

John 20:30-31

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Preacher: Matt Landeck

[0 : 00] Hey, y'all. The sermon text for today is John 20, 30-31.

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.

Again, test this slide out, Jay. Matt, I'm one of the elders here, like Jordan. Jordan, thank you for that Life of the Church segment.

It was actually very encouraging to hear that for me. Here at Shoreline, we try to infuse everything we do with God's Word, and I think the music and that last section was testament to that.

Would God be praised. Well, everything that you do in life has a purpose. You work so you can make money. You buy food, and you prepare it so that you can satiate.

[1 : 14] You feed your hunger and supply your body with energy and nutrients it needs. You weed your garden so that the seeds you plant would bear fruit instead of being choked out. You consume various forms of entertainment to fill time when you're bored.

You spend time on money and hobbies because they help you feel accomplished.

Bring self-worth or because you enjoy them. You disciple your children so that they may grow up to walk in righteousness and please the Lord. The list goes on. Everything you do in life has a purpose, and that's a good thing, I would argue, because when we forget the purpose of what we're doing, we get lost.

We lose motivation and gusto. We become aimless. We get lazy and complacent. We regress to habits and actions and thoughts and words that are unhelpful or intentionally hurtful.

And oftentimes, without focusing on life's purpose, life can get stale or seem pointless. Or worse, we can find ourselves perpetually stuck in grueling relationships or even fighting to keep our head above water physically, emotionally, spiritually.

[2 : 29] Maybe you've felt some of these things that I just mentioned. I know that I have. Beloved, we can't lose track of our purpose. And John had a specific purpose behind writing the Gospel of John that we've been studying here at Shoreline for almost two years, and we're close to the end.

In our text today, he explicitly lays out the purpose of this writing. So let's read our text, John 20, 30, and 31. 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.

John's purpose in writing the Gospel is so that you may believe, and that by believing you may have life. Spread throughout John's Gospel, we see support for verse 31's purpose statement, as he uses the word believe 91 times in 21 chapters, and the word life 36 times, far more than the other three Gospels.

John clearly reveals to us some 20 chapters in why he wrote all of this. And friends, this purpose of his is for us. He's writing to us that we might believe and have life.

And you might be saying, well, Matt, I already believe and I have eternal life. I'm a Christian. And that may be true. Praise God. But John's focus isn't simply evangelistic, right?

[4 : 01] That's a funny word, a long word, i.e. a call for people to believe for the first time. There's also a call for those who are already followers of Christ to double down and refocus on their purpose.

To keep on believing and keep on living. So whether or not you already believe in Christ as your Savior, my goal for today is that all of us might grow in our believing and living.

And my plan is to explore select verses addressing, you may believe and you may have life, as illustrated by Jesus in John's Gospels. Church, I hope that looking at John's purpose will remind us

of and reinvigorate us towards refocusing on our purpose as Christians to live lives through our belief and the new life we've been given.

Let's pray before we begin. Heavenly Father, would you go before me, go before us in this moment, in this time, soften our hearts, open our ears, would your word come forth in truth, and would it be transformative, Lord, for your glory.

Amen. Before we get to John's purpose statement in verse 31, let's take a look at verse 30 together. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.

[5 : 32] Scholars have concluded, notes one theologian, that the Gospels only record about 50 days of Jesus' ministry in all the combined Gospels. Yet Jesus' total ministry of three and a half years comes to about 100, sorry, 1,080 days.

That means that we only have about 4.6% of Jesus' ministry recorded. Imagine the teaching, the conversations, and ministry we've never heard about.

We might wonder, well, why are these other signs, specifically, why weren't they recorded by John? The short answer would seem to be that more evidence to validate Christ's message wasn't necessary.

John Calvin said, John has only related some things out of a large number, not that the others were unworthy of being recorded, but because these were sufficient to edify faith. And I would add, on a personal note, how marvelous to know that our Lord, Jesus, added numerous other signs to the ones we have recorded in John's Gospel.

How powerful, how compassionate, how caring, how glorious is our Savior to change lives, to impact forever, physically, emotionally, spiritually, for their good, those who are blessed by His signs.

