

Written That you Might Believe

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Date: 26 July 2012

[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John, entitled, Jesus is God.

All right, take your Bibles if you would, and let's go to Matthew. I must confess to you that I did not know that it was split session. It's my fault. I didn't check my calendar like I should have, and so I am prepared to finish the book of John on Sunday.

And so I'll finish chapter 19 tonight. Sunday we'll finish John. Next Thursday night, if I'm not mistaken, where's Trent? We have a special speaker, correct? Robert, who is our special speaker next?

Justin Gasway will speak next Thursday. He's a pastor at Cloverleaf, and you're going to like him. He's a young man, about 30 maybe? 29. 29, and he'll be here.

We've got special men coming almost every Thursday night next month. And then on Sunday, the next Sunday, Lord will, and I think I'll be in the book of 2 Corinthians. So that's unless the Holy Spirit or you or somebody else helps me see something else that I ought to do.

[1 : 0 9] But let's go to John chapter 20. John chapter 20. And I'm going to ask you first. Well, we'll see if you will participate.

If you won't, I will take care of it. But we're down to the verse now. John chapter 20, verse 31 is the key verse of the message tonight. And that is, these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name.

And so we're going to talk about that written that you might believe. And I want to work my way through the passage of Scripture here with you. So if you'll read with me, starting in verse 24, and we'll finish chapter 20.

The Bible says, But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, which means twin, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, You're a stinking bum, you skipped church, and we're all mad at you, and God doesn't like you anymore.

Oh, I got off script there. I got off script. Let me read that again. It said, Jeff liked it. Jeff was over going, Yes!

[2 : 1 9] Finally, he breaks loose and preaches. All right. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the prints of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas, Reach thither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach thither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.

I won't spend hardly any time on this, but if I could get you to circle anything, you ought to circle, Be not faithless, but believing. This guy walked with Jesus for three and a half years, or whatever amount of time it was with Jesus, and he is actually faithless.

I didn't say that. That's what the book says. He said, Quit acting like, quit being. He didn't make him act. He says, Be not faithless. You ought not to be without faith.

You ought to believe. Verse 28, And Thomas answered, but I like his answer immediately. Thomas' answer is, He said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said unto him, Thomas, Because thou hast seen me, and hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

[3 : 48] And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.

First thing, let's have a word of prayer. Father, touch our hearts and help us tonight. Honor yourself and magnify yourself through this passage of scripture. Help us to see that you are the Christ, you are the Son of God, and help it to influence and affect every part of our lives.

And I'll give you praise and glory and honor for all that you do. In Jesus' precious name, amen. Number one, seeking the missing and sharing what God's doing.

I wish you'd write that down. I want to focus on verse 24 and 25 because I had several people come to me and say, how are you going to handle Thomas missing the service?

It's going to be a good opportunity if you let them know they can't skip church. And I mean, I've had people kidding with me. They just can't wait for this message. And so let me show you how I think God handles the subject if I could.

[4 : 59] But verse 24, he says, Thomas wasn't with him. Sunday morning, Jesus rose from the dead. Sunday night, the apostles are all gathered together behind the door. Doors are closed.

Doors are locked. They're afraid. They're scared. And Thomas wasn't there with them. And when they did see Thomas, they said, Thomas, man, you ain't going to believe it.

We was together last night and Jesus showed up and Thomas said, I will not believe. So let me just mention a few things. Thomas missed out on being at the meeting on Sunday evening when Jesus showed up.

Now that would be without a doubt the night you don't want to miss. That would be without a doubt the night you don't want to miss. The other disciples that were in the meeting didn't get a critical attitude.

However, not that I see in this passage. I think we've done ourselves a great deal of harm and believe me, I'm a three time a week, sir. The contemporary bug hasn't bitten me calling off Sunday night services hasn't bitten me.

[6 : 00] The being cool is so far from who I am. Being cool is so far from who I am. I'll just accept being who I am. But it is amazing that a lot of times we've kind of given a bad rap to good Christianity because we're out beating people over the head and look what happened.

He skipped church. Now, if I'd have been doing that, I'd have said, Thomas, you're dumb. You missed church. You should have been there on Sunday night. You weren't there. We was all at the church.

