

# (John) John's Gospel

by Brian Brodersen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of shedding tradition and getting back to Jesus, and highlights the unique aspects of John's Gospel, including the deity of Christ and the intimacy of Jesus' conversations.*

**Duration:** 49:27

**Scripture:** John 1:47, John 14:15, John 14:26

**Topics:** "Spiritual Darkness", "Eternal Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing the spiritual component in everything and understanding that the spiritual realm is superior. He laments that many people are still in darkness despite the light of the world, Jesus, coming into the world. The preacher highlights the tragic incident in Saudi Arabia where pilgrims were trampled to death, illustrating the destructive nature of darkness. He also addresses those who may feel content and fulfilled in their worldly pursuits, but reminds them that they are spiritually dead and in need of Jesus' offer of life. The sermon concludes with an invitation for people to receive the Lord and find spiritual fulfillment.

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## Transcript

Let's open up tonight to the Gospel of John, as we begin our study this evening through the Gospel of John, and tonight looking at the Gospel of John from more of the overview kind of a look at it. There's an interesting phenomenon that has occurred in regard to Christianity. Many people in our culture and around the world have been troubled and turned off by the church.

They see the church as oppressive and hypocritical, but some of those very same people are intrigued by and even interested in Jesus Christ. They find Christians appalling, but Jesus appealing. What does that tell us? It tells us that the church has evidently done a poor job of representing the Lord.

I believe that if the church is going to have a significant and lasting impact on the world in this 21st century, we are going to have to shed a lot of our tradition and what you might call churchiness and get back to Jesus himself. He is the Christ, and every Christian ought to resemble him more and more with the passing of time. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul said this, but we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Here Paul tells us this. This is what he's saying. He's saying that as we behold the Lord, as we gaze upon him, we are transformed into his image.

That's what we are going to be doing as we study this wonderful gospel. We are going to be getting a fresh look at Jesus and seeing firsthand what God is like. That's what I believe the Lord wants to bring to us through this study of John's gospel.

He wants to bring to us just a fresh picture of himself. He wants us to just get a fresh new look at who he is. Now, each of the writers of the gospels had a different purpose in their writing, and that becomes clear as you get familiar with the gospels.

As you read through them, you start to realize that each one of them had just a slightly different perspective that they wanted to communicate. Matthew's purpose was to reveal Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, the son of David, the king of the Jews, and Matthew's gospel is very oriented toward the Jewish mindset. Mark's purpose was to present Jesus as the servant of the Lord.

Of course, the Roman Empire was made up primarily of servants, and it seems that Mark was seeking to communicate in some way to that portion of the population. Luke subtly highlighted the perfect humanity of Jesus, no doubt seeking to appeal to the Greek mind. But John's gospel, much different than the other three, as you perhaps have noticed in reading through it, a different perspective.

John's gospel reveals more than any other the deity of Christ. The deity of Christ is a way of speaking about the fact that Jesus Christ is not simply a perfect man, but he is what you might call the God-man. He is the man who is also God, and that is something that John brings out more so than any other gospel writer.

He brings out the fact of the deity of Christ, that Christ was and is not merely God in the form of a man, but God in the nature of man. Not God in disguise, but God in the flesh. He did not only come among us, he became one of us, possessing as his very own a true and full human nature from its conception.

In Jesus Christ, we find a real incarnation, a true and full entry into our humanity, and John brings that out in a very wonderful way over and over again throughout his gospel. He shows us that what actually occurred was that the creator became a creature. Now, John begins his gospel by asserting that very thing.

He says in the very first verse, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. And then he goes on to conclude that section by saying, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. But then John is also the one who records for us that statement of Jesus where he declared himself to be the great I am, the one who revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush.

It's John who tells us that. It's John who quotes Jesus as saying to Philip, he that has seen me has seen the father. And then finally, John is the one who tells us how Thomas cried out to Jesus, my Lord and my God.