[6 : 56] How good is our God? Let's look at verse 31. But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in His name.

But these are written is the bridge that connect verse 30 and 31. Last week, we heard our brother Jim Gancars speak about Thomas' lack of faith and prevailing doubt.

He had to see the risen Christ and touch his physical body, the healed wounds, and his hands and his side in order to believe. Or so he said. Maybe you or someone you know feels as though the Bible's account of Christ's life is too old.

Or because they can't see God or interact with Jesus Himself in person, how could they believe the stories and the testimonies of others who weren't even there? The eyewitness accounts of Christ seen in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and here in John are firsthand accounts.

You don't have to have been there to believe. You don't have to have been raised in a church or gone to seminary or read lots of Christian literature or put your hands in Christ's hands inside like Thomas to believe.

[8 : 11] These things are written and sufficient so you may believe. Friend, would you choose to believe today? You may believe.

So the first of our two sections in digging into John's purpose statement is the phrase, you may believe. Jesus' ministry was displayed most clearly through His miracles called signs in John's Gospel and His message, what He taught.

So let's look at the signs. Christ's public ministry was marked by seven signs, displays designed to authenticate Christ's words and display His glory, proving that He was who He says He was, the Son of God, the Messiah.

Messiah. Messiah is a Hebrew word which in Greek is Christ. So Jesus the Messiah is Jesus Christ. So let's look back at these signs briefly which we studied quite some time ago, remembering what they tell us about Jesus and recalling how they led many to true belief.

Turning water into wine, Jesus' first miracle, reveals Jesus' transforming power over the material world or nature and ability to influence created things.

[9 : 30] This sign, the first display of His glory, persuaded His disciples to believe, as noted in John 2, 11. The healing of the nobleman's son, Jesus exerts His power and reveals His glory as Lord over physical life.

His compassion and mercy towards a nobleman and his family, neither of which He knew, was manifest in dramatic fashion from many miles away.

The strong faith that this man displayed, no doubt, grew even more after this event as Christ did the seemingly impossible and His household believed. Praise God.

The healing of the paralyzed man displays Christ's ability to restore that which is lost and broken. We see Jesus restore this man's ability to walk which had been some 38-year-long ordeal for Him. You know, Jesus didn't need the healing waters of the pool into which this man desperately tried to wade. He needed only His will and words, rise, take up your bed and walk, and the man was healed.

[10:38] The feeding of the 5,000 shows Christ's glory as provider of needs and sustainer of life through multiplying a few bread and fish to be enough to feed thousands.

He provided much nourishment and sustenance from essentially nothing. The walking on water, the majestic act of walking on water in the midst of a great storm, in the disciples' most treacherous hour, on the brink of disaster, shows Christ's glory and His ability to help those in need and overcome in any circumstance, no matter how big or how hopeless things may look.

The healing of the blind man. Jesus gave sight to a man born blind. Contrary to the disciples' misconception, this man's blindness wasn't a punishment from a sin of his or his family, but he was born blind so that he might see physical light for the very first time through being healed by the spiritual light of the world, Jesus Christ.

And the seventh sign, raising of Lazarus, Jesus' life-giving power is shown as being greater than death itself as Jesus raises His friend who has been dead for several days.

Those are the seven signs that John records in his gospel. Lastly and most importantly, Jesus Himself rising from the grave, although not considered one of the seven signs in John's gospel for various reasons.

[12:12] This was by far the most miraculous display of Christ's power and glory as recorded by John. So these seven signs that John records provide an overabundance of physical evidence to support Christ's claims and display His glory as the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of God.

These things are written so you may believe. Now I want us to look at an example of what the words and message of Jesus were. We've seen the signs of His ministry, but now we're going to look at the substance of the Messiah's message.

What was He saying? What was He teaching? What was He all about? Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus provides great insight into Jesus' message. In chapter 3, John tells us Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council, approached Jesus in secret and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that you're a teacher come from God, for no one else can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

Nicodemus recognizes Jesus' signs as significant, but has his doubts as to who Jesus actually is. He doesn't simply say, I know you're the Messiah that we've been waiting for.

