actually trying to say here?

Now on the surface, John seems to be saying something similar to what he said last chapter, when he said that Jesus did many signs, right, in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe. Right? He's saying, I couldn't possibly write everything, so I've carefully, I've intentionally selected what to include, and it is sufficient for salvation. Now that's true. But this concluding verse here, it's not actually about John's selection of material, right? It's about Jesus. That's what this verse is about. And if we go one level deeper, this verse is telling us that what Jesus Christ accomplished by his incarnation, and his life, and his death, and his resurrection, and ascension, it's far beyond what John or any of the gospel writers could possibly have documented. They've given us windows into the life of Christ, and it is enough, and it is good. It's what the Spirit has given to us, but they could not capture everything that Christ accomplished. And I think we can go even one level out still. After all, who is this Jesus?

Who has John been telling us all throughout the gospel that this Jesus of Nazareth is? He is nothing less than the preexistent, eternal, all-powerful God of the universe, right?

[37 : 51] He is I Am. He's Yahweh. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He's the one who declares through the prophet Isaiah. I am the Lord. That is my name, my glory. I give to no other. Before me, no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me, there is no Savior.

That is who Jesus of Nazareth is. As D.A. Carson writes, the Jesus to whom John bears witness is not only the obedient Son and the risen Lord. He is the incarnate Word, the one through whom the

universe was created. If all his deeds were described, the world would be a very small and inadequate library indeed. Friends, consider how many books have been written over the centuries to try and unpack who God in Christ is and all that God in Christ has done. And it's not enough. It's never enough.

God is continuing to work and to move by his power and his grace in this world. He's manifesting to still more hearts and lives, the eternal glory of his name. He's building more stories all the time.

Now, Carson goes on to say, it is as if John has identified himself but is not content to focus on himself, not even on his veracity. He must close by saying his own work is only a minute part of all the honors due the Son. And that, friends, is the whole point, the honor of the Son.

That is the very purpose for which we were created, to magnify, to extol, to praise, to worship Christ for his infinite glory. See, we walk where Christ leads us. We witness to the truth of Christ so that he and he alone is worshiped. That's what devoted disciples of Jesus do.

[39 : 57] Our stories are unique stories. They become stories that redound to the honor and the praise of Christ. Christ. Right? And there have been 2,000 years of stories generated since Christ walked this earth.

More stories being formed all the time that tell of his sovereign and gracious work in this world to bring salvation to sinners, to those who didn't deserve it. To draw men and women deeper and deeper into an intimate and shared life with Christ. To build and to unite his body, the church. And, you know, I imagine that the houses and the streets of heaven are going to be filled with these joyful and Christ-exalting stories. I imagine that someday in eternity, day after day, we're going to be telling one another tales of how Jesus supernaturally worked in our lives. And he might be like, well, wait a second. That's actually not exactly how it happened. It's going to be great. He's going to be honored and praised. We're going to have our minds blown as we hear story after story after story of what God has done and what God has done in Christ. We don't need to wait until then to share our stories, do we? And so John ends his gospel bearing witness to the glory of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

That's just how he started the gospel, isn't it? Bearing witness to Christ's glory. I'll need to access your... Okay, I won't.

Thanks, Siri. You're welcome. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Please pray with me.

[42 : 10] Heavenly Father, what a glorious gospel the gospel of John is. The revelation of you through your Son, Jesus Christ.

God, we have only begun to scratch the surface of who you are. God, we're going to spend our lives seeking to know you more. We're going to spend eternity seeking to know you more.

God, we long to walk where you lead us, to share an intimate fellowship with you, to submit ourselves in obedience to the places that you call us.

God, we long to be witnesses like Christ, like John, like Athanasius, like those who have gone before us to the gospel of Jesus Christ for your glory, and also that the world would know that they would see and believe as well that Christ is the King, that he's the Lord, the Messiah, that they too would find life in his name.

Jesus, this is all for your glory. It's all for your glory. There is no one else who is worthy. There is no one else who deserves the praise and honor of our lives surrendered to you.

[43 : 38] So lead us, O Lord, deeper and deeper into your heart and into lives lived for your name and your glory in this world. We pray this in Christ's name.

Amen.