

# Gospel of John I

by Stephen Kaung

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*Stephen Kaung explores the Gospel of John, emphasizing the importance of personal relationship with Jesus and the unique perspective of John the Apostle.*

**Duration:** 1:23:13

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:21-22, Matthew 6:33, Mark 3:17, Luke 9:49, John 1:35-39

**Topics:** "John"

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## Description

In this sermon, Brother Stephen Combs emphasizes the faithfulness, mercy, and love of God. He encourages the congregation to trust in God's ability to transform their lives, just as He transformed the apostle John into the apostle of love. Combs reads from the Gospel of John, specifically chapter 1, where John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God. He also references Matthew chapter 4, where the apostle Paul, despite his old age and physical limitations, urges believers to love one another. Combs concludes by highlighting the power of God to use individuals with different temperaments and personalities for His glory.

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## Transcript

This is Sunday evening, September the 10th, 1972, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is being given through Brother Stephen Kong. May we look to the Lord in prayer.

Lord, how we praise and thank Thee, because Thou art so faithful, Thou art so merciful, Thou art so loving. How we praise and thank Thee for all the past, how we praise and thank Thee for the present, and we can thank Thee even for the future. Lord, we can trust ourselves to Thee completely, because Thou art so trustworthy.

We gather together this evening because of Thy faithfulness, because of Thy mercy and Thy love. And we do open ourselves to Thee, Lord. We desire to be filled by Thyself.

Deliver us from ourselves. Deliver us from anything, everything that would distract us. But Lord, we want Thee.

We want to exalt Thee. Thou dost say, if Thou be lifted up, Thou would draw all men to Thee, Lord. Thou art lifted up in our hearts, and we are drawn unto Thyself.

We pray that at this moment, may Thy Holy Spirit breathe upon Thy Word, make it living and operating. We ask that we may not only hear, but we may see. In the name of our Lord Jesus, amen.

Amen. Thank God for gathering us together here tonight unto the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the name that we love. I have so many verses to read that I think I have to pick a few.

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to John? John chapter 1. The Gospel according to John chapter 1. We'll read from verse 35. Again on the morrow, there stood John and two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as he walked, he says, Behold the Lamb of God.

And the two disciples heard him speaking and followed Jesus. But Jesus having turned and seeing them following, says to them, What see ye? And they say to him, Rabbi, which being interpreted signifies teacher, where abideth thou? He says to them, Come and see. They went, therefore, and saw where he abode, and they abode with him that day.

It was about the tenth hour. Matthew chapter 4. Matthew chapter 4. Verse 21 and verse 22. And going on things, he, that is our Lord, saw other two brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the ship with Zebedee their father, mending their trauma.

And he called them. And they having left the ship and their father, immediately followed him. Mark.

Mark chapter 3. Verse 17. You know the Lord called disciples to him. Chapter 3 verse 17.

And James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James. And he gave them the surname of Bonerges. That is son of Thunder.

Luke chapter 9. Verse 49. Luke chapter 9 verse 49. And John answering said, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him, because he follows not with us.

And Jesus said to him, Forbade him not, for he that is not against you, is for you. And it came to pass, when the days of his receiving up were fulfilled, that his steadfastness set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers before his face.

And having gone, they entered into a village of the Samaritans, that they might make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was turned as going to Jerusalem. And his disciples James and John seeing it, said, Lord, wilt thou that we speak, that fire come down from heaven, and consume them, as also Elias did? But turning he rebuked them, and said, Ye know not of God's Spirit, but ye are.

Matthew again, chapter 20, verse 20. Matthew chapter 20, verse 20. Then came to him the mother of the sons of David, with her sons, doing homage, and asking something of him.

And he said to her, What wilt thou? She says to him, Speak the word, that these my two sons may stick, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left, in thy kingdom. And Jesus answering said, Ye know not what he asked. Can ye drink the cup, which I am about to drink? They says to him, We are able.

And he says to them, Ye shall drink indeed my cup. But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but to those for whom it is prepared of my Father. The gospel according to John.

John chapter 19, verse 25. And by the cross of Jesus stood his mother, and the sister of his mother, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala. Jesus therefore seeing his mother, and the disciple standing

by, whom he loved, says to his mother, Woman, behold thy son.

Then he says unto the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. And finally, chapter 21, of the gospel according to John.

John chapter 21, verse 20. Peter, turning round, sees the disciple, whom Jesus loved, following, who also leaned at supper on his breast, and said, Lord, who is it that delivers the young? Peter seeing him says to Jesus, Lord, and what of this man? Jesus said to him, If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. This word therefore went out among the brethren, that disciple does not die.

