

LIFE GROUP GUIDE

The Gospel of John

John 20:30-31



11.5.2023

SCRIPTURE:

John 20:30-31

SERMON NOTES:

Last week we had the privilege of Dr. Mohler preaching for us again. He did such a fantastic job. He preached through John 20:24-29. It is the story of Jesus' appearance to Thomas. One of the points that Dr. Mohler made that I have never connected until he said it is that the Thomas scene is the climax of John's Gospel. Our passage today is a summary of that purpose, but it follows the confession of Thomas. The whole Gospel of John has been driving us from Chapter 1 to recognize that Jesus is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. It has been driving us to see that "to all who believed in His name He gave the right to become children of God." Salvation is found only in Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Thomas says to Jesus, after his previous doubt about Jesus being alive, "My Lord, and my God."

Thomas confesses that the crucified and risen Christ is Lord and God. The Word made flesh is none other than the Eternal God. Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity who came into the world? Why? To save sinners. To rescue and redeem the lost. To bring forth a kingdom that will never end.

After capturing that story about Thomas, John puts the finishing touches on it by telling us plainly why he wrote his Gospel. We unpacked these verses today.

Exegesis of John 20:30-31

VS 30 -- Now Jesus did many other sign in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book'

John wants his readers to know that the things they have read are not the full scope of everything Jesus ever did. Just think about the number of conversations and interactions they had with Jesus and watched Him have with others. John is telling us that they saw other signs, meaning, other evidence that Jesus is "Lord and God." John has captured a lot of evidence and signs. Matthew, Mark, and Luke captured many in their Gospel accounts that were written roughly 25 years (give or take) before John's Gospel. The four of them have compiled eyewitness accounts of the words and works of Jesus. But they did not, and could not, capture everything He did. Which is a fascinating thing to consider.

VS 31 -- 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 told us that he has not written everything that Jesus ever did that displayed His glory and identity, but these things are written, meaning the things he wrote in his Gospel, so that you may believe Jesus is the Christ.

John wrote his Gospel with an aim and purpose that he is not hiding. He is very clear on his intent. He wants readers to have the chance to experience the words and works of Jesus through his account, so that they too may believe He is the Christ.

That phrase "the Christ" is a Messianic term. This is the title for the long-expected Jewish Messiah. Remember, throughout the Old Testament is the promise of One who is coming in the name of the Lord. He will be from the seed of the woman to crush the head of the serpent. He will be a child of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, from the lineage of David, a Suffering Servant, the true King who will be the light of the nations, the child born, a son given, and the government shall be on His shoulder, His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. This is the Christ. This is the long-expected Savior and King. The Son of Man whose coming is from Ancient of Days. John lets his readers know that the One he is writing about is that One. Jesus is Him. He is the Christ.

He is the Son of God. This term is another term for the Messiah. Remember, in John 1:49, Jesus encounters Nathaniel and tells him that He saw him under the fig tree before Philip called to him. This leads Nathaniel to declare, "Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" The Messiah. John recounts this story as early as John 1, and throughout the book proves it. Then reminds us in our text today, that was his aim. To prove this to you.

But why? Why does he want us to believe this? Because believing this marvelous truth is the way by which we inherit eternal life. Sinners are saved by believing upon Jesus. Believing in Jesus is how our sins are forgiven and eternal life secured. John writes so that you have enough evidence yourself to believe these things about Jesus and follow Him.

These are incredible verses. You can say that these two verses summarize the purpose of why John wrote this book. It went out to Jews and Gentiles. It was used to strengthen the faith of believers who had audibly heard the story of Jesus and the gospel message, but it also went to people who had never heard. John's aim is to help birth faith through the hearing of the truth.

Application:

Now, these verses raise some particular kinds of questions that I think would be helpful for us to answer and work through:

"How do we know the stories of Jesus really happened?"

You see, for vast majority of people who would read John's Gospel, none of them would have ever been eyewitnesses to the things that Jesus did during His earthly ministry: the teachings, the healings,

the casting out of demons, the signs and wonders like raising Lazarus, walking on water, and more. All they have is the testimony of others who witnessed them firsthand.

Thomas had the luxury of seeing Jesus in the flesh, pierced hands and side, but 99.9% of all people after them would not get that opportunity. Instead, they would believe on the basis of the testimonies of people like Thomas, John, and the other apostles. Does that make it less valid? By no means. Eyewitness testimony is the basis for so many things in society. It always has been. The Bible required, and justice still requires, that accusations be verified by multiple witnesses. The Bible assumes witness testimony is trustworthy unless proven otherwise by previous misbehavior and impeached credibility.