He was a qualified Jewish teacher. He knew the law passed down for millennia by the Jews. Who did Jesus of Nazareth think that He was? This uneducated miracle worker defying the Jewish ritual laws and regulations and claiming to be our Messiah.

[13:49] Jesus answered him, continue on, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to Him, how can a man be born when he's old?

Can he enter a second time and his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

Don't marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus said to Him, how can these things be? Jesus answered, are you the teacher of Israel that you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

Jesus replied to Nicodemus, pushed hard against the Jewish assumption that their racial identity, their old birth, assured them a place in God's kingdom.

[15:02] Jesus made it plain that a man's first birth, first birth, does not assure kingdom of heaven. First birth, that is a hard, that's a hard one to say. Jesus made it plain that this man's first birth does not assure him the kingdom of heaven.

It's got off track there. Not only being born again, right, being reborn spiritually gives this assurance. Only being reborn again gives this assurance. Nicodemus was a religious leader, an educated man, and an earnest man.

And so by all outward appearance, he was already guaranteed entrance into God's kingdom. Yet, Jesus inferred that he was not part of it. Jesus declared throughout his ministry that admission into the kingdom of God wasn't what people assumed.

Next, and arguably the most recognizable verse in the Bible, Jesus lays out the truth about entrance into his kingdom, which is the core of the gospel message he preached in John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It's belief in the son of God, Jesus Christ, that brings entrance to God's kingdom and eternal life, friends.

[16:22] Let's revisit John's purpose statement in verse 31 of chapter 3. These are written so you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing, say, by believing.

By believing. Good. That by believing, you may have life in his name. By believing. Unfortunately for Nicodemus, this believing is entirely apart from one's upbringing.

Religious education, race, good deeds, cultural status, the list goes on and on. Now all humans must be born again into a new spiritual life because all humans have sinned and transgressed God's law.

Without this gift of new life through Christ, each of us stands condemned because of our sin.

Romans 3.23 says, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God or God's standard.

Verse 17 and 18 in John 3 go on. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

[17:29] Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God. Each and every person in this room here today has made or will make a decision one of those two ways once they have heard this news, whether you've heard it in the past or today's your first time.

We have to either choose to accept or reject the news. And if you don't choose to accept the news, you have chosen to reject it. There is no in-between.

Christ came to bring sinners out of condemnation and judgment that they already reside in, not to declare condemnation, the text says. In reality, by rejecting Christ's offer of new life, friend, and refusing to believe in him, you, you are a person who condemns themselves to life after death apart from God.

next we see the specifics behind the condemnation or judgment in Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus, verse 19 through 21.

And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

[19:01] but whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out by God. John 8, 12, Jesus provides more on this idea of light.

He says, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. Well, what prevents people from believing?

It doesn't seem that hard. It doesn't seem that complicated. In reality, it's not. But what prevents people from believing? They reject Christ, the light, because they don't want their sin exposed by his light in their heart and life.

Sin and darkness have an alluring, beckoning call that keeps people trapped in their old spiritual life and thus remaining in a condemned state. as they have rejected his free gift of new spiritual life.

And I would say, oh, the foolishness and deception in the human heart. The Savior is calling us and was calling Nicodemus in John chapter 3 to believe in him as Messiah, a Savior, to save them, to save him, to expose darkness and old spiritual life and receive new life through the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

[20:36] These things are written so that you might believe. Do you believe? Hopefully, this first section serves as a helpful reminder of what a Christian believes and challenges you to a deeper, more personal, more grounded and thoughtful belief in the one who offers new spiritual birth and brings light into the darkness of our hearts.

Rehearing the message of the gospel should never get old to us. In fact, if it has, that might be an indication we've lost focus on our purpose. We've got to hit the refresh button and that starts with recalling our beliefs in Christ as the Son of God and revisiting the gospel story about your condemned state before God and Christ's offer of new life.

The signs of the Messiah's ministry and substance of the Messiah's message ought to elicit our belief and are the foundation to help us refocus on our purpose that our belief might lead to truly living, which is what we'll look at next.