And Jesus did not say to him, He does not die. But, if I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple who bears witness concerning these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his witness is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, these which, if they were written one by one, I suppose, that not even the world itself would contain the books written.

We have mentioned several times in the past that the gospel of Jesus Christ is only one. There is only one gospel. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But this gospel is presented to us by four evangelists. The gospel of Jesus Christ is so rich and full that it takes four evangelists to present that gospel to us. And in each of these four gospels, we find a different emphasis.

In the gospel according to Matthew, we find, out of Matthew's own experience, Christ is the King. And how He calls us to obey Him. That we may be His kingdom.

The gospel according to Mark, Mark as a young man, is being trained to be a servant of the Lord. So he can see our Lord Jesus as the servant of God. The model perfect servant.

Who comes not to be ministered to, but to minister. And to give His life a ransom for man. The gospel according to Luke.

Luke is a physician. He is always interested in man. And there he discovers the man of man.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the man after God's own heart. The Son of Man. And finally, we find the gospel according to John.

Now dear brothers and sisters, in order to have a better understanding of the gospel written by each of these evangelists, it will help us if we know something of what has happened to the lives of these evangelists. Because they are not just presenting Christ to us as an objective history. They are presenting Christ to us as a subjective experience.

Out of their own experience of the Lord Jesus Christ, they share with us the Christ that they know. Because of that, we would like to spend some time in going together through the life of the evangelist, John. And probably that will occupy our evening tonight.

Now our purpose is not that we may know John. Our purpose is we may know the Lord of John. But John as a channel will help us to know better the Lord that he knows so well.

Of course we all know that the gospel according to John is written by John the brother of James. Although he has never mentioned that in his writings. He is so humble.

He always tries to hide himself. So he never mentioned that this is the gospel that I write. He just mentioned that the one whom Jesus loved.

The one whom Jesus loved. But we all know that's John. The youngest of the twelve apostles.

We do not know too much about his background. All we know is he and James are brothers. And their father is called Zabadee.

Their mother most likely is Salome. The sister of Mary. The mother of Jesus.

So according to the flesh John and James are cousins to our Lord Jesus Christ. Evidently this man Zabadee was a well to do person. Even though they were fishermen.

Now brothers and sisters do not think that fishermen must be very poor. This fisherman Zabadee seemed to be well to do. Why? Because he had hired hands.

He not only fished himself with his two sons. But you'll find he had hired hands. So a fisherman that could afford to hire people to help them fishing must be quite a big business.

Must be well to do. And not only that but we also know that Salome was one of the sisters who supplied our Lord Jesus and his disciples with material things. Now you have to have something to minister to the Lord and to his disciples.

And moreover you'll find they seem to have a house in Jerusalem. Now to have a house in Jerusalem not being their native town you can maintain a house in Jerusalem the capital of that time you must be someone with means. Otherwise you are not able to maintain two houses and especially in the capital.

Just like people live in Richmond and maintain another house in Washington D.C. Now it costs something to do that. And somehow you'll find they had a house in Jerusalem. Even though James and James and John had never been to school.

By that it means that they had never been to the school of rabbis. They were never trained as Pharisees. Never trained to be rabbis.

And yet they seem to know the high priestly family very well. Because you remember when our Lord Jesus was taken to the house of the high priest. John was able to go right in.

Why? He knew the high priest. And Peter he had to come out and told the maid that this is my friend let him in. And they let Peter in.

So evidently you'll find this family seemed to be well connected with the high priest family. Anyway it seemed to us that this family must be a very devout family. They must be very pious Jews.

You see many Jews at that time they embraced Judaism as a religion. But few among them were really serious. And evidently you'll find the Zebedee his wife and his two sons seemed to be quite serious in the things of the Lord.

The first time we met John was we saw he was one of the two disciples with John the Baptist. John the Baptist came out as the forerunner of Christ. And as he preached repentance.

You'll find those who responded to God they came to him and were baptized. And among them were John the brother of James the son of Zebedee. Now John was such a person that once he took a step he was very thorough.

He was never a person that will go into anything half-heartedly. He was of such a temperament either none or all. There was no in-between to him.

So you'll find that after John received the baptism of John the Baptist you'll find he became a true disciple of John the Baptist. He stayed with John the Baptist. He not only received his baptism but he stayed with him.

You know many people may receive the baptism of John the Baptist but they went home. But not with John. He stayed with him.

And because he stayed with him something happened. Now brothers and sisters of course in the first chapter of John he didn't mention his name. He only mentioned his companion Angel.