The theologian (354-430 AD), Augustine, one of the most important philosophers and theologians in history, wrote about the importance of testimony to generating sound beliefs. He emphasized the importance of recognizing that if we had to personally see or touch every single thing in order to generate a truthful belief about it, we'd be very limited in our beliefs. It is necessary that we are able to accept credible testimony in forming beliefs. The example he gave, that is relevant to almost everyone hear, is about the paternity of his parents. He had no way to know outside of their testimony that he was the son and daughter of those parents. Now, today, we can get DNA tests, but I imagine most of you haven't. Why? You believe the testimony of your parents when they tell you that you belong to them or when they describe the events of your birth. You have a belief formed on testimony, not scientific evidence.

Christianity is passed to us through eyewitness testimony. This is how we come to hear and know about the work of God in sending His Son, Jesus, into the world to save sinners. He lived, he died, and rose again. How do we know? Because a lot of people witnessed it. And their lives were changed forever as a result. And they gave themselves on His command to go and tell others, so that they too may believe.

"Why do we follow what is written in a book by men?"

This is often a question believers ask, and sometimes it is an accusation that unbelievers assert. Isn't the Bible a book written by men? Yes. Yes it is. But it is not a book MERELY written by men.

John tells us that he wrote his account. He wrote with an aim and purpose, meaning he thoughtfully determined a structure and flow. He chose certain events to include and exclude. Does this make it less God's Word? By no means. John wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21 -- For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Does this mean John was in a trance and his pen went on its own? No. The Spirit led John, directed his thoughts, and John wrote in the style and language of John. This is the same for other writers of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:15-16 -- and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Paul reminds Timothy to stay committed to the sacred writings that he had been acquainted with since childhood. What are the sacred writings of Scripture? In this case, the Old Testament because the New Testament was literally being written. But we see the model of a people who are committed to sacred writings. What does sacred mean? Not ordinary. Holy. Special. Why are they sacred or special? Paul answers that in the same verse when he says they “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” Through faith in Jesus, that’s first, the Scriptures can make you wise for salvation. In other words, the Scriptures reveal salvation to you as you put your faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul then describes for us what the sacred writings/Scripture really are: **breathed out by God**. They are God-breathed. What does that mean? They come from the very mouth of God. The Bible holds the Words of God.

If all Scripture is God breathed, how then did we get it in written form?

We have several examples in the Bible of God’s Words being put into written form. First, are examples of God Himself writing them:

Exodus 31:18 -- And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 32:16 -- The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

Exodus 34:1 -- The LORD said to Moses, "Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.

Second, are examples of God directing individuals to write His words:

Deuteronomy 31:9-10 -- Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them...(this law was deposited by the side of the ark of the covenant)

More was added to this book of God’s words by Joshua:

Joshua 24:26 -- And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

God commanded the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to write down His words:

Isaiah 30:8 -- *And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever.*

Jeremiah 30:2 -- *"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you.*

These are all examples in the Old Testament of God's Words being written down. But we have New Testament evidence as well.

John 14:26 -- *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

John 16:12-13 -- *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

1 Corinthians 14:37 -- *If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.*

2 Peter 3:1-3 -- *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.*

These passages, I hope, convincingly show that from Old to New Testament, the habit of writing down God's Words to his people, his prophets, and his apostles was commanded by God for the purposes of generations to come having this knowledge of God. These are God's Words, every last word of it, even though they are written by men. In fact, the reality that God used humans to write these makes them no less sacred or God-breathed. A couple of passages that affirm this. One of them is the 2 Peter 1 passage we read earlier about men writing as they were carried by the Spirit. Another is in from Paul:

1 Thessalonians 2:13 -- *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.*

Peter and Paul both, from these two passages, tell us that the words recorded in Scripture and the testimony put forward within them are not works of man, they are works of God. Men, carried by the Holy Spirit, penned the Words of God. This is how we can confidently and unequivocally say, "All Scripture is breathed out by God."

Yes, we follow the words of 66 books, written by many different authors, over the course of thousands of years, and we do so because they are the words of God. Our God speaks. And He speaks with words, even words written down by men.

"What kind of belief gives us eternal life?"

John says that his Gospel is written so that people who read it and study it may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, have life in His name. Belief and eternal life are connected here.

In fact, that is what the Gospel is about. The kind of belief that saves sinners and reconciles them to God isn't simply a knowledge or comprehension of the facts of the gospel. Belief implies trust. It is a trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Belief requires a dependence on Christ alone.

Demons understand the facts about Christ. They know Jesus is Lord. They know He is the Son of God. They believe that He is fully God and fully man. They understand He died on the cross and rose from the grave on the 3rd day. They know these things and believe these things. But that belief and knowledge isn't saving faith. The kind of belief John is writing to secure in our hearts is the belief that produces joy and confidence in God's grace and goodness because it understands Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient for them. There is nothing they can do to earn God's love. They are not accepted in and out of grace on the basis of how they performed on a given day. It is a simple childlike faith that what Jesus did was done for sinners who believe, and in believing they rest in the assurance of His love for them.

