That You May Believe

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Preacher: John Lowrie

[0:00] to the singers, to Lindsay for doing the kids talking, for Gordon for leading us. I really enjoyed Wednesday night hearing from various ministries, especially those in the church who are involved in this church, but you have an interest in God's work in another mission society.

So can I encourage you every time there's Wednesday of the month, if you can make it along to that, that will be good for your soul as well as praying for that ministry as we're on on Wednesday evening. This morning we're going to begin a new series in the Gospel of John, and if you know anything about my ministry, when you begin a new series in a book, you'd very seldom begin at chapter 1, verse 1. You look, first of all, what is this book? What's the main thrust of this book? And having understood that, that then becomes the backdrop for every sermon that comes from that. That means you're preaching God's Word. The preacher has no right to read a passage and just say interesting things about it. We preach the Word. We preach what is here. We make plain what is here.

Now, John's Gospel makes very plain why he's writing, makes life easy for the preacher because he tells us why he is writing, and that will form the theme for all our sermons. So turn with me, please, to John chapter 20. It's the first sermon, but we're not beginning at chapter 1, verse 1. We'll look at that in a few weeks' time. I'm not preaching next Sunday morning, but the following Sunday, we will begin to look at the text of John's Gospel. But this morning, we're going to read from chapter 20 and verse 19. And this will set the tone or the backdrop to all the sermons we will hear in John's Gospel. John chapter 20, and we'll read together from verse 19.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. After he said this, he showed them his hands and sighed. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

[2:07] Again Jesus said, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. And with that, he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. Now Thomas, also known as Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. A week later, his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe. Thomas said to him,

My Lord and my God. Then Jesus told him, Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

We'll end our reading there. Let's come before God. Let's ask for his help. Our loving Heavenly Father, we come to you this morning. We thank you for this service, for the singing, Lord, for the fellowship that we enjoy together, for the public prayers.

Lord, we come in this point of our service, and we ask that you would speak to us from your Word. Lord, we would see Jesus. We would want to see him afresh. Lord, we in many ways forget about ourself and concentrate on him and worship him. For as we were reminded, Lord, he is our true superhero.

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He is the only one who is worthy of all praise and glory and honor. So, Father, we pray, Lord, as we embark on this new series looking at this Gospel of John. Help us, Father, to understand it. Help us to understand why he has written this book in your Bible. So, Father, lead us and guide us, we pray. [4:39] Speak to us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. I wonder when you were growing up, if you had a nickname. I never really had a nickname. Nicknames would have been good. I don't know, maybe that's a discussion far over coffee, isn't it? You can be brave enough to tell folk your high school or primary school nickname. I was known as Big Stinky or something. Whatever, if you're brave enough to do that type of thing. I never really had a nickname.

I think one of my mates used to call me Jake for some reason. Sometimes I use it as a password for various websites. Jake, how you doing, Jake? I know people that, I remember one family, one of their friends gave birth to a boy, and they called him Sam or something.
They didn't like it because it only had one syllable, and I'm John, and I think that's crying out for a nickname. So I don't know if you had any nicknames. Nicknames can be quite endearing.
It might focus on something you're good at, and they give you a nickname, and you think, that's great, I like that nickname. Other nicknames can be less so. They can be quite derogatory, and you'd rather not have those kind of nicknames.
Maybe you're still getting counseling for the nickname that you went through school with, but I'd love to know if you had a nickname, you can tell me that. This morning we read in this passage somebody who had a nickname in a sense, or he got a nickname, or we remember him with a nickname, Doubting Thomas.
[6:14] It's a time in his life when he doubted the Lord, and that one incident made him have that nickname in that sense. We call people sometimes, you can be a right Doubting Thomas, and relating to him, I'm sure he's in glory thinking, wow, what have I done?