And so John, he brings to light like no other gospel writer, the deity of Christ. But beside John's emphasis on the deity of Christ, he also reveals more so than any other gospel writer, the personal and even intimate interaction between Jesus and others. The synoptic gospels, which is a term that's used for the three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, synoptic means seen from the same point of view.

And as you read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Luke, you know that it seems like you're reading the same thing over and over again. Now, the more you read them and the more familiar you become with them, you realize that there are definitely some differences. But yet there are many, many similarities, probably more similarities than there are differences.

And so they are referred to by theologically oriented people as the synoptic gospels, meaning from the same point of view. Now, the synoptics view Jesus, it seems from a bit of a distance. But John is close up and personal.

Now, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, they record the sayings of Jesus. Interestingly, though, John records the conversations of Jesus. You see, there's more of an intimacy there.

They're not just sort of at a distance watching and listening, and oh yeah, Jesus said this, and then he said that, and then he said this, and he said that. That's what the synoptics do, generally speaking. But John comes right in and he's right there listening to the conversations that Jesus is having with other people and giving us insight into the dialogue that's going back and forth.

And through that you get really a more personal and a more intimate look at our Lord Jesus Christ. Think about it with me just for a moment as you just sort of scan the gospel of John in your mind. Some of you might be able to do that easily because you've read it a number of times.

Some of you it might not be quite as easy. But you know, if you just sort of look at it, you think that yeah, it's true. Jesus, in John's account, he has these conversations with so many different people.

He has a conversation with Nathanael. He says to Nathanael, you're an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile. Nathanael says, how do you know me? Jesus goes on to say, before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

And Jesus is speaking intimately. There's this conversation that's occurring there. As you move on, you find another conversation taking place with one of the great rabbinic leaders of the day, Nicodemus.

And it was that personal conversation with Nicodemus that has brought to us that understanding of the need to be born again. Because it was to Nicodemus that Jesus said that unless a man is born again, he cannot perceive or enter into the kingdom of heaven. As you go on, you find that Jesus has this amazing conversation with a woman in Samaria.

They're at a well talking to her about water, and then more specifically about living water, and revealing himself to this woman as the Messiah. We find that Jesus has a conversation with a man that he would heal, a lame man who was seated at the pool of Bethesda. And then there is that woman who is caught in the act of adultery, and John records for us the conversation that Jesus has with this woman.

And then there was this conversation that took place between Jesus and the Pharisees that John records for us. Dialogue, back and forth, Jesus speaking to them, them responding to him, some argumentation going on, and so forth. John records that conversational thing that happens there.

And then there's a man born blind. Jesus has an interesting conversation with that man. Of course, he healed that man.

And then there's Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus. Lazarus, you remember, perhaps was the man who died, and Jesus raised him from the dead. And there's that record of that intimate conversation that took place between Jesus and Mary and Martha.

And then we have in the 14th through the 16th chapters, we have the conversation that transpired between Jesus and the apostles, something none of the other gospel writers tell us about. This intimate, deep, profound conversation that occurs between Jesus and his followers. And then in the 17th chapter of John, we are given insight into the conversation that Jesus had with his father in heaven.

That whole 17th chapter is a record of that conversation. It is literally the Lord's prayer. The Lord is praying for his people in that 17th chapter.

And then you find that Jesus has a conversation with, of all people, Pontius Pilate. And John records the conversation that Jesus and Pilate had. No other gospel writer records that.

And then finally, at the end of the gospel, John records a wonderful conversation that took place between Jesus and Peter as the Lord reached out to restore Peter back into fellowship with him after Peter had denied him on those three occasions. So as we go through John's gospel, we're going to see both the glorious aspect of the deity of Christ, as John will bring that out in the places that I mentioned, and subtly in other places as well. But then we're seeing Jesus in a very intimate and personal way on the human level as we go through this wonderful gospel.

Now, the content of John's gospel centers around seven signs and seven sayings of Jesus. And we'll see that as we make our way through the gospel. Now, each of these signs and sayings are meant to convey a message concerning Jesus and the Father.