Angel! And this one they were with John the Baptist. But we all know it was John. It was John.

So one day John the Baptist testified. Behold this is the Lamb of God. He pointed to the Lord Jesus and said behold this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of this world.

But then the next day when John the Baptist and his two disciples were standing there with Jesus and as Jesus passed by John the Baptist said it the second time behold the Lamb of God. This is the Lamb of God. When he said that his two disciples left.

They went after Jesus. And Jesus turned around and said what do you want? What are you seeking? And you notice the most unusual answer. The Lord said what are you seeking? The answer was where do you live? We will say the answer is so different from the question.

But dear brothers and sisters do you know that? This is the best answer to that question. The Lord said what do you seek? What do you want? And they said where do you live? The Lord said come and see. So they went with the Lord.

They saw where the Lord lived and they lived with the Lord for that day and through that night. And because they lived with the Lord that day and that night something tremendous happened. Why? Because the next day you remember Angel went to find his brother Peter and said we have met the Messiah.

Now if Angel did that certainly John did that too. He went to his brother James. This was the first encounter of John with our Lord Jesus.

When he met the Lord Jesus he was already prepared. So far as his heart was concerned so far as his spiritual condition was concerned he was a ready vessel for the Lord. He didn't know that but the Lord knew.

Dear brothers and sisters do you know that you are chosen before the foundation of the world? Do you know that before you are born you are known? Do you know that after you are born until the time you met the Lord for the first time the Lord knew all along about you? In other words there was nothing lost. Even before you knew the Lord the Lord knew you and everything that came into your life was arranged. He was just preparing you for the day that's all.

Nothing was lost. If we can see this it will really strengthen our faith. Here was John a prepared vessel and then you'll find the Lord.

Oh brothers and sisters sometimes we think this was rather strange because John followed the Lord before the Lord called him. It seems as if John was seeking the Lord. He instead of Lord sought him.

But actually it wasn't that. You know that morning John the Baptist and the two disciples were standing there and they saw Jesus walk by. Was it by accident or did our Lord pass by purposely? Our Lord must know.

There was John the Baptist and the two disciples and the two disciples were ready for him. He didn't say a word. He didn't need to.

He just walked by show himself to them. That's all. Without saying a word.

And he let John the Baptist did the talking. John the Baptist said this is the Lamb of God. In other words he was driving his disciples away and said you go away from me and you'll follow.

John the Baptist did not draw people to himself. He pointed people. So far as his ministry was concerned he was very successful in the beginning.

But he was not out for success. He was out to point people to Christ. So there he was.

As if he was driving his two disciples away and said now you were my disciples but that was just for a preparation. Now the Lamb of God has come. Go and follow him.

And these two disciples understood. Unfortunately many of John's disciples continued to follow John and did not follow Jesus. They thought that they were doing a service to John but actually a disservice.

Dear brothers and sisters how we need to be deliberate from all men from any instrument of God to follow the Lord. The Lord may use certain men or women. The Lord may use certain instruments to help us along but certainly it is the pleasure the delight of God's servant to drive you away from them that they may drive you to the Lord.

If anyone would keep you to themselves something is wrong. But here you'll find John the Baptist he drew literally drew these two disciples away and you know these were the two best disciples. So in a sense you'll find it was the Lord who drew them.

The Lord passed by. When the Lord said what seeketh ye their answer was where do you live? Dear brothers and sisters I think there is no answer better than this answer. Why? Because lots of people they follow the Lord for what? Lots of the Jews at that time they follow the Lord because they want bread.

They are willing to cross the sea to find the Lord. Why? Because the Lord just performed a miracle. Five loaves and two fishes and feed so many people so they wanted to follow him for bread.

And the Lord said labor not for the bread of this world but for the bread that comes from heaven. Now other people may follow the Lord why? Lots of people follow the Lord in the beginning of a ministry because they saw wonders and miracles. They were attracted by these wonders and miracles.

But John he followed the Lord not for the sake of any physical gain. Not even for the sake of miracles and wonders. He followed the Lord because he wanted the Lord.

Where do you live? I do not care about bread. I do not care about miracles but I want you. Where do you live? I want to live with you.

Brothers and sisters can you find a better answer? Whom are you really seeking for? Why do you follow the Lord? Is it because you want the Lord? It is the person of the Lord not even what He is. And that was John. If you read the gospel according to John you will find that is very true.

He wanted the Lord and the Lord alone. He wanted to have fellowship with the Lord. He wanted to know the Lord.

He wanted to abide with the Lord and the Lord abide with Him. He wanted to be one with the Lord. Wherever the Lord was there would be Him.