I'm living with this name the whole time. Indeed, Jesus contributed to Thomas' nickname. He was the one who said to him, Stop doubting and believe.
And then he stuck with this nickname, Doubting Thomas. The truth is, each one of us could justify the name Doubting John, Doubting whatever.
None of us always fully trust the Lord. So although we might look at Thomas, and yet he was the one that would lay his life down for the Lord, many of us, even as Christians, have doubts, we have fears, we have anxieties.
And you might be here this morning, Christian, for many years, maybe something is looming large this week, or maybe in the future, and you're doubting, you're fearful, you're anxious, and that's a nickname that you could take upon yourself.
[7:28] And the Lord would say to each one of us, John, stop doubting and believe. And that's what we're doing this morning. We're going to begin a new series in the Gospel of John.

Now, why the Gospel of John? Now, let me explain to you the difference between the Gospels, because that helps explain the difference. In a moment or two, I'll show you a chart, but not just now.
The Gospels, the Gospel according to John, the Gospel according to Matthew, whatever, is good news. The word means good news. It's the good news according to these Gospels.
They're written, each of the Gospels are written for a specific purpose. to a specific people. The writer sitting down, he's not just trying to recall everything he can about Jesus.
He did this, then he did that, then he did that, and then Mark comes along, and he forgets some of the stuff, and he puts us in. That's not how the Gospels are put together. Matthew.
[8:27] Matthew's Gospel, he's writing to Jews primarily, that he wants to show them that Jesus is their promised King. The theme of kingship is very big in Matthew's Gospel, that Jesus is the son of David, promised years ago to sit on the throne of David.

The topic of the kingdom is big for Matthew, and he orders his teaching very orderly, and he quotes many Old Testament passages. It's a big thing for him.
It's obviously a good Gospel to give to Jewish people, as Matthew teaches who Jesus is from a very Jewish perspective. Now, Mark's Gospel is quite different.
His theme is the servant of God. He's writing to Romans and Gentiles. He presents Jesus as a man of action, action man, a bit like the superheroes we had.
He emphasizes Jesus' actions more than his teaching, his deeds, his miracles. And not only that, he has Jesus running through the Gospel, basically.

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[9:38] There's a word that he uses all the time. If you're using the authorized version, I'd love to know if you can guess what the word is. It's the word straightway in the authorized.

But in our versions, immediately. You'll find that often. Jesus did this, immediately did that. Then he did that. Then he did that. The dust doesn't settle in Jesus. He wants to present Jesus as someone impressive.
He has all hit a lot of his miracles there. It's a good book, good Gospel, to give to people in our culture that are easily bored. Why should I consider?
They might be bogged down in Old Testament prophecies in Matthew. They might struggle with that. But Mark's Gospel is a bit easier. Now, Luke's Gospel. If Luke tells his story quickly, Luke tells his story to perfection.
He's a GP, he's a doctor. He writes a historical, orderly account of Luke. He says this, and right at the beginning of his Gospel, many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us.
[10:44] And then he talks about being eyewitnesses. I myself have carefully investigated everything, and it seemed good to me to write an orderly account that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

It's a good book to give to somebody who's quite analytical, and so forth. His theme is Jesus, not so much as the son of David, but the son of man.
His genealogy doesn't go back to just to David, but goes back to Adam. And that should relate to you and I. What about before David and Abraham?
We are interested in a descendant who comes from Adam, who's one of us, and he does that. Luke is also a people person. Doctors, nurses are people people. So in Luke's Gospel, he has Jesus meeting loads of people, especially the marginalized, especially people like prostitutes, slaves, widows, tax collectors, women, people who society in that day didn't have much time for.
Luke, the physician, people person, records Jesus meeting people. It's a good book to give to people in our society, perhaps who are marginalized, say you might want to read the Gospel of Luke.
[12:06] They will encounter Jesus meeting people, and it's a very real thing. And, but what about the overlap? Here's a chart that shows the link between each other.