So Jesus performs these signs and there's a specific message that's being communicated behind each one of the signs. And then he does say certain things, and John does record some of the sayings of Jesus. But interesting to me, he doesn't record the things that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record.

And Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not record the things that John recorded, that Jesus said, that there are seven specific signs and seven specific sayings that are conveying a message to us concerning Jesus and the Father. Looking for a moment quickly at the signs, the first sign is that of turning water into wine at a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. Jesus turned water into wine.

And actually, as we're going to see when we get to that, this was the first miracle that Jesus performed. And people have, quite honestly, been puzzled by that. Why would Jesus perform his first miracle turning water into wine? What's the significance of that? Well, I don't know for sure, but you know, it seems to me that what Jesus was doing in that is he was letting people know right up front that God is interested in man's life.

He's interested in man's experience here in this world. He's interested in man's enjoying life. You see, religion tends to be burdensome.

That's sort of the nature of religion. And religion, of course, is man's attempt to try to find some way to reconnect with God. And by nature, religion is a burdensome thing.

And quite often, the idea lurking behind any religion is that of, you know, rules and stiff regulations and no enjoyment or pleasure. That's contrary to spirituality or holiness. And religion historically has been a thing

that's weighed men down.

But you see, that's not what the gospel is about. That's not what the Christian faith is about. It's not about laying some big burden on man.

And I think by Jesus performing this miracle at a wedding feast and turning water into wine, I think what he was communicating was that God is interested in man's enjoyment. God wants us to enjoy life. He wants us to enjoy the good things of life.

The only thing that God really does is he takes sin out of our life. That's the thing that's ruining life. But so often people get the wrong idea.

They think, oh man, God, if I give my life to him, he's going to make my life miserable. I'm not going to be able to have any fun anymore. I'm not going to be able to enjoy myself anymore.

And so I've known people who have had sort of a sense, you know, that they needed to make that commitment. But they've they've said, well, you know, I'm going to do that. But first, you know, give me a few weeks.

I got to really party up and get my quota full before I go into that boredom mode or that that mode of misery. But there's nothing further from the truth. Jesus came to give us a pleasurable life, an enjoyable life.

And I think that's what he's communicating there. But then we see another sign that Jesus performed, and that was the sign of the cleansing of the temple. You know, we learned from John's gospel something that we would not know from the other three.

Jesus cleansed the temple twice. If you only had Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts, you would think that Jesus cleansed the temple once at the end of his ministry. You find that according to John, he also cleansed it at the beginning of his ministry.

And what was he communicating when he cleansed the temple? Well, he was communicating that he is the ultimate authority on religion. You see, the temple in Jerusalem was the center of worship for the true God. When Jesus comes into that temple and he cleanses it, he demonstrates his authority over that temple, and he demonstrates his authority in the realm of religion.

And of course, if you have religious ideas or questions or concerns, Jesus is the one who can answer those, because he is the ultimate religious authority. Another one of the signs was the healing of that lame man there at the pool of Bethesda. And in the healing of that lame man, who was a sinner, because we're told that Jesus said to him, go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.

What we see in that, the message being conveyed, is God's compassion for sinners. God is compassionate. He loves sinners.

He doesn't want them to stay in their sin, because that's offensive to his holy nature and is destructive to their lives. But he does love them, and he came to deal with sin. And we see that in Jesus reaching out and healing that lame man.

John does record for us the feeding of the 5,000, which the other gospel writers do also. He records for us the feeding of the 5,000, but John gives us some insights into it that the other writers don't. But in that,

what we see is God's care for man's basic needs.

Jesus takes this multitude of people, and you remember the disciples said, master, send them away. It's late, and they need food. They're hungry.

They're weary. Jesus says, you give them something to eat. They said, oh, we don't have anything.

The Lord said, have them sit down. And Jesus, you remember the story, he took care of them. He fed them, and they had 12 baskets full of fragments left over, and everybody ate till they were completely filled.