You weren't at the church. And look what happened. Jesus showed up and you didn't see what happened. But that's not what happened. They didn't get a critical attitude. Here's what it says. They go tell Thomas what did happen.

All they did is go tell Thomas what did happen. Now, if you're a strong Calvinist and says we don't have to go look for them that ain't here. If God wants them here, he'll bring them here. Well, that's not what they did. They went and found the guy that was missing.

They said, you ain't here. And we just want to tell you what God did. They didn't go get critical. They didn't go rip him. But they did go say, man, you're not going to believe. You're not going to believe what happened.

[7 : 05] So they go tell Thomas what happened. And could I just say as a church, I don't know if you'll get this. And sometimes because I guess I'm still new to America, even though I've been here six years now, we need to form a church and we are a church.

We name it. But you know what? A church ends up being, we know each other. We know each other. We know each other on our good days. We know each other on our bad days. We're there when each other are hurting. We're there when things are going on.

And so when Thomas missed, everybody in the group knew it. Thomas ain't here. Thomas is not here with us. And they went not to rip him, but to say, Thomas, you missed it.

We should notice when our brothers and sisters are not in the service. We should share out what God's doing. We should seek them out. We should love them. We should let them know that they were missed. Thomas still doubts, but that's his problem.

It's not the problem of the other disciples. One more thing I want to say, but before I do, just recently, let me just say this. Recently, this happened right here.

[8 : 09] My dad, this is not recent. My dad always said, every Sunday when dad, if dad worked shift work, and if he missed a midweek or if he missed a Sunday night or he missed a Sunday morning, because he used to work like, I don't remember, it was like seven or eight days on and then he got four or five days off and then he would change shifts.

And so he'd be on midnights and for a number of days, then he'd be on days for a number of days. He'd be on evenings for a number of days. And so he had the weirdest schedule. You never knew. He didn't know.

He had to always carry it written down. He never knew where he would be. And so he missed church quite regularly. And when he missed church, he always said, did anybody miss me? Did anybody ask about me?

I always thought that was kind of funny that daddy wanted to know and he was selfish. But you know that recently, somebody's kind of quit going to our church has made the comment, I don't think anybody cared. Nobody's asked about me. I thought, man, it sounded like my daddy.

Churches, churches ought to care. People ought to care. We ought to notice when somebody's not around and we ought to express that. They ought to feel like, hey, I am, by the way, if you miss the Kiwanah Club, they might miss you.

[9 : 15] They might miss you. If you miss the Lions Club, and we're a body, we're the body of Christ. There ought to be something very special here about loving each other and caring about each other. These gloomy, easily discouraged people need to be in fellowship more than most.

The longer they're left to their fears and doubts, the colder they will become. Can you imagine what's going on? Just for a minute. And by the way, let me just say this about Christians. And Pastor Frick can, I believe, would agree with this and vouch for it.

Jesus just died and was buried and he rose again, but they're not really cognizant of everything that's going on yet. They're scared and they're hiding behind closed doors. Thomas isn't there.

And let me tell you something that happens. When you pull away from the group, when you pull away from the group, it is so easy to get discouraged. It is so easy to get bitter. It is so easy to get cold.

It is so easy to withdraw. And if they hadn't have gone to get old Thomas, I don't know what would have happened. I'm not saying he would have lost his salvation. If he had it, he wouldn't have lost it. But I'm just telling you this is what I, and I bet brother, you talk to brother freaking private later and see if this is true.

[10 : 21] I'm telling you, I've watched Christians. And if you pull out and you're not around other Christians, it'll begin to affect you. It'll affect the way you think. You'll pull away. You'll get cold. You'll draw away from the Lord.

And so when we see other people doing that, one of the best things we can do is, man, Thomas, you missed. I'm not calling you to criticize you. I'm not calling you to fuss at you. I'm not calling you to tell you you was a dingy not to be here.

I'm just calling you to tell you what Jesus did and check on you and let you know I love you. And I think that's what goes on. And number one, I hope you can see that. Number two, second thing, only Jesus can convince Thomas.

Only Jesus can convince Thomas. Verse 26. And after eight days, again, his disciples were within and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut and stood in the midst and said, peace be unto you.

Then said he to Thomas, stick your hand over here, buddy. Let's get the story. You get the story with me and consider the story with me. I mean, I imagine, I mean, I can be there.