I don't expect you to take this in, but you look at the Mark, unique to Mark, tiny, tiny, wee bit that Mark has there. And you look at various things, unique to Matthew, 20%, 35% is unique to them. Relatively small portions. They draw on each other in many ways. Basically, 90% of Mark is included in Matthew, and they draw on each other.
They're called the synoptic Gospels. Synoptic just means, well, optic means optic, C to C, opticians. Syn, S-Y-N, means together in Greek.
So, these three Gospels are seen together. That's why they're called the synoptic Gospels. There's a lot of common ground between these three Gospels. Now, John's Gospel is very different.
[13:16] Here is a Venn diagram. I love Venn diagrams here, my favorite diagram. And what an image to find. If only I had a handy Venn diagram, and then you find an image with this.

Venn diagrams show the overlapping without the numbers. The numbers don't mean much, but you look at Mark. A lot of Mark is included in Matthew. A lot of Luke is, almost half is included in Matthew.
It shows you just the overlap between them. But look at John's Gospel. John's Gospel has 92% that isn't included in any of the other Gospels.
That's why he's not one of the seen together Gospels, the synoptic Gospels. Those three are quite similar. John's Gospel is quite different.
And it's very unique to him. Now, what is John's Gospel all about? What's his purpose in writing? John tells us in the passage we read Look at verse 13 and 31.
[14:19] Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded. I've not recorded everything he says, but these are written. In other words, I've written what I have written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

In the books of James and Philippians and other books, there's always been a verse that you might shine like stars that he chose to give as birth in the book of James.

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Verse 31 is the key verse in the Gospel of John. He tells us why he's writing. He's writing that you may believe. He wants to present Jesus to us to get us to believe in him or to trust in him.
And that's what he wants to do. His purpose is very much apologetic and evangelistic. He wants to present a glorious Jesus that we go, wow, and we want to believe in him and we want to trust in him daily.
In other words, as Jesus says to Thomas, Thomas, stop doubting and believe. That is John's purpose in writing this whole thing.
[15:35] To get us to stop doubting, to stop doubting Jesus and who he is, to recognize who he is and to trust in him. He's not just there to educate us, to give us a historical Jesus.

He's there to give us a theological Jesus. It's quite something. So his purpose, our purpose, is the same as John's purpose for writing. That's the purpose of this series, that we might consider Jesus as we go through the Gospel of John to get us to trust in him more, to love him more, to believe in him more.
These are written, verse 31, that you may believe. John, there's some debate. Is who is John actually writing to? Is it Christians or non-Christians?
Basically, it's both. Mostly, perhaps, to non-Christians to get them to believe for the first time. For those of us who already believe, it's to get us to trust in him more and to walk with him more.
So it's probably both. And that's what John wants us to know, who this Jesus is, to believe and trust in him. The purpose of studying this is to present a fresh vision of Jesus.
[16:49] Here's another image. I'll be surprised if anybody knows what this is. You can come and see me afterwards. John, I knew who that was. That's from Star Trek. That is a Romulan bird of prey.

There, you've learned something this morning. That's what that looks like. What's good about this is Captain Jean-Luc Picard or whatever is sitting on the deck and he's looking out.
All he sees is stars. There's nothing there, Captain. Everything's fine. The thing about this, this ship can cloak itself. It's probably one of its best things.
There's nothing there, Captain. Everything's hunky-dory. And then, lo and behold, it decloaks itself. It has to decloak itself in order to fire its weapons. So, when you think everything's safe, suddenly it decloaks itself and you're left with this.
Wow. Look at this Romulan bird of prey. What John is doing, he is decloaking Jesus for us. The other, Luke makes Jesus very accessible.
[17:51] He's your friend. He's the one who understands. He's your buddy who will go through life. John doesn't do that with Jesus. He decloaks him. You think you know Jesus, I'm going to decloak him.