And so there in that, you see in a bigger sense, God's care for man's basic need. You know, sometimes we think that God only cares about our spiritual needs. The spiritual is, of course, the priority, but God cares for our basic physical needs as well.

And then there is the healing of the man born blind, and in that we see God's concern for those who are suffering. This man was suffering through no fault of his own. As a matter of fact, his disciples would ask him, Lord, who sinned, this man or his family, his parents? Because the rabbis in that day taught that you could be suffering the consequences of your parents' sin by being born with some physical malady.

But Jesus said, no, it wasn't because of any of those things, but it was so that the glory of God might be manifest in him. And Jesus took and healed this man who had been born blind, showing his concern for those who are suffering. And then Jesus raised a man from the dead.

That man's name was Lazarus. And in that, of course, Jesus is showing to all of humanity that he has power over man's greatest enemy. And then the final sign in John's gospel is that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself.

And of course, the resurrection of Jesus authenticates his claim to be the Son of God. So these are the seven events or the seven signs that the gospel centers around these signs. And as we see, they're each communicating something to us.

There are also seven sayings. Seven times in this gospel, Jesus uses this formula in his speech. He says, I am, and then he adds something onto it.

Now, the interesting thing about that is that this phrase, I am, is the very name that God revealed himself to the nation of Israel by. You remember back at the time of Moses, when Moses encountered the Lord at the burning bush, and he was saying to God, who was telling him to go back and command Pharaoh to release the people. Moses said to him, but who do I say sent me? Who are you? What's your name? And the Lord responded, and he said, I am that I am.

That is my name. So Jesus, he then takes that title to himself, and he says on seven different occasions, he says, I am, but then he adds something to it. He says, I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the good shepherd.

I am the resurrection in the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. And then finally, he said, I am the vine.

And again, in each one of these sayings, he is communicating something to us concerning himself. When he said, I am the bread of life, what he's saying is I am the one who sustains and satisfies the human soul.

You see, every person knows by experience a hunger in the soul.

They don't necessarily identify it as that, but every person knows by experience that there's, there just always seems to be something missing from life. You can't quite explain it. You know, it's like one of those days when, I don't know if you ever have any days like this, but once in a while, I will have a day where I just decide I'm gonna just eat anything and everything I want.

And so you go out and you eat anything and everything you want, and at the end of the day, you're still looking for something else because it never really satisfied. Sometimes on my birthday, you know, on your birthday, you can do things like that. So on my birthday, I just, okay, pulling out all the stops, I'm eating all the junk I can possibly eat.

And then, you know, as, as the clock is ticking and as we're approaching midnight and the day is going to pass away, it's like, wait, wait, I, I didn't find the right thing yet. Here, let me try that. Let me taste this.

And you know, the day passes and you never really found that thing that was going to bring that fulfillment or that satisfaction. That life is like that. What is that? It's a, it's a spiritual hunger.

And Jesus said that that is where all people are at. They're hungering and they're thirsting. He said that He is the bread of life.

He's the one that can bring satisfaction. He's the one that sustains our lives. He said He was the light of the world.

And as the light of the world, He was claiming that He illuminates man spiritually and then naturally as well, to some extent. Jesus is the light of the world. His message, the gospel, He Himself brings a spiritual enlightenment.

It brings an illumination. Man begins to see things and understand things for what they really are, that everything has a spiritual component to it and that the spiritual realm is actually the superior realm. Oh, we look around us today and we see that the masses are still in darkness.

How sad, because the light of the world has come into the world, but men continue to remain in the darkness. They love the darkness. And the darkness is destroying them.

Perhaps you heard what happened over in Saudi Arabia this week, as the pilgrims were making their way to Mecca and 345 of them were trampled to death. That's actually a relatively small number compared to the numbers that have been trampled to death in the past. A few years ago, some almost 1,500 people were trampled to death.