[11 : 24] It's almost like I'm in the room. I can see this like as a big movie. If you've made a movie, I could just see this, this happening. It's been eight days. It's been seven days. It's been from Sunday morning way before dawn.

He was gone from the grave sometime after Sunday night or Saturday night before Sunday morning. He's gone. He arose and he's gone Sunday night. They've had a meeting. Now it's been eight days.

That's an idiom for it's a week later. It's Sunday night and they're meeting together again. But can you imagine what's been going on? What's the talk of the town? All these guys know each other. When you know each other, you know, like I was at a funeral today.

I walk in the room. I look around the room. I know 75% of the people in the room. I mean, everybody in the world is hugging me. People are giving me the little wave, the little nod. I mean, they went to Whitfield Baptist so they were pastors that I knew.

When you're in the group, you're in the group. You kind of know what's going on in the group. You know what I mean? If you're in a club, you know what's going on. So, I mean, do you reckon the women were talking? Do you reckon Mary was running her mouth about having gone to the tomb and how she talked to those angels and how they found the grave?

[12 : 30] Do you reckon Peter and John, I mean, it didn't just happen on Sunday morning and the next Sunday night or Sunday night and the next Sunday night. I can imagine that all week long there's been chitter chatter about this.

And I can imagine when Thomas wasn't there, I don't know when they went to see him. Maybe they had Tuesday night visitation or maybe they had Monday morning visitation. Who cares when they went? But can you imagine what happened? They first, they go say, Thomas, man, you ain't going to believe it.

We were hiding in the room. We were scared, slapped to death and he showed up in the room. Who? Jesus. He was there. We've heard all about him. What in the world happened?

And Thomas said, I ain't believing a word of it. I don't care what you guys say. I don't believe it until I see him with my own eyes. Until I touch him, I will not believe.

Now, it wasn't just one apostle. I don't think it was one apostle. I mean, I think the guy had 168 hours of hearing it. I mean, I think he got up in the morning and everybody's chitter shattering. I think Facebook was eat up with it.

[13 : 28] Jesus rose from the dead. Twitter was buzzing about it. The gossip down at the well was Jesus arose. Where you went to buy the bread for the day, Jesus arose. The whole town knew about it.

Everybody's talking about it. about it. But Philip says, Thomas says, I won't believe. Now watch this a second. We ought to go. We ought to find Thomas.

We ought to talk to Thomas. We ought to love Thomas. We ought to be kind to Thomas. But we ain't going to convince Thomas. You ought to witness to people. You ought to share the gospel.

You ought to give them a gospel track. You ought to lay out Jesus all the time. But you ought to stop, step back and realize I ain't, I'm not convincing anybody. I'm counseling a couple that live in Lawrenceville.

They're Peruvian. And they, through Chuck, they heard about, they heard that they could come see a guy who was a pastor who spoke Spanish and had lived in Prudence. So they come over and see me. Today was the second time.

[14 : 29] And they want marriage counseling. They don't really care about it. But I told them, I said, now let me just explain to you how things work with me. I said, I ain't got but one book. It's my book on how to do everything. And it's the book I believe is right about everything.

So let me just open it up. And I brought it for you. Read a verse. And so I'm sharing the gospel. I said, we got to forgive. Let me show you how Jesus forgave. And you know, I'm really not pushing for a decision.

I'm not in a convince them mode. They do anything. I tell them right now. But I'll say, well, I'll tell you this. I know Jesus convinces. And in the verse here, in the verse here, it's after eight days in verse 26, then Jesus shows up again.

And he says to Thomas, stick out your finger. I don't, I don't think he ever even touched Jesus. I don't know if you see it. Read the verses. Read the verses. He says, he says, and he goes, all right, Thomas, I know what you said.

Stick out your hands to get in my side. Quit being faithless and believe. And Thomas said, hey, my Lord and my God. I think Thomas is like, I don't need to touch. I give. I see you.

[15 : 31] I know you. Now, he may have touched him. I'm not saying he didn't. If you got a message on, he did touch him. Fine. He might have touched him. The disciples could go tell Thomas. They could be excited witnesses, but that's all they can do.