And you'll go, wow, I've never seen that. I never really realized Jesus is so impressive. And that is what John is all about.
So, let's look at this. Before we start to look at the text in a few weeks' time on John chapter 1, verse 1, let's unpack very briefly, and it is just very briefly, verse 31.
Because that's his purpose, that we might believe and trust in Jesus. Now, what does he say? Don Carson, if you're wanting a commentary on the Gospel of John, there really is only one commentary you need.
It's Don Carson's book on the Gospel of John. We don't need another commentary ever again. His is the best commentary. And it's quite a weighted book, but it's readable, and it's quite technical at times, but it's a good book.
[18:54] He says in this verse, he says, to expound in detail just that one verse would be to try and expound the whole book. And that makes sense, because this is the main, his main teaching in this verse is really what the book's all about, that you may believe.

Believe what? He mentions three things, and we're going to look at those three things very quickly. They will be unpacked, of course, over the weeks that lie ahead. So, what does John want us to know?
What does he want us to believe? First of all, that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah. That is the first point. He wants us to believe that Jesus is the Christ.
He mentions this here. These things are written that you may believe that Jesus, what, is the Messiah, or is the Christ. Depending on the version, I'm using the 2011 version of the NIV, which says, Messiah, the ESV uses the word Messiah.

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If you have an earlier version of the NIV, it will say Christ as well. For us, the title Christ and Messiah is strange to our ears. If you went round this housing estate and says, I'm here to tell you Jesus is the Messiah or the Christ, their eyes would be glazing over.
[20:06] They would just be, really, what's that got to do with me? Not remotely interested in those phrases. Don't mean anything. Mean something to a Jew. The people in Jesus' days were longing for the Messiah, longing for the Christ.

Luke mentions this. The people were waiting expectedly and were all wondering in their hearts if John, John the Baptist, might be the Messiah, might be the Christ.
John mentions this in chapter 4. We'll eventually come to that. Come see a man who told me everything I did. Women at the well. Could this be the Christ? They were waiting on the Christ.
What does it mean? It's basically the title for our Lord, the Savior and Redeemer. Christ basically means that He is the anointed, the chosen of God.
He is God's man. He is the one sent from God. Christ is basically the Greek translation of the Hebrew word rendered, Messiah.
[21:09] They're in many ways that are interchangeable. It's the official title of the Lord, the chosen one of God, the anointed of God, God's man, as it were. You'll find it 514 times in the New Testament.

It's such an important thing. He is the anointed, the consecrated one sent from God to function as prophet, priest, and king, to teach us about God, to be the sacrifice for our sin, to bring in the kingdom.
These great themes in the Old Testament are all fulfilled in Jesus. And a sign of His coming will be miracles. The miracles will be the sign.
Lindsay mentioned this, didn't they, that the power of Jesus and the things that He can do. John will mention this in chapter 7, verse 31. Still many in the crowd put their faith in Him.
They said, when the Christ comes, will He do more miraculous signs than this man? In other words, look at the miracles. Jesus says this, if you don't believe Me, look at the miracles.
[22:14] The miracles testify that I am God's man. I am chosen by Him. He mentions, if you don't believe Me, believe the miracles. They were a sign that God's anointed was among them, the Messiah, the Christ.

that miracles would have been one sign of this. Jesus is the Christ, prophesied. His genealogy shows that He is the Christ.
That's what Matthew emphasizes in chapter 1. There were 14 generations in all from Abraham to David, 14 from David to the exile in Babylon, and 14 from the exile to the Christ.
In other words, he says, Jesus is the Christ. He presents His material in this way. Jesus owned the title for Himself. Remember, near the end, before He's crucified, the high priest, I charge you, under oath, by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.
Yes, it is, as you say. He is the Christ. He demonstrated this by His miracles and so forth. He fulfilled the role of Christ, God's chosen.
[23:23] That is so important. We take that for granted. But when we're trying to get people to consider Jesus, and maybe even us, even when we doubt, we remember that He is God's chosen.