And it all occurs as they come to a certain place. They're in Mecca. And it's a place where there's a narrow passageway and thousands upon thousands of people try to rush through this passageway.

And what they're doing is they're going into an area where they're picking up stones and they're pelting these three pillars with these stones. The pillars are symbolic of the devil. And by pelting these pillars with the stones, they're seeking to in some way expiate their sin.

They're seeking to somehow purge themselves from their sin. And in the process of trying to get through that narrow little passage and get in there to pelt these pillars with stones to purge themselves from sin, 345 people were trampled to death. That's what you call spiritual darkness.

And that's what spiritual darkness does. It leads to man being deprived. It leads to man being destroyed.

But Jesus said, I've come as a light into this world. I am the light of the world. And so He illuminates man spiritually.

And as man is spiritually illuminated, then there is, of course, an illumination that takes place in his thinking process as well. Man, when he's illuminated spiritually, he understands who he is and what life is all about and what he's supposed to be doing here and living for and all of those things that make life much more enjoyable. But then Jesus went on and He said that He was the door.

I am the door. He was speaking of being the one to give us access into the life of God. You know, you can't just access God.

You can't just walk up to God and say, God, here I am. And I want to know why you did this and why you didn't do that. And by the way, I'm going to be coming up here to heaven pretty soon.

And, you know, I hope you're getting things ready for me. You can't do that. You see, you can't even get close.

There's a door that you must pass through to even access God. And Jesus said, I am that door. He said, I am the good shepherd.

And there, what He's communicating is that He is the one who is responsible for the welfare of His people. He said, I am the resurrection and the life. He's communicating that He is the author of life.

All life is the result of the creative power of Jesus Christ. Do we know that? Do we realize that? We'll look more at that in our next study. But John tells us there in that first chapter that everything was made by Jesus.

And then he says this, and not even one thing that was made was made apart from Him. Not even one thing. Any form of life that there is, you can know this about it.

It was made by Jesus. You know, that is amazing. Sometimes when I'm studying, I look down on my piece of paper, and there's a dot.

Now, I've seen that dot, and I actually thought it was a pencil mark. But much to my surprise, I find the dot starts to move. It's moving across my paper.

I look, and I think, what is this thing? This is alive. It's moving across my paper. Now, I don't have a magnifying glass.

Probably if I looked at it, it would be some monstrous kind of beast. I don't know. But, you know, I know it's living.

It's moving across my paper. And, of course, generally, you just take your thumb and smash it. But that little living thing that's moving along there, you know why it's alive? Because Jesus Christ gave it life.

It exists because He made it. Because not even one thing that was made was made apart from Him. He's the author of life.

And then He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus is the embodiment of truth. There is truth.

We live in a world where many people are denying the possibility of there even being truth. There's no truth at all, they say. But Jesus said He is the truth.

He's the embodiment of truth. And then, finally, He said, I am the true vine. And there Jesus was conveying to us the message that only through Him can man live a fruitful life.

Only through Him can man live a meaningful life. A life of substance. A life that is approved by God.

I think of the story of Belshazzar, the king of Babylon. Maybe you remember the story. He was a prideful man, and his grandfather was Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. He had led the people of Judah captive, and he had brought many of the implements from the temple back to Babylon. And on a particular occasion, Belshazzar was having a party, and he decided to bring out some of those instruments that were brought from the temple in Jerusalem, and to toast, to use the cups and the different bowls and things, to use them in his party.

And he was toasting the gods with these instruments that were created specifically for the worship of the true God. And as this was going on, maybe you remember the story, suddenly a man's hand appeared out of nowhere, writing on the wall, and it pronounced a judgment upon Belshazzar. Belshazzar was frightened to death.

He called for his wise men. None of them could interpret what the writing meant. And somebody came forward and said, there's a man in your kingdom.

He was here in the days of your grandfather. He's a wise man. The spirit of the gods is in him.

He can tell you what this means. And so they called for Daniel. And Daniel came in, and he looked at Belshazzar, and he said, this is what the writing means.