And brothers and sisters because his heart was completely occupied with the Lord the Lord revealed Himself to John. And the next day he could go out like angels said we have seen the Messiah. That was his first encounter with the Lord.

Now if you read the gospel according to John you will find there is something different from the other three synoptic. You see all the other three gospels the gospel according to Matthew the gospel according to Mark and the gospel according to Luke they record or they start recording the ministry of our Lord from Galilee. Our Lord began to minister but they began with our Lord's ministry in Galilee.

John was the only one who wrote the record of the Lord's ministry in Jerusalem. In other words he was with the Lord from the very beginning. From the very beginning.

He was one of the earliest disciples. So there he was after his first encounter with the Lord after he knew the Lord there he followed the Lord. He was with the Lord.

When the Lord went to Jerusalem cleaning the temple he was there. When the Lord went to that wedding in Cana he was there. When the Lord met the Samaritan woman he was there.

So here you will find he was familiar with what happened to the ministry of our Lord in Judea before he began his ministry in Galilee. He was with the Lord from the very beginning. But strange to say when you come to Matthew chapter 4 you find John the Baptist was in prison.

And because John the Baptist was put in prison now the ministry of our Lord Jesus seemed to be the only ministry existing now. So our Lord Jesus as he began his earthly ministry after John was put in prison he started that in Galilee. That's where all the other gospels began.

So he walked by the Sea of Galilee and there he called. As he passed by you remember he passed by and he saw Peter and Andrew. They were casting the net and the Lord said come and follow me.

So they left the net and followed the Lord. He walked a little distance and he saw the two sons of David with their father and the high workers. They were mending the net.

In other words they have already had a catch. And now some nets had broken. So they were mending the net by the shore and the Lord said come and follow me.

And they left the net and their father and the ship and the high servants and they followed. After that first encounter with the Lord John seemed to spend lots of time with the Lord because he was a witness to all the things that happened during the early days. And he gave us a record in the first few chapters of the gospel according to John.

But even though he followed the Lord as if automatically for a time and yet in a sense there wasn't a clear cut following the Lord. In other words he followed the Lord most of the time. He was a companion of the Lord.

So he saw all the things that happened and yet you find when the Lord began to call disciples he was mending the net. He was home again. It was an on and off off and on thing.

And I wonder how many of our experiences seem to fit in with that kind of situation. After our first encounter with the Lord dear brothers and sisters automatically we are following him. But probably to many of us it was a matter of on and off off and on business.

We seem to follow the Lord for a while and then we disappear for a while and then again we seem to be following the Lord. There wasn't yet that clear cut understanding. In other words we do not understand the Lord's calling to be to believe in the Lord Jesus is one thing.

To hear the call of discipleship is another thing. Anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus more or less is a disciple. But it's an on and off business.

Unless you do not believe in the Lord then you will not follow him period. But if you are a believer of the Lord it cannot help that you follow him sometimes. In other words discipleship is there but somehow we are not too clear too certain about it.

It is grave. It is in the borderline not too clear. And one day we need to hear a call from the Lord.

It is the call of discipleship. The Lord does not want us to be believers only. We must be believers yes but we must be disciples.

In other words we must follow the Lord. Not only believe in him but to follow him. To be an apprentice of him.

To learn of him. So the call came to John when he was nameless. And when the call came the Lord said come follow me.

That's all. But the call was so strong John left everything and followed. Dear brothers and sisters this is the call of discipleship.

Sooner or later every one of us who have trusted in the Lord will hear that call. As a matter of fact the sooner the call comes the better. As a matter of fact the call should come at the time you are saved.

They should come together. But to the experience of many people it seems as if there is a gap. You believe in the Lord Jesus you receive him you have him and you like to be with him and in many respects you like to follow him but still you are holding back something.

You haven't yet come to a place where you have heard the call in such a strength that you forsake everything and follow him. Brothers and sisters that call will come. Will come.

And when it comes there is only one answer and only one way to answer that call and that is forsake all and follow him. That may not mean physical leaving. Like John you know he physically he left the ship.

He left the nets. He left his father. He left his higher servant.

He left everything and followed the Lord. It was physical even to John. But there is something more basic than the physical and the basic is spiritual.

Dear brothers and sisters what is the call of discipleship? The call of discipleship is come follow me. How can we come? How can we follow him? We must leave all. If we hold back anything we are not able to come.

We are not able to follow him. The call of discipleship is absolute. I do not know how you feel.

One day the Lord will come to you and say come and follow me. Then probably you will discover there are many things you are holding on. You want to follow the Lord and yet you will not let go these things.