He's not just a man like Muhammad who elevates himself or whatever, who studied, who's a great rabbi, who's a great teacher. He is God's man.
He is prophesied. He comes to be the Savior and the Redeemer. There is only one Christ. There is only one way, truth, and life.
John will mention this. Jesus alone is God's anointed. He is the Christ. Secondly, Jesus is the Son of God.
Jesus is the Son of God. These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, God's chosen. He comes as prophet, priest, and king. But this one who is chosen by God is more than a man.
[24:22] He is the Son of God. He's greater than Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel. He's not just someone who was born in Bethlehem and God just chose him. He has to emphasize that he is the Messiah, God's man.

Listen to him. Consider what his life and his death. But he is the Son of God. For Jesus to be the Christ, to be prophet, priest, and king, he has to be the Son of God.

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He has to be God, the Son. Because only God can really reveal God. People can try, but only God can fully reveal God.
And only God can really deliver his people. In the Exodus, in the Old Testament, only God, that's why you have these plagues to show that they didn't deliver themselves. God did this.
Only God can save you. Only God can bear the wrath of God. No man could bear the wrath of God on the cross. Man has to die for his own sin.
[25:26] Jesus has to be the spotless Lamb of God, the perfect Lamb of God. He has to be God. Otherwise, we are not saved. We'll unpack this later on. He has to be the Son of God.

For the Jews, the Messiah, and the Son of God, in many ways, were synonymous. Psalm 2, you know that great passage, I will proclaim the decree of the Lord. He said to me, You are my son. Today I have become your father. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations, your inheritance, the ends of the earth. For Jews, most of them would have been thinking Jesus is also the Son of David. For some, he was only the Son of David. It's true, he is the Son of David, but it's only partially true. He is a descendant of David. He was promised the kingship of David, but he is more than a man. He is the Son of God. Jesus, you remember, I was reading this this week, funny enough, so I've included it because it's very relevant. Matthew 22, all the people are asking Jesus questions.
[26:31] What about this? What about Caesar the coin? Should we pay taxes? Should we not pay taxes? Jesus answers all our questions and they marvel. And then Jesus comes to the Pharisee and he says, I'm going to ask you a question.

This is a question while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, what do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he? The son of David, they replied.
He said to them, how is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord? For he says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.
If David then calls him Lord, how can he be his son? So, John wants to take this. He is more than the son of David. He is the son of God. He is God the son.
This is the one that we are considering. And that is the difference between John and the other three Gospels. The other three Gospels look at Jesus' life and although they don't record everything exactly the same, they record Jesus' life chronologically.
[27:34] They talk about Jesus' birth, then his baptism, then his early church ministry, then his later ministry, then going to Jerusalem and dying on the cross.

Now, John misses out most of Jesus' earthly ministry. There's hardly any. Jesus, for him, there's no genealogy, there's no birth, there's no baptism, there's no calling the disciples.
Most of John's Gospel relates to just the last two weeks of Jesus' life, his death. His purpose in doing this is to show that we are considering somebody very special.
But he does comment on his origin, but it's not Bethlehem. He takes it back even further. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning. I mean, he begins his Gospel with a bang. I mean, how do you unpack this? See, as a preacher, you go, this is one of these passages that just blows your mind.
[28:42] That is the God we are considering, God the Son. Not just he was born in Bethlehem through Mary and Joseph. John says, woof, I'm going away. Not just to David, or not just to Adam.

I'm showing you where he began long before that. He was with God in the beginning. So, he's not presenting Jesus in a chronological way.
Some people look at John's Gospel and say, it doesn't make sense. He has Jesus doing this, and any has him doing that? And other Gospels say that that happened before that. John's all over the place.
Can we really trust his Gospel? Now, John isn't presenting his material chronologically. He's not interested so much in a historical Jesus. He's not writing a biography of Jesus.
He's writing a theological account. He wants to show this particular miracle at this particular time. He wants to show the signs. Signs are a big thing for John. You will hear that a lot.
[29:40] He'll talk about signs. He wants to show. He wants to explain. He wants to decloak Jesus and show that in the very last chapter of the Gospel of John, you can read that, verses 24 and 25, testifies to these things and who wrote them down.