The second of our two sections at looking at John's gospel purpose statement is the phrase you may have life, life in his name. Belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not an end in and of itself. It's not belief for the sake of belief, friends. It's not like a collector's item that you purchase, put on a shelf, and then admire on occasion. The end point of our belief is that we may receive life, specifically, life in his name.

[22 : 29] So what does this phrase mean, life in his name? Well, this is a statement that I came up with. Life in his name is a life lived through Christ, solely influenced by Christ and all for Christ's praise as a result of Christ's work.

If you're taking notes, that would be a good one to jot down. Life that comes from belief must be active, not passive.

I want to look at three characteristics of what this life looks like, what our life should look like, practically speaking, as believers, as seen in the book of John. Life in his name is missional.

I want to thank Pastor Mike for this one, this sub point. Life in his name is missional. We should be on mission. Let's look at a few examples.

John the Baptist. The earliest example in John's Gospel, chapter one, John said, I'm the voice of the one calling in the wilderness. Make straight the way for the Lord. John was on mission for the Messiah.

[23 : 46] He made it his life's mission to call Israel to repent and believe and to behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John the Baptist was on mission.

How about Christ's disciples? Later in John one, we see Christ's first disciple sharing the news of finding the Messiah with family members and friends, such as the stories of Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel.

And except for John, all of the original disciples were martyred, i.e. killed for their faith in Jesus. Life in his name means going on mission with and for those whom you know and are trying to love, even to the point of death, all for the sake of sharing the good news about Christ.

The woman at the well, she went on mission. John chapter 4, Jesus breaks social barriers and speaks to a Samaritan woman who the Jews didn't associate with and vice versa, telling her that he has water that will cause her to never thirst again.

And he's the Messiah that she's heard of. After miraculously unveiling his knowledge of her personal life, despite being a complete stranger, she turns and tells the town people of her interaction.

[25 : 05] The text says, many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. Hallelujah. For the woman at the well, life in his name meant going on mission to share Christ with her neighbors.

Finally, John's writing. For John, life in his name meant choosing full-time missions as a disciple of Christ. Once Christ died and was raised and ascended, John didn't stop.

He didn't have a second career. He didn't retire early. He devoted his entire life to sharing the good news of the gospel and penned not only the gospel of John, but also first, second, and third John as well as Revelation.

John was on mission. Shoreline, I pray that we would see our life through Christ as being a call to living a missional lifestyle, spreading the good news, the good, good news.

That's what I wrote. Good, good news. The greatest news of new life in Christ. Life in his name is missional. Life in his name is sufficient to sustain us.

[26 : 26] In the bread of life discourse in John chapter 6, Jesus says, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. He uses a physical reality, food, to illustrate a spiritual reality. He will nourish and quench our spiritual hunger. What is our spiritual hunger? It's that which we so often try to quench in physical ways with sin and pursue our idols to fill the spiritual void that we feel deep in our hearts.

Life in his name is sufficient to sustain and nourish us deeply in all of life. May you be sustained and nourished by Christ, the bread of life.

Life in his name is sufficient to grow us in righteousness. In John 15, Jesus says, I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.

[27 : 36] Apart from me, you can do nothing. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. Living a life in his name means living connected to Christ, the vine.

And bearing the fruit of righteousness that cannot exist apart from the life that flows through Christ. I wonder, friend, are you bearing that fruit? And are people in your life seeing that evidence?

Being connected to the vine means Christ also, according to that verse, answering our requests that align with the Father's will for our lives. He will receive, we will receive the spiritual blessings that God desires for us when we remain connected to Christ.

That is a win-win. Say win-win. Say win-win. Win-win. When we're connected to Christ and we ask the Lord for his blessing, for what he wants for us, we win.

We receive those things. life in his name is sufficient to grow us in the righteousness that our new life was purposed for.

[28 : 55] Life in his name is sufficient to care for our needs. Life in his name includes care from the good shepherd.