It may happen physically or it may be a hard attitude. In your heart do you respond and say Lord I leave everything. This is the only way.

Anyone who has not come to this place shall we say he is half and half and he is not able to follow the Lord to the very end. It is something that we have to decide in the early days of our Christian life. Do you know why many Christians seem to have a good beginning but they do not come.

Why is it that you find many Christians seem to have a good beginning but they do not grow as they should. And when you come back you will find the reason is the call of discipleship isn't a clear issue in that life. Is the call of discipleship a clear issue in your life? Again I say it may not mean that you have to leave your home or your school.

Probably the contrary. God wants you to stay in your school and study. God wants you to stay in your home.

But there must be a clear cut in your heart. The Lord and nobody else. You have to leave everything and follow him.

And that's why he answered the Lord in the matter of discipleship. But to be a disciple of the Lord is not an easy thing. You know sometimes today we always present Christianity in such rosy picture.

You know? So people expect when they come to the Lord the Lord would just lift them up and put them in the third heaven. And then they discover it wasn't so. It was a shock to them.

As a matter of fact to be a disciple of the Lord is the most difficult thing in this whole world. The Lord called John and James to him. And then the Lord gave John and James a name.

The Lord called them Bernigas which means son of thunders. Isn't that a strange thing? We often in our mind think of John as such a person. Oh he is love is such an almost family.

You know? So in all the pictures of the artist you know if you see any picture drawn by an artist there was no photographs at that time you know. So we don't know exactly how they look. But to the artist concept you know when they draw a picture of John it's almost like a woman.

White love. So full of love. So gentle and so weak.

Family. But dear brothers and sisters you're wrong. The Lord called him son of thunders.

There is no family in thunders. What is thunder? Thunder speaks God called Simon Peter. Because he is to be a living stone.

A material for the building of God's house. So in the Bible you'll find whenever the Lord gives a new name it seems as if he is looking forward to the future of what the Lord will do in that life. That's true.

Now in the case of John probably it's both. Probably it's both. And we have some evidence of it.

You know? Probably by temperament John is such an intense person. You know? He is built as a very intense person. And his temperament is intense absolute thorough yes meditative introspective reserved but you know a person that is very introspective and maybe quite reserved and very intense when that person is really disturbed it comes out like thunder.

Well by the way our natural temperaments are all different. God loves us. Look at your face.

Only a few things on your face. Just two eyebrows two eyes one nose one mouth and two ears that's all. But God can so use these few items and create such variety that no two faces are exactly alike.

Not even the trees. God does love variety. That's all.

Variety is bringing fullness. Otherwise it will be monotonous. Now if God makes our physical condition as such certainly you'll find in the matter of temperament God makes us all with different temperaments.

Some people are naturally born extrovert. Other people are introvert. Some people are naturally born very cautious and other people are very aggressive.

Some people are born very quick. Other people are born very slow. Then brothers and sisters do you know that? That's variety.

That's quantity. That's fullness. Temperament is neutral.

To be an extrovert there is no virtue in it. To be an introvert there is no shame in it. To be quick or to be slow as a natural temperament there is nothing wrong or nothing right in it.

It is morally neutral. It is just like God makes us all different physically. It seems to me that our natural temperament I hope it's not a shock to you.

I hope, you hope that your natural temperament will change. If you are very quick you hope that you will get very slow. You want that change.

But look at Peter. He never changes. Never changes.

Transformation doesn't mean that your natural temperament is changed. This is created by God. Just like your faith will remain.

What has changed is the life that is controlling your temperament has changed. Formally it is your self-life that is using your temperament. So your temperament manifests you.

And that's very ugly. Whether it's quick or slow. Extrovert or introvert.

Aggressive or reserved. Ugly. But transformation comes when the Christ life takes hold of your temperament.

And dear brothers and sisters even your slowness is a beauty. But of course under His control it's purified it's channeled it's regulated it's under His control. So there is a little bit different.

You know? In other words temperament does not change but it is a little bit different in its expression. Why? It is now under a new management. John by nature his temperament was like a sun of thunder.

You do not hear thunders everyday. But when you hear it it's loud. A person like John who was so intense so absolute.

With John there was nothing in between. Either this or that. He became a disciple of John the Baptist and he was 100% John the Baptist disciple.

Then he left John the Baptist completely behind him and became a disciple of the Lord Jesus 100%. And if you read all his writings the gospel according to John the first, second and third epistles and the book of revelations you'll find in all his writings it is absolute. No compromise of any kind.

He was that absolute intense person. And when that light was under his own control what a trouble. Let us hear the thunders now.