Let me go off-road for just a second on this point and mention something. Believers who land in different theological positions on subjects like Calvinism often dispute things with one another that are irrelevant in their carrying out the command of Jesus to take the gospel to people. For example, on a subject like this, we can debate and argue over the extent to which God grants belief. We can debate election from the foundation of the world. We can debate the ability to lose salvation. But let me show you why these are family debates and not something that should cause us to part ways from one another. Biblical Calvinists and non-Calvinists believe that true belief in Jesus is how anyone is saved. They both believe the gospel is to be shared with them and the call to believe should be extended. Both believe that when a sinner comes to faith in Jesus, they are saved. Both believe that faith must continue and endure to the end. Calvinists and non-Calvinists are lockstep on those issues, which means they can walk hand-in-hand with one another as they share the gospel and call people to faith. The inter-family debates are over what we think is happening behind the scenes. But that is silly to divide over. We agree on the main things. We all believe John wrote his account so those that hear it will believe and by believing they'll have life in Jesus' name. Period. No biblical Calvinists has a need to say, "yeah, if they're chosen." No biblical non-Calvinists has a reason to say, "yeah, and that belief is totally of their own will, not God's." It's just silly to make this a thing.

Okay, detour over.

There are three elements that saving faith contains: **knowing the facts of the gospel, comprehending the facts of the gospel, and trusting the facts of the gospel.** Are all three elements found in you today?

You have heard the facts about what God has done in giving Jesus, His Son, for our sins. I hope today you comprehend those facts. Then you truly recognize that sinners need a Savior because we are incapable of saving ourselves. Jesus alone paid the debt of sin. Do you comprehend that today? If so, the final question is this: what are you trusting in? Are you putting your trust in Jesus to be for you all your righteousness? Are you placing your faith in Jesus' death to be a substitute for you? That's the belief John is after today in your heart. In our hearts.

Saving faith endures to the end. Many display signs of temporary faith, but as Jesus taught, the cares of this world or Satan himself snatches the seeds. The Scriptures make clear that this faith must endure. And truthfully, apart from the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, the best any sinner could ever achieve is a temporary faith. There are too many challenges in this world.

Believe. And keep believing. Believe, and thank God for the gift of that faith. Believe, and ask the Lord to help you keep believing to the end. Believe, and join with a body of believers that can nourish that belief and help feed it. Believe, and in the end, we will inherit eternal life in His name. What an incredible promise we have in Jesus.

LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?

BUILD UP

- **REVIEW:**

- Read John 20:30-31 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
- What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
- Additional Scripture:
 - Hebrews 11:1
 - Galatians 2:20
 - John 6:47
 - John 5:24
 - Mark 16:15-16

- **REFLECT:**

- Why did John write his gospel?
- Why didn't John include the other signs that Jesus did?
- How do we know the stories of Jesus really happened?
- Can we trust the Bible if it was written by men?
- What kind of belief gives us eternal life?
- Why should we not allow the polarization of falling into one of two camps to separate us from fellowship with each other?

- **RESPOND:**

- Do you trust that the Bible is the very Word of God?
- Do you really trust that Jesus' death on the cross has completely paid for all of your sin? How is that reflected in the way you live?

- **MEDITATE:**

- John 20:30-31 - *30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 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.*

- **MEMORIZE:**

- Hebrews 11:1 - *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

SEND OUT

- **GROW:** How will you abide in Christ this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **GO:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER:**
 - Pray over any request from your group members.
 - Lead Pastor - **Erik Reed**
 - Ministry - **Kids Ministry**
 - **Pray for our long-term families on the field:**
 - The Wilsons

- The Grays
- The Starks
- **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
 - Kaesi
- **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG): Nepali in Malaysia**



- **Population in country:** 249,000
- **Global population:** 868,400
- **Christian Adherent:** 2.00%
- **Evangelical:** 1.80%
- **Primary Religion:** Hinduism
- **Primary Language:** Nepali
- **Summary:** Nepal, which is located between two giant nations, China and India, is a small land-locked country. Economically, Nepal is considered one of the least developed countries. Therefore, a considerable number of Nepalese work abroad due to the lack of employment within the country. The Nepalese migrant workers are people from Nepal who have come to Malaysia, especially urban areas, to earn more income. Most of the Nepalese who go abroad are educated males from middle class families.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray for Nepali followers of Christ to share his ways with those in Malaysia. Pray for the Nepali people in Malaysia to have a desire for spiritual truth that will lead them to the cross. Pray for many to find the Savior and tell of his glory to other Nepalis.
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