This care brings an abundant life, as John 10.10 says. A life that is all that God has for us. With protection, the watchful eye, and tender care that Christ intends for us to know day in and day out. You know, John doesn't do a lot of describing of exactly what that abundant life looks like. But I think the words of Psalm 23 remind us of this abundant life with our shepherd. Maybe you recognize this text.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. That's the abundant life. And guess what? The abundant life also includes difficulty and hardships.

[30 : 12] What we're cared for. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you're with me, your rod and your staff. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. He cares for our needs. In the last stanza of Psalm 23, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Amen. That is the life that I want to experience. How about you? Life in his name is a life where God cares for our needs.

And finally, life in his name is eternal. We see this phrase eternal life many times in John's gospel. And I think out of all the spiritual concepts that I've learned in the last several years, this might be one of my favorites. That eternal life is not simply endless time.

[31 : 31] For even those that reject Christ will experience this fate. Eternal life is better thought of not as a quantity of life but as a quality of life.

One commentator says, eternal life means the very life of God experienced today. It is the spiritual experience of heaven on earth.

when we are saved the Lord of heaven comes to live within our very being so that we immediately begin to experience this new quality of life referred to as eternal life.

This quality of life is about a relationship with God. It is an experiential knowledge of the Father and the Son. As John 17 3 says, and this is eternal life that they know you and this is eternal life that they know you the quality friends the quality eternal life that they know you the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Isn't that a great thing to hear? Isn't that a great truth friends? Shoreline eternal life starts here on earth and continues in heaven forever. We don't have to wait to die to possess it.

[32 : 53] Now that's good news. That's the gospel truth. Amen? Life in his name is eternal. So the second part of John 2's John's two-part purpose statement John 20 31 in writing his gospel is that those who read it may have life in his name.

So Christian are you alive? Are you alive? No I mean really alive.

Are you living life in his name? A life lived through Christ solely influenced by Christ and for Christ's praise.

Has your belief in Christ as your Messiah propelled you to live life on mission? Are you sustained and satisfied by the bread of life?

Brother and sister. Experiencing the abundant life that the good shepherd promises and are you living eternal life here and now? Or have you lost your focus or your purpose as a Christian?

[34 : 11] I hope that you haven't. losing focus as Christians can have huge spiritual implications. Without focus on our purpose we lose excitement for spiritual things and by default we allow sin to creep in and our idols to assume the places in our hearts and take captive our affections which Christ previously held.

world. We become spiritually lazy and apathetic which means we're probably not building up the members of God's church that we've been specifically designed and called to build up.

Iron sharpening iron. And we're surely not sharing the good news of the gospel because it doesn't really feel like good news right now.

Not like it used to at least. As followers of Christ we've got to be diligent and stay focused. Brothers and sisters keep on believing.

Keep on living. I think one way we can do this as a church is to create a culture of discipleship.

[35 : 29] To continue a culture of discipleship. that's what we long for. And so that could be as simple as finding someone here who seems to recognize and have a focus on their purpose as a Christian.

Who's living life in his name. Grab him or her and learn from them. Let them teach you. Glean from their wisdom.

them. And then wrap it up and put it on a shelf and leave it. And then take what you've learned and teach somebody else.

Teach somebody else. That's how we build and grow a culture of discipleship. discipleship. You don't have to be way up here. You don't have to have preached to lead a community group.

You don't have to have read your Bible front to back every year. Maybe you've only known Christ for six months. You've got something to share. Let's create a culture of discipleship so that we might keep on believing and encourage each other in this and keep on living and encourage each other in that.

[36 : 49] And of course this is for his glory. But it's for our good like he intended. So church I pray that looking at John's purpose statement has caused a spark that might reinvigorate you to focus on your purpose as a Christian.

Or maybe you don't know Christ your purpose as a human which is the same purpose as a Christian and it's the same purpose that John gave to live life through belief and the new life that's offered and that you've been given.

These things 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. Pray with me church. Heavenly Father we ask this morning that you would grant us insight and understanding into our hearts.

That your spirit would come and illuminate the darkness and the sin that we allow to dwell in our secret and deepest places.

And would we allow your church the folks here sitting by us to have a part in that that we would all keep on believing and keep on living.

[38 : 26] It's in the name of your son that we can and do pray these things. Amen.