You know how did a thunder happen naturally? Some disturbance in the air. And then electricity would build up. Until finally the lightning strike and the thunders roll.

Right? And here you find John as he followed the Lord time and again his thunder but the Lord disciplined him. One day you remember the disciples they were arguing among themselves again you know as they did almost every day probably they were arguing among themselves as who was the greatest. Now do not think that John drew back and said alright you go ahead you go I'm the youngest.

They were all arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest. And just after they finished their argument John came to the Lord and said Lord Master I saw someone casting out demons in your name. And I forbade him because he did not follow.

And the Lord said he that is not against you is for you. Now brothers and sisters you know what? He saw a man casting out demons in the name of the Lord and evidently the demons were cast out. But he was not happy about it.

Why? Because this man did not follow with him. He was the Lord's chosen disciples. The orthodox.

The regular. And here he saw someone irregular. Now if you want to follow the Lord you have to be with us.

Because we were the irregular. And in a sense he was right you know. But he got so exclusive in his thinking.

So narrow minded. If you do not follow with us you are not following the Lord. He did not know how great big and intense person can to be narrow minded.

Why? Because she was so intense. Well brothers and sisters probably you will say now, now do I remember that there is another verse? Say in Matthew chapter 10 I think. The Lord said he who is not with me is against me.

Now is there any contradiction here? Here the Lord said he who is not against you is for you. And yet in the other time the Lord said he who is not with me is against me. Now how do you reconcile these two things? Now remember you have to read the context.

If you read the context you will find when the Lord said he who is not with me is against me. He is referring to the world. So far as the world is concerned he that is not with the Lord is against him.

But when he said he is not against you is for you he is referring to those who are the Lord. Among the believers he who is not against you is for you. The Lord enlarged the heart of John the apostle.

You are the regular, yes. But don't be jealous. The Lord is great.

He is able to bless even if it is a little bit irregular. And do not be jealous about it. Yes.

It doesn't mean that you should leave me and go off like that other person. Of course not. You have to follow me continuously.

But do not be narrow. Yes. Learn to embrace all God's people.

Now brothers and sisters this was not natural with John. John was a person who can love only one maybe two. I don't know probably.

But the Lord enlarged his heart to embrace all who are the Lord. And you see what he changed later on. It was John who insisted again and again love.

He learned his lesson. Then immediately following this you know the Lord was going to Jerusalem. And opposing to the custom of his time the Lord travelled through Samaria.

The Jews always escaped Samaria because they had nothing to do with the Samaritans. So they were right across the river Jordan to the east side and travelled on the east side and across back. But somehow the Lord did not keep that tradition.

He went straight through Samaria from Galilee to Jerusalem. And he sent his disciples to prepare his way. But when the Samaritans saw that the Lord's face was towards Jerusalem, they wouldn't receive him.

Because they would have nothing to do with the Jews. And when John and James, these two brothers, saw this they were so angry for the Lord. They came to the Lord and said, Oh Lord, how come that they do not receive you? You are the Messiah.

And they don't receive you. Now do you want us to call fire down from heaven just like Elijah did? Dear brothers and sisters, remember, They do believe that if the Lord permits them, they are able to call fire down from heaven. They have no doubt about that.

They believe they can do that. They just want to attract with the Lord, that's all. Zealous for the Lord? Very zealous.

Not for themselves, no, for the Lord. And you know what the Lord answered? The Lord said, You do not know what kind of spirit you have. Your spirit is in opposition to my spirit.

He, my Lord Jesus' face was toward Jerusalem. What did that mean? It meant that He set His face toward Jerusalem. Why? Because He was the Lamb of God.

He was to be slaughtered in Jerusalem as a sacrifice for the sin of this world. So the spirit with Him at that time was the spirit of the Lamb. The spirit of the Lamb was meek, humble, harmless, sacrificial, giving Himself for the sin of this world.

But here you'll find these two disciples. Outwardly, they seemed to be very jealous for the Lord. Oh, very jealous for the Lord, just like Elijah.

They seemed to mind very much the honor of the Lord. But they exhibited a spirit that was foreign to the Lord's spirit at that moment. Their spirit was a spirit of anger, of revenge, of vengeance, hard and harsh spirit, contrary to the spirit of the Lamb.

The Lord said, You do not know what kind of spirit you have. Dear brothers and sisters, that's the second time you hear the thunder, but the Lord checked it and changed it. Then the third time, you'll remember, Matthew took the penalty.

Towards then, all the disciples thought that the Lord was going to Jerusalem to be crowned king. They have been maneuvering and maneuvering with one another for a long time and now this was the last. Whoever will get the best of it.