We know his testimony is true. Jesus did many. Every one were written down. I suppose even the whole world would not have room for the books that were written. Looking back, but presenting a theological Jesus, a Jesus in all his glory.

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I read the Gospel of John. I read Billy Graham. I read loads of books, A Cross and the Switchblade. and all this before I became a Christian. What really had an impact on me was John's Gospel.
I think I've said, he only read John's Gospel because he's the same name as me, John. I'll read John. Why read Matthew, Mark, and Luke? I'm John. I'll read that. But you encounter somebody very different, very different.
And although I didn't believe, I remember thinking, if this person is real, he deserves to be followed. You deserve to lay down your life for this man better than following any footballer or movie star or any career or any course of life.
[30:52] If he came to me at that point and says, John, I am real. Follow me. I would have done it. I still wasn't saved. I still couldn't get it. I still hadn't repented and believed. But even as I'm reading the Gospel, I loved reading it in the train from Glasgow through to Motherwell.

And I'd read it. I'd just read a passage. I'd have a wee think about it. And I wasn't reading the Daily Record. I was reading something very different, encountering somebody who's very different.
For me, if I can get somebody, a non-Christian, to read anything, it won't be the book of James or Philippians. It'll be John's Gospel. Read John. And you try and get a...
I used to hand out wee Gospels of John every chance I got. And if they don't have it... That's what's great about phones. You don't need to buy them. You can say to them, just go on, download a whole Bible, the ESV, free of charge, onto your phone, find the Gospel of John, read that.
It's on your phone. They'll know sitting embarrassed in the train as a non-Christian with a big dusty book, The Gospel of John. I had that experience with Celtic supporters coming on at Bridgestone, thinking, I'm reading the Gospel of John.
[31:59] What are these guys going to think of me? It's got the Gospel of John on it. I put it away. The Lord used that for my conversion, showing me I was ashamed of him before I became a Christian. You're not really interested in me.

You're just playing at this. I remember thinking, God, if you're there, forgive me. Forgive me. Read the Gospel of John. It's very, very powerful. That's what Salvador Dali, some of the commentators say that John's Gospel is very different from the other three.
John has Jesus striding, the wee phrase he uses, striding one inch above the ground. In other words, he's not really human. He's levitate. He's very different. And that's why, you remember I showed you the picture of Salvador Dali, St. John of the Cross.
The cross is floating above the ground. He's not just a man. But he is grounded. He's real man. But he is the Son of God.
And that's what John's Gospel, it's all about Jesus. Not so much about what he did, but who he is, his person, and his work. And that is why it's very, very important.
[33:06] The Gospel of John was very important to the early church, especially the councils. Who is this Jesus? Who does he have to be when they're forming theology and doctrines, trying to pull all of the Scriptures together?

When they were confused about who Jesus is, John's Gospel was great. If you go wrong in the person of Jesus, this is where cults, this is where JWs fall short, where they say, well, is he really the Son of God?
He has to be the Son of God. He has to be God the Son, equal with the Father in essence. All things were created by him and for him, through him. He is before all things, all things consist in him, hold together in him.
If you do away with the person of Jesus, the deity of Jesus, you're left with no good news. We have no good news. So, John's Gospel was as key for theology regarding the person and work.
of Jesus. He is very, very impressive. Jesus is not fully comprehensible and we still need to realize that.
[34:12] So, that's our purpose. Our purpose is to get us, as we do this series, to stop doubting and to begin to be in awe of Jesus once again.

As I said to you before, my ministry up to this point has very much been, God loves you, hugs you, hold me. You might come every Sunday and go, hug me, squeeze me, I'm having a hard time. A fresh vision of Jesus is what we need.
If you can't be excited by Jesus, you might as well pull the shutters down, lock the doors, and just sell the building. Sell your tellies, do whatever. Don't bother turning up. We need to, if we can't be excited by Jesus in this life, there is nothing that will excite us.