It means that you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and that your kingdom is going to be taken from you, and you're going to be destroyed. But what he said to Belshazzar, in essence, is your life hasn't amounted to anything before God. You've had a fruitless life.

Your life is of no value. You've taken the life that God's given you, and you've squandered it. And now your life is over.

Jesus said he's the one that will guarantee that we do not squander our lives. He's the one who will guarantee that when we are weighed in the balance, we won't be found wanting. We won't be found without substance.

We will have substance because he's the one that will bring fruit into our lives. So you see, in these seven sayings, you have messages that are being communicated as well. Now, there's another interesting aspect that we have in John's gospel that is unique to John's gospel, and that is the aspect of revelation in regard to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Now, all of the other gospel writers make references to the Holy Spirit and give us little bits of insight and information, but only in John's gospel do we have teaching from Jesus specifically on the person and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If you flip over to the 14th chapter of John for just a moment, let me give you some examples. John chapter 14, verse 15, Jesus said, If you love me, keep my commandments, and I

will pray the Father, and he will give you another helper, that he may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

And then over in the 26th verse, he said, 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 things that I said to you. And over and over again in chapter 14, 15, and 16, Jesus gives us deep and intimate instruction and insight into the person and work of the Holy Spirit, into the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the helper or the comforter, literally the one who comes alongside to assist, one who comes in a sense to take the place of Jesus, so that we might, like the apostles did, that we might have that sense of the Lord's very presence with us. And so that's a unique aspect of John's gospel as well.

But finally, John tells us at the end of his gospel his purpose for writing, and he says that these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. So John's primary purpose for writing this gospel is so people could come to know that Jesus is indeed the Christ, that he is the Son of God, and that they would believe in him and have life in his name. And so as we make our way through this gospel, of course we're going to have opportunity after opportunity after opportunity to extend an invitation to people so that they might come and experience the life that Jesus has brought to us.

Now, Jesus said in this gospel, he said, I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly. John uses the term eternal life or everlasting life over and over again in this gospel. But for just a moment, think about just the very term life itself.

There are different pictures of life. There's a picture of life that might better be described as just mere physical existence. And you know, there are many people in our world today and perhaps, you know, right in our own neighborhoods, probably so, who as you would observe them, you wouldn't necessarily say they're living.

Well, of course they're living, they're breathing, they're doing all that. But as you look at their life, it's more like they're just existing. They're just existing.

They just, you know, they go off to work, they eat, they sit in front of TV for hours, they fall asleep, they get up, go to work, eat, come home, sit in front of the TV again, fall asleep, and that's their life. You look at a life like that and you think, well, is that a life? That just seems more like an existence. Or maybe they, you know, step away from the TV and get on the internet for a while.

Or some other electronic gadget they stick in their ear or something, you know. But that's about the extent of it. It's more like an existence.

I heard of a guy who gets up every day and goes out and plays a couple of games of tennis and comes home and plops in his easy chair and pretty much that's where he spends the rest of his day. And he just sits there with his remote controls just flipping around and watching anything and everything on his satellite dish or whatever he has. And you know, you look at that, you think about that, man, what is that? It's kind of really just an existence.

But then there are people that you would look at and you say, well, you know, hey, that person's, hey, they're living. Oh, they're out at the parties, they're traveling, they're out on the weekends doing sports and

all kinds of different activities, off for a hike and out for a surf and then off to the mountains for a bike ride or snowboarding or something like that. And wow, that person's really living.

But you know, not necessarily. Now, they might be living in an emotional sense, the others are more just sort of existing in a physical sense. But in both cases, both of these types of life end in death.

Not only physical death, but spiritual and eternal death. But you see, Jesus said that he came to offer life, not merely physical existence or even emotional life. He came to offer us spiritual life.

He came to give us eternal life. He came to take us into the realm of abundant life. And as we go through this gospel, that's what we're looking at.