So here you'll find John and James invited their mother to come and of course aunt. You know, the word, the voice of an aunt carried the weight. So they got their mother to the Lord and said, promise that you will give anything that we ask.

And the Lord will not give them a blank check. The Lord said, what do you want? And they said, when you receive the kingdom, one are your right hand and one are your left hand. They monopolize everything.

So the Lord said, you do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I'm going to drink? Oh, yes, we are able to. And the Lord said, yes, you have to drink the cup that I'm going to drink.

But to sit on my right and the left is not for me to drink. It is for the heavenly Father. Brothers and sisters, these two brothers were very ambitious.

Very ambitious. Was it wrong to be ambitious? Especially with the young people. You know, it's a problem.

A young brother, a young sister came to the Lord and then the world would say, well, you believe in the Lord Jesus. Now you're finished. You have no more ambition.

Is that true? Yes and no. Dear brothers and sisters, listen to Paul. Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, he said, I am ambitious.

You know, the word in your Bible probably does not use the word ambitious. But in the original, it means ambitious. I am ambitious.

Of what? To please the Lord, whether in life or in death. Now that is his ambition. The Lord did not blame John and James for their ambition.

The Lord only put before them that, now you are ambitious to sit on my right and my left. For what? Are you ambitious just for yourself? That you may occupy a high position in the kingdom? Or are you ambitious for me, to please me? Dear brothers and sisters, we should be ambitious. We are more ambitious than the people of this world.

The people of this world, they are ambitious for what? For wealth? For position? For power? For this and that? These are too small for us. We are ambitious. We are ambitious to please the Lord.

That's the best ambition a person can ever have. Nothing wrong with ambition. What is wrong is, is it selfish or is it for the Lord? And if you have an ambition, remember, there is a price to pay.

The Lord said, if you really want to sit on my right and my left, drink the cup that I am drinking. Be baptized with a baptism that I am going to be baptized. In other words, do the will of God.

Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. That's all you need to do.

You do not need to look at the right or the left. You only need to take up your cross and follow me. And the Father knows what to do.

So, brothers and sisters, here you'll find the Thunder Road. Again, I say, to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus is not an easy thing. Discipleship demands your life.

Discipleship demands the death of your self-life. Discipleship demands that you be put under the cross, under the ground. Discipleship is to displace your life with the life of Christ.

That's discipleship. Are you today in the school of Christ? Are you today learning Christ in this way? Dear brothers and sisters, there you'll find your natural thinking, your ambition, selfish ambition, your self-centered, all these things. And Christ will come you and fill your life.

This is transformation. This is to be conformed to his image. Until the personality of Christ is manifested through you, it is still your temperament, your shape, your form.

But it is Christ that is able to be expressed through you. John, in the school of Christ, seems to graduate first. How do you know? You'll remember when our Lord Jesus had his last supper, last Passover with his disciples.

The Lord began to share with the disciples, saying that one among you will betray you and nobody needs you. Everybody said, Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? So finally Peter made a sign to John, who was sitting by our Lord Jesus. So you remember, John leaned upon the breast of the Lord and said, Who is he? And the Lord said, He to whom I dipped the bread in vinegar and said, This, this is he.

Here you'll find all the twelve disciples. John seemed to be the closest. You know, among the twelve disciples, three seemed to be very close to the Lord because the Lord took these three to the Mount of Transfiguration and the Lord took these three to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now, not that the Lord was unfair. He was partial. Not at all.

It was because these three seemed to have a purer desire for the Lord. Because they draw near to the Lord more, therefore, the Lord drew near to them more. You know, the Lord is not partial in any sense.

He loved every one of us just the same. But still, you'll find some three seemed to be closer to Him. Others seemed to be further.

Why? Because of our attitude, not because of His attitude. And of the three, you'll find John was the closest to the Lord. He leaned upon the breast of the Lord.

In other words, he knew the love. In the garden of their family, when they came to take the Lord, all the disciples fled for their life. As the Scripture said, when the shepherd was smitten, the sheep scattered.

All of them, including John. Including John. But who was the first to rally? John.

John, among the disciples, was the first to rally. Why? Because when the Lord was sent to the house of the high priest, He was there. He followed.

He fled. Yes. But He came back very quickly.

And Peter was there. So here you'll find of the disciples, He was the first. And you know, among the disciples, who was beneath the cross where the Lord was crucified? Only John was there.

Aside from a few women, John was the only disciple who was at the foot. And he ministered to the Lord. Think of that.