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So, pray for this series as we work through this. So, Jesus is the one who will be presented. Thomas, when he encountered Jesus, after his doubt and his unbelief, stopped doubting and believe, what did he say in verse 28?
My Lord and my God. That's quite a statement. In a culture where you had to worship Caesar as emperor and as God, that was one of the phrases that Jesus, Caesar is Lord, Caesar is God.
[35:28] We don't have to do this. We don't have to say the prime minister or somebody's God or Jesus. We don't have to do, you're not arrested and thrown in prison.

But in those days, you had to bow down. You had to worship other gods. Therefore, to testify and say, my Lord and my God, is quite a very powerful apologetic.
And then that's what's happening here. JWs deny Christ. They are, they have the spirit of anti-Christ. They are against Christ.
We are for Christ. We understand who he is in and of his person. So, throughout this gospel, John wants to present Jesus. I write these things that you may believe what?
Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed, the chosen of God. We will see that throughout John's gospel. Secondly, that he is God. And this should help us believe and trust in him.
[36:26] But the other reason is, thirdly, Jesus is the life giver. He is the one who gives life. I write these things that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing these first two points, you may have life in his name.

You never have eternal life if you don't believe the first two. JWs don't have eternal life because they don't believe the first two. They might believe point one. They do not believe point two.
Jesus is the Son of God. And this is why this is so important. He, first of all, he is the giver of life. Eternal life is very important for John.
Life. Here's another chart. This is my last chart that I'm going to show you. Forget the total at the end. Go to the kingdom column. Look at Matthew 55 times. Matthew mentions kingdom.
Kingdom is big for Matthew. Jesus is the king, the anointed of God. Matthew mentions it 20 times. 90% of Mark, sorry, is in Matthew.
[37:30] Luke 46, John 5. It's not a big topic for John. The kingdom. But look at life. Matthew mentions it 7, Mark 4, Luke 5, John 36 times.

And then you look down at John's letters, even Hebrews, James, Peter, Jude. Don't mention it very many times. John, once again, in his letters, life is big.
It's a big topic. Revelation, it's big in Revelation. But life is a big topic. You will find the topic life in John's gospel. He's not just telling us theological facts.
As I say, it's evangelistic. He wants to save people. He wants us to trust in him that we may have life. He mentions this right at the very beginning. All things were made through him.
Without him, nothing was made that's been made. In him was life. Verse 4. There's only four verses in, and he's mentioning right away. He's mentioning he's the Son of God.
[38:31] He is anointed of God. Even in his first four verses, he takes verse 31 and says, boom, this is why I'm writing this. And it's very important. He mentions two aspects to this life.

First of all, eternal life. Duration. Jesus is not one, he's one who brings eternal life. Duration. Jesus is the only way.
There's only one way. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He mentions this. John 3.16, the verse we quote all the time, God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son.
Whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have what? Eternal life. It's a big, big topic. John's very strong in this. I used to quote, and never, as a young Christian, quoted John 3.16, never, without quoting John 3.36.
I always quoted that. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, reiterating 3.16. But whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.
[39:36] You either have eternal life or you have wrath. There is nothing in between. It is that. And John is strong in this. That's why he's writing.

It's apologetic. It's evangelistic. You need eternal life. You need to be back before God. His other letter, 1 John 5. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.
That's why he wrote 1 John. He's very much interested in life, eternal life. It's in his gospel. It's in his letter. He writes to Christians, I'm writing all these things that you may know that you have eternal life.

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We were looking at that topic last week, the eternal security of believers, that you might know you have eternal life. It's a faith to die for, in other words.
This is a faith. You die, you get eternal life. You die to yourself. So, he's interested in life, that you may have life in his name.
[40:38] So, it's eternal life, but it's also full and abundant life. Life now, quality of life, not just duration, but quality. Great verse, John 10, 10.