They could go tell Thomas and they could be excited witnesses, but it's Jesus. It's the Holy Spirit who convinces people. Jesus showed up and called Thomas by name. He challenged him to do exactly what he said he would have to do to believe.

The Lord Jesus challenges him not to be faithless, but believing. His doubt was that he lacked faith. This guy is called Doubting Thomas. That's his nickname from then on.

That's his nickname from then on. Isn't that amazing? I'd hate to be the harlot Rahab or the Doubting Thomas. I wouldn't want either one of those things, but can I just tell you as Christians, boy, faith is so key to everything you're going to do.

Hebrews 11, 6. They can't throw it up on the wall for you. You don't have to look it up, but you ought to almost know it by heart if you don't know it. Without faith, it is what? Without faith, it is what?

[16 : 38] Impossible. Impossible to what? Please him. Without faith, it's impossible to please him because if you're going to come to God, you must believe that there really is a God and you must believe that he rewards them that diligently seek him.

We have to be faithful people. I mean, we have to be full of faith people. I love it. Philip believes and he calls him my Lord and my God.

You can't win people to Christ. You can and should witness, but it's the Lord himself who will convict and draw himself. That's a change from where I've been in my life.

I have been known in the past to lead a couple hundred people to Christ in a week. Myself. I've had so many people pray their prayer.

I've had, I mean, I learned all the tricks. None of them ever came to church. None of them ever got baptized. None of them ever started living for God. We could talk them into praying.

[17 : 40] And sometimes you don't want to witness because you think you've got to buttonhole people and you've got to say the five verses exactly right and you feel like if all the pressure's on you, you feel like all the pressure's on you and this guy's going to go to hell if I don't say it just right.

And so because you can't say it just right, you either tell the preacher to go see him or you back off. But I'm going to tell you what I see here and I believe this is what's going on. The guys couldn't convince him.

All the chatter for a week couldn't convince him but Jesus could. And I can lay out the truth and show him the gospel and show him the truth and at the right moment the Holy Spirit of God can drive that home but it won't be the way I hold my head, the way I put my tongue in my mouth, it won't be that.

And that takes a lot of pressure off of me. I can speak to you and say, hey, this is what the Bible says. You don't respond, I'll just wait until the Holy Spirit kicks you because he'll step in and he'll do a work.

That ought to relieve you just a tad. It ought to let you know, man, just be an excited witness. Just tell people what Jesus has done. Just tell them. I remember in Peru, I taught the guys how to go soul winning.

[18 : 50] The first Saturday I took them soul winning. We led like 40 people to Christ that day. I remember thinking I'm going to write that in my prayer letter. Of course, none of them ever came. We never saw them again. Then I called them back and said, boys, this don't work.

This doesn't work. It doesn't work. And I also saw us go out and talk to people and it was like we took the pressure off us, put the pressure on him and God saved them. And so I want to challenge you.

That doesn't relieve you of your witnessing. It doesn't relieve you of being excited. It doesn't relieve you of going out there. But the pressure's not on you. The Lord will take care of doing it.

Notice Philip called him Lord or King, sovereign, his God. Thomas says, I give complete surrender and obedience. Then next thing, the third thing, he makes a really powerful statement in verse 29.

Jesus does. Verse 29. Look at it. 1929. You got your Bible? Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou has seen me, thou has believed. Blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed.

[19 : 57] Now what in the world is going on there? Thomas, you saw faith is believing without seeing. We walk by faith and not by sight.

So faith is that way. He says, Thomas, you had to see to believe. Thomas said he'd have to see and touch to believe. That's like so many people today. Jesus, however, says those that have not seen and still believe are blessed.

A satisfied faith. Trust what God has given us in his word without needing anything more. I'm going to go ahead and read you a couple more little statements about this.

But this is what you need. I don't know if this ever bothered you, but have you ever heard that he was gloriously saved?

A preacher will say, we had a guy come forward and he was gloriously saved. Another week, he'll say somebody got saved. And I always was like, now that one was gloriously saved and that one was saved. Now what's the difference in being gloriously saved and saved?

[21 : 01] And what's the difference in being, I mean, you've been, some of you have. Chuck, you're smiling. Maybe you understand what I'm saying. You'll hear a fact, everybody gets saved gloriously saved. But most of the time, gloriously saved in our vocabulary means they cried.