We often think how the disciples But here you'll find John ministered to the Lord as this, at this critical moment. The Lord saw His mother and saw the disciples. And He said, Woman, behold your son.

And He said to John, Behold your mother. Our Lord entrusted His earthly mother to the care of John. How He must have ministered to the Lord.

The Lord was a perfect man. You must remember that. He is God, but He is also a perfect man.

And as a perfect man when He was dying and His mother was left there, you know how He felt. And how John ministered more than that. He not only took the mother of Jesus to His house, but you know Peter, he denied the law three times.

He went out and went. He was lost. He was so ashamed of himself.

I don't believe He would go anywhere. He was ashamed to see anybody. But we find on the day of resurrection, He was there in John's house.

How did He come about? It must be that Peter went out weeping. He was like a man in a daze. He didn't know where He was going.

And He was ashamed to see anybody. But it must be John that went out and found Him and brought Him. What a ministering that is.

He might not be able to convince Peter of anything because Peter was such a strong personality. But at least He stayed with Peter and Peter stayed with Him. So on the day of resurrection you'll find something happening.

When Mary of Nadala came and said, the Lord's body disappeared. They both stood up and Peter was the first to run. John followed.

But John being a younger man, he outran Peter. He came to the tomb. He looked inside and he saw the cloth that wrapped the body of our Lord Jesus was still wrapping like the body was there.

But it was empty. But He didn't go in. He waited.

But Peter rushed right into the tomb and he followed Peter and saw the whole thing. Brothers and sisters, quiet. He outran Peter.

Why didn't he go in first? He knew what Peter needed. He wanted Peter to be fully restored. He let Peter have the first chance of everything.

He was willing to step aside and help Peter. What a spirit that was. And you know who was the first one who recognized the Lord by the seashore? The Lord said, do you have anything to eat? The Lord said, no, cast the net.

And they cast the net and they caught lots of fishes. But nobody knew it was the Lord. But why did he jump into the sea and swim to the Lord and got to the Lord first? He told Peter.

He knew what Peter needed. Dear brothers and sisters, you know, we often see Peter, but we don't see John, appreciate John enough. Peter was a natural leader, yes.

He was a leader. God greatly used him. But remember, without John, John never tried to push himself.

He was always that person hiding himself. He was an introvert, you know. He always hid himself.

When he wrote the Gospel according to John, he didn't even tell us who wrote that book. Just the one whom Jesus loved. That's all.

And you'll find his ministry is a ministry of love. A ministry of love. His ministry was not a ministry of leadership, as we would say today.

But his ministry was a ministry of love. He was quite willing to play the second fiddle. He did not want to push himself.

Brothers and sisters, which is easier, to play the first fiddle or to play the second fiddle? How people playing the second fiddle will feel themselves inferior, you know, and will be so subconscious as to try to strive to be the leader? But John knew his place. John knew his ministry. His ministry was a ministry of love.

Always the point. And you know, John's ministry is the ministry of recovery. Of recovery.

He recovers everything that has been lost. God used him to restore Peter, you must say. And you know why he wrote the John? For the sake of restoring the truth.

He wrote it during a time when there were heresies, agnosticism going around. He was always mending the net. Something broken.

Patiently he mended the net. It is a labor of love. A labor of love.

We are told by tradition. He was the last of the apostles to die. In his old age he labored in Ephesus in that area.

The place that Paul labored much in the beginning. And it was told that he was old. Way up in his 90s he could hardly walk and people would bring him into the meeting.

Brothers and sisters would be sitting there waiting and he would come in leaning upon some people. He would sit in a chair and all he said was brothers love one another. If you love one another that's dear brothers and sisters here you find a man who was naturally a thunder.

But how God can transform that person and use his natural temperament and become a thunder. With all his writings you find there is nothing in between. He always leads us back to the ultimate.

We hear the voice of God like a thunder in the writings of this man, John. So dear brothers and sisters if God can do this work in John and make him the apostle of love there is nothing God cannot do with any of us. Thank God he gives us encouragement.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father how we praise and thank thee thou art able to take hold of the light and transform it with the same temperament and yet bring glory unto thyself. Oh Lord we do praise and thank thee for this disciple, this apostle of love, this thunder of God so clear, so majestic, so ultimate, so absolute. Lord we pray that our lives may also be touched by thee and may be used in whatever way thou does desire to use us.

Thou art the potter. We are the clay. Lord mold us, make us, fashion us according to thy will.

Lord may we decrease but may thou thyself increase in all of us. Oh we want to exalt thee. We want to see thee.

We want to express thee. We want to glorify thee. To thee be all the praise and the honor and the glory forever and ever.

Amen.

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