We're looking at life, true life, eternal life that goes on forever in heaven. But we're also looking at abundant life. And I want to say this.

If you're not a Christian, if you haven't received Christ, you have at best emotional life, at worst physical existence. But this is all a temporary situation that ends in eternal disaster. God wants to give you everlasting life.

He wants to give you spiritual life. He wants you to know him in this life and have the confidence that you're going to go on enjoying his presence eternally. But if you do know him, he wants you to have not only eternal life in the sense that you know that you're going to live forever, you're going to go to heaven.

He wants you to have abundant life. He wants you to have a life that's exciting, a life that's thrilling, a life in the spirit, where as you're reading through the Bible, you're not just reading about history, things that took place 2,000 years ago or 3,000 years ago or 5,000 years ago. You're reading about things that, yes, did take place back then.

But yet there are things that are taking place right now. You're living the same things you're reading about because the Lord is active in your life. He's at work in your life.

He's leading you. He's guiding you. He's speaking to you.

He's working through you. He's ministering to people. And there's abundant life going on.

And so that's what we're going to see come out of our study of John's gospel. Those who already know the Lord are going to get abundant life, and those who don't know him yet are going to get eternal life, which, of course, abundant life is connected to that. And all of this happens, John says, by believing, that you might believe and that in believing you may have life in his name.

John uses the term believe many, many times over. And of course, to believe in the biblical sense doesn't mean to merely acknowledge intellectually that something is true, but it means to go a step further. Like the amplified version of the Bible takes this word in it, it expands upon it.

And it says believe in, which then means to trust in, to rely upon, to cling to. And that's what we're talking about. Trusting in the Lord, relying upon him, clinging to him, believing in him in a way that is real on a daily basis.

It's not just something you do on the weekend, but it's your life. That's why John wrote this gospel, that we might know and believe and have life. And so, next week, we will jump into chapter 1, verse 1, and trust

that as we go, the Lord is going to be imparting that eternal life, that abundant life to us.

Now, if you're here tonight and you have not come to know Jesus Christ personally, you're one of those people, maybe you're just existing. Life is a colossal bore. God has so much more for you.

On the other hand, maybe you're not all that bored. Your life is pretty exciting. You're doing all kinds of great and wonderful things.

You don't think you really need much of anything, but the reality is you're spiritually dead. And Jesus wants to give you life, and he offers that to you. It's a free gift.

What we're going to do tonight and what we're going to do every Saturday night from this point out is give people an opportunity to receive the Lord. Now, over here on my left, your right, there's a door back there, and that is the prayer room. And in the prayer room, there are a couple people that are back there, and they are there ready, available, waiting.

For anyone who would like to just make their way back there after the service, you want to receive Christ, you want to know him, you want to become a Christian and have this experience of life that we're talking about, those guys would love to talk with you for a few minutes and say a simple prayer with you, give you a Bible, and send you on your way with a new life. So if there's anyone here tonight in that position and you'd like to do that, then as we finish up the service tonight, I want to encourage you just to make your way over to that prayer room, and there will be some folks in there to meet you and to pray with you. For those of you that might want prayer, you know the Lord already, but you want to just be encouraged and strengthened in your walk, then of course, we'll have some guys up front here immediately, and we'll be available for prayer for you.

Let's go ahead and close in prayer. Lord, we thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ. We thank you, Lord, that you have given us eternal life, and we know that that life is in your Son.

And he who has the Son has life, and he who does not have the Son does not have life. Lord, we thank you that you've given us this great gospel to study together, and so we pray you'd bless us as we go through it. And Lord, we pray for just a touch of your Spirit upon us here tonight.

And Lord, again, if there are those that don't know Jesus, help them to make that move over to the prayer room, that they might come to know you tonight. Lord, may we all be filled up with your Spirit and living, Lord, that abundant life that you came to bring us. Thank you, Jesus, that you came, that you died, that you rose again, and that you're coming back.

And help us, Lord, to be serious about the things of the kingdom until you return. Amen.

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