Or they got goosebumps. Or they did something. And they gloriously got saved. The facts are, you read the book, you listen to the Holy Spirit, you trust what God said, and you get saved.

Somebody in this room got saved and you were dried the whole time and you never cried and you never, if you ever read the Bible stories about people getting saved, they want, they don't get gloriously saved most of the time.

I mean, we got a guy riding in a chariot through the desert. His driver's driving his chariot. He's sitting back in the back seat riding in luxury. He's got a chauffeur driving the chariot. He's sitting back in the back seat reading the book of Isaiah and he can't understand.

I mean, just reading the scratching his head saying, what in the world is going on in this chapter? And then all of a sudden, Philip shows up, climbs up in the chariot with him to ride along. And so Philip said, let me explain that to him. And he started right there and he preached to him Christ.

[22 : 05] And if you'll notice, he did not fall down on the ground. He didn't start writhing on the ground. He didn't start squalling or crying. This is the story, at least the story the Bible tells us. This is what the Bible says. He said, well, there's water.

Can I get baptized? And Philip said, of course not. Not unless you believe. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? Do you believe in him? And the eunuch said, yeah, I do. He said, all right, stop the chariot, let's get baptized.

That's a pretty wild story. That's a pretty wild story. Doesn't necessarily fit our Pentecostal leanings. But it does fit our Bible leanings. I'm just saying that sometimes we emphasize emotions way too much.

We're more like Thomas. It seems so many want God to do something to prove that he's real. They need to see more. They want a vision. Usually that's our vanity that causes us to want such experiences.

You know what we want? I want to hear you say how you got saved. Jimmy says, well, I was 15 and 16. I raised my hand, didn't mean it, but later on I was in my room and I really felt like the Holy Spirit dealt with my heart and I accepted Christ as my Savior.

[23 : 10] Oh, blah, blah, blah. Not too exciting. Here's this other guy. Here's this other guy. He says, I was riding down the road and a blinding light hit me, knocked me off my horse, fell on the ground and I got saved.

Whoa, now that one's gloriously saved. And then here's another one. He's at church and he got to cry and he got to shout and he got to run. That's gloriously saved. The truth of the matter is the only thing that mattered was he said, I trust Jesus and he got saved.

And somebody's going to try to make you doubt your salvation someday. They're going to say you didn't cry enough. Well, it ain't about you crying enough. They're going to say something dumb and you don't need that.

Real reason people want to see something or feel something so they can go around saying this. Well, Steve, I mean, I mean, I know that's cute. You was listening radio and you got saved. But me, I was on a horse.

I wasn't in no car and I wasn't listening to no radio. And I'm telling you, a beam of light like Star Trek hit me, knocked me on the ground. Ah, that's how I got saved. That's vanity. The truth is, here's how we got saved.

[24 : 16] We all realized we were dirty, stinking, rotten, filthy sinners that deserve to go to hell and Jesus died for us and we trusted him. That's how we got saved. Some want to see a miracle or a special act of God. Some want a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit like speaking in tongues.

Some of us want success numbers like me. I'd like to see God do it. I'd like to, I'd know he's on my side if you let me see more people get saved or whatever. Here's the truth. We need a satisfied faith that says, I just trust Jesus.

Can I just tell you, you hold in your hands the word of God, you ought to trust it. It's what the word of God says. And let me just tell you this, the same feelings that made you feel gloriously saved, you're going to have a dreary day when the glory's not there and you're going to lose your salvation.

But if you know, I just believed God and I'm just going to believe him now. I don't feel like believing him, but I'm just going to believe God you'll still be just as saved because it's not about how you feel.

It's about what happened. There are days in the 38 years I've been married to Betty that I mean, I feel so romantic. I mean, I get goosebumps. I see her walk down the hallway.

[25 : 27] John Pearson says his marriage is still just like it was on the first night. But I'm going to be honest, mine's not quite like that. You know, I mean, I can remember the first time Betty cooked food for me.

I thought it's got, it's got to be the most delicious food that's ever been cooked. I can just remember. I remember, I mean, I remember stuff. But you know, we've had some bad days. We've had some days when things didn't go good and we was kind of fussing, fighting.