You should know this. The thief comes to steal and to destroy. Jesus says, I have come that they may have life and have it to the full, or abundantly, depending on the version that you want.
Jesus wants to give us joy and peace in believing. Not, I'm saved in 1960. Life is hard. It's just miserable. I know I'll probably smile in glory, but I'm not smiling today.
Life is just hard. The weather's rubbish. Scotland's this. Blah, blah, blah. It is life. Life now. Stop doubting and believe. The Christian life, I'll mention this probably tonight, was never designed to make us miserable.
To bore us senseless. It's not meant to do that. I think if we're bored, it's our fault. I look out some mornings, and some of you are struggling to keep awake.
[41:42] I see it. I see it. Look at yourself. Come to me and say, John, you're boring me to death. Remember I said this. Wake up. Misses, can you wake up your husband?

You put him to sleep. You wake him up. I recognize that pastors can do this. Preachers can do this. And I say, I am coming out with the deep things, but I'm presenting it in a way. It's boring. That for me is an unforgivable sin.
Don't bore people. But if others are lapping it up and thinking, Jesus is great. Whoop-de-doo. High five. I've got life. But I'm dozing off. Ask yourself why that is.
Be a part of the doctor. Maybe you need a tablet. Maybe there's something. Maybe your water levels, your urine levels are not functioning as they should. There might be that reason.
But maybe it's just you. You're carnally minded. And if I was up here with a pair of speedos on singing Knees Up Mother Brown, that would keep you awake. We're too carnally minded. So as we begin this series, come for life to encounter Jesus afresh in his glory.
[42:48] And to think of that. Because life is in Jesus' name. That's what he says. That you may have life in his name. In his name. His name is, we talk about so-and-so's name is mud.

If somebody says, that his name's mud. You're not going to invite him for your dinner, are you? You think they're mud. Forget it. Don't go near him. Name says everything about a person. He's got a good name. Name in Bible times means everything.
And it's in his name. What does that mean? It's in his person. It's in his work. And that's why John will unpack life in his name. It's all about him. It's about his person and work.
He will do this to two people. He wants people to believe who have never believed in the first instance. Non-Christians. That you may believe and have life in his name.
Life for the first time. It's also for those who have already professed faith. Who already have eternal life. But we're doubting. But we're not walking as we should. And his desire is also to counsel God's people.
[43:52] To show us afresh who Jesus is. So it's evangelistic. But it's also pastoral in nature as well. To come to him. So that's John's gospel. These are written that you may believe.

That Jesus is the Messiah. The Son of God. That by believing you may have life in his name. The backdrop to this series will be that you may believe.
That is the series. That is why every passage we look at. It will be to produce a response. In non-Christians. And in Christians. To encounter Jesus for the first time.
Or for the 400th and first time. That we will believe in him. Trust in him. As John presents this fresh vision of him. So in a couple of weeks time.
We'll begin at chapter 1 verse 1. Appreciate your prayers for that. If I had the tongue of an angel. I could hardly do that passage justice. It's a big passage. But he begins with a bang.
[44:47] We will begin with a bang. Two weeks from now. We're going to sing an old song. I don't know why this song came to mind. Come thou long expected Jesus.

We thank you for this book that we have in the Bible. We thank you for the gospel of John. We thank you for the way in which he was led by the Spirit. To present Lord. A glorious account of his person.

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And his work. Father as we embark on our study of this book. We pray Lord. That we will thrill. At the prospect of a fresh vision of Jesus. Lord. To see him in his glory.
And Lord. That we might stop doubting. And believe. Lord. Forgive us Lord. If we are doubting Thomas. Lord. Help us to see him as he is.
Lord. Open our eyes. Remove the scales from our eyes. Even this week. Lord. Help us to walk into this week. With the Lord himself. We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[45:44] Thank you folks. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.■ Thank you.

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