And you know, I didn't feel all that married. I felt more like murder. But the truth is, I was married. You know, you know where Kyle is right now, don't you? He's like, whoo, whoo, married to the most wonderful thing of our marriage.

Just wait till he comes home from a trip and all his wife's got, you know, I used to come home, I'd go flying out of the country and preach somewhere and I'd arrive back. All I could think of was, I bet he's going to have me a special meal cooked. Betty's going to be waiting for me.

She's going to have her arms wide open. I'm going to come into the house, all this loving and hugging and kissing. And I would get the door and this is exactly what she'd do. I'd be setting my suitcases down and she would say, I'm not believing it.

[26 : 27] You left, you left. The washing machine's torn up. Five of the pastors have committed fornication. The whole place is falling apart. I'm telling you, and she just laid, I say, I'm going to pick these bags up and go back out the door.

I'm headed out of this country. That day, you might not feel, but see, we don't go by feelings. Could I just get an amen there? You don't go by feelings. And if you travel, your salvation's based on your feelings, you got a very faulty, weak salvation.

That's why this is important. You know what they do in this right here, in foundations, you know what they do? They say, let me give you a foundation, not a feeling. Let me tell you what the Bible says, not what the preacher says.

That's why in that foundation, somebody's taking the Bible, saying, look what the Bible says. Time to quit, and I'm nowhere near where I'm supposed to be. So, number four. Number four, if I could.

Why was the book of John written? And I'll finish. Why was the book of John written? Would you look at verse 30 with me? This is the key, but I got five minutes to get to my main key.

[27 : 28] Ready? Look at verse 30. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. I need you to understand, because if you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they don't jive up real good.

Have you noticed that yet? It's like the storylines don't always jive up real good. It's like, well, did that happen first or did this happen first?

Because John seems to act like it happened first, but Luke, he kind of got that messed up. And you're going to read all these stories and you're going to be like, what's going on in the Bible? Number one, I can trust it.

It's God's word. Number one, if there's a problem in the Bible, it's me. If there's a problem in Bible understanding, it is never the Bible. It's me.

Huh? I believe it was Trent. Trent told on, it was on Twitter, so I ought to be able to say it, but I believe it was Trent's wife had major car problems and he called Andrew or something.

[28 : 26] Andrew said, put gas in it. It'll work better. Was that happening or not? You know, the problem is not the car probably. If your wife don't know to put gas in it. Amen. And we've all had that problem.

We've all. So the problem is not the Bible. Problem is not the Bible. So when they told the story, but you know, when John wrote his book, that Holy Spirit wrote it. Everybody got that right. We all know the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible, not John.

John didn't write it. John's the writer, but God is giving him the words. God's giving him the thoughts. God's giving him what he wants to put down. But when he, when, when, when the Holy Spirit picked John and he used his personality, I mean, John's all over the place because God didn't like knock him in the head and turn him into a zombie.

But God made sure the right words got put there. He, he protected it and he preserved it. And notice what happened. John said, now guys, as I'm finishing my book and there was a lot of stuff Jesus did.

And I'm not going to tell all of it to you because I picked what I wanted to pick to put in the book on purpose. And he tells us that just as clear as that.

[29 : 35] Would you read the verse with me and see if that's what he says. Look at John chapter 20 or 19, isn't it? 20. Thank you. I don't know where I'm at. Verse 30. And many other signs, truly did Jesus in the presence of disciples.

He said, I'm not denying anything. He said, Luke's going to tell you some things I didn't tell you. Matthew's going to mention some stuff I didn't mention. But hey, I know that's true. He said, they're not written in this book. But look at verse 31.

But these are written. I wrote these stories. I wrote these signs. I wrote these miracles. I wrote these stories on purpose. That's the first purpose written, first purpose written book you ever read, huh?

Before there was a purpose driven life and a purpose driven everything else, God wrote a book on purpose. And look what he said. He said, That you might believe. John said, let me, John said, as the Lord worked in his life and worked all these miracles, John said, this story needs to be told so they know he's, Jesus is the son of God.

And this story needs to be told so they realize he's the Christ. And this story needs to be told. And the Holy Spirit put this book together. You've just finished reading. And the Holy Spirit put it together. John chose us miracles and everything on purpose.

[30 : 45] We were to see from his book that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. And that believing we might have life through his name. Almost every chapter of John has a testimony of someone believing or proclaiming that Jesus is the son of God.

By the way, when I started preparing this, I actually was putting down every chapter going to show you the testimonies where he was calling out witnesses. Then I said, that would get old and dreary. Y'all be like, good night, brother. But just take John 1 29.

In John 1 29, John the Baptist says, Behold the Lamb of God. Just keep going through it. Nicodemus comes and says, Hey, we know you're a teacher sent from God. All through the book, they keep saying, Hey, even Pilate knew it.

I mean, so the book was written with a purpose. Every book in the Bible is written with a purpose. You say, I don't always know the purpose. That's not the problem of the book. It's a problem that you have. By the way, Matthew was written primarily to show you Jesus as the King of Israel.

Mark was written to show him as a suffering servant. Luke is a man. And I'd like to ask you some questions and I'll quit. The question is, has the book of John accomplished its purpose in your life?

[31 : 49] I wish you'd look at the verse and I wish you'd answer the question. I wish you'd look at the book and I wish you'd answer the question. The Holy Spirit put down the book of John and he said, These are written that you might believe.

First question, have you believed that in Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior? I mean, everybody in this room, you've got to know that. You've got to know that you read the book and why do I believe that Jesus, now listen, please listen to this.

Why do I believe Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior and all that? It has nothing to do with my dad. It really doesn't. I was, by nature, rebellious.

No other teenager is, but I was. At about 15, I decided, they gave me, my parents gave me my first study Bible. I'd never had one. It wasn't really a good study Bible.

It was a cheesy one. It had pictures of Jesus in it and a whole bunch of junk, but it had cross references. It had a concordance in the back and I didn't have a computer yet. And I remember taking that Bible and I remember I got along with God in my Bible and I said, I will not believe anything my daddy tells me unless I can find it in this book.

[32 : 55] And I promise you, it took me months to figure out baptism didn't save me. I knew the answers. I knew what daddy said, but I needed to know. It's what the book said. I'm glad my mom and my daddy taught me and I'm glad my preacher did.

I had, it took me a long time to figure out I didn't need to speak in tongues. I mean, it took me probably a year to figure that one out. I went to Catherine Kuhlman services. I did everything I could, but I studied in the book all the time. And you know, I just want to know something.

Have you believed? Not because your mama said it, not because your daddy said it, not because it's what the preacher said, but have you believed in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Do you believe that he was more than a man?

Do you believe that he was God in human flesh? Well, if you hadn't gotten that, you just don't believe the Bible. Do you believe that Jesus was God in human flesh? Do you believe he was and is the Christ, the sent one?

Do you, I mean, when you read the book of John, do you, do you look at and say, Jesus is the Christ? That, that's, that's so strong. See, the Christ was talked about for 39 books, starting in about Genesis 3, 15, the Christ.

[34 : 01] And so anybody reading that book would be like, yep, he's the one. Yep, he's the one. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of God-written prophecy? If you don't, you missed it.

You need to know that. Do you have eternal life? Have you grown? Has your faith in God and his word grown through this study in the book of John? And I was going to ask questions, but I ran out of time.

How has the growth affected the way you live, the way you think, the way you talk, and the way you act? And I'll tell you this, honestly, from the bottom of my heart.

I don't want us to be a Bible study in church. I want us to be a Bible living church. I don't want us to be a, we got big heads and little bitty feet.

We know a whole bunch of junk, but we don't do much of it. I don't want us to say, man, we went, man, we go through the Bible to our church. Bless God. We all got notebooks and everything. We mark Bible.

[35 : 00] We mark our Bible. That's not what it's about. It's about, did it get in you? Is God working in you? Holy Spirit said, John, tell him, tell him in this verse why I wrote the book.

And John says, I'll just go ahead and tell you guys, there's a whole lot of stories that Jesus, stories about what Jesus did, and miracles. And truly he did those. But I picked these that you might know.

There it is. That he is the, that you might believe that he is the Christ. Jesus is the Christ, the son of God and believing in his name. You might have life.

Father, I love you. I pray that you'd bless and work and magnify yourself. I thank you for this church. Thank you for the opportunity to share this passage. And I'll give you glory and praise for all that you do.

In Jesus' name, Amen. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.

[36 : 08] www.visionbaptist.com.