



Series: SEEING IS BELIEVING
(Book Study Gospel of John)

Christ First Church
Pastor Wayne Chasteen

Sermon 1: *Introduction & Key Verses*
February 16, 2020

INTRO: Today we start an extraordinary adventure through the Gospel of John. There are 4 Gospels in the Word of God. They make up the first four books of the New Testament. John is last in the order. It comes after the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are called Synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar or sometimes identical wording. They are called Gospels because they record the life, ministry, and teaching of Jesus Christ during His time on earth.

John's Gospel is not considered synoptic because much of it's content, about 92%, is unique and not found in the other records.

AUTHORSHIP: The four books bear the names of their authors. Matthew and John were 2 of the 12 disciples of Christ, and therefore, eyewitnesses of the accounts that they recorded. Mark was an interpreter for Peter and wrote his account based on the memoirs and sermons of Peter. Peter, of course, was a disciple and an eyewitness to the ministry of Christ as well. Luke, may be the most fascinating of the lot. He was a Physician, and, according to his own words, an investigative reporter, of such, who was a stickler for details and accuracy. And it is by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, and His using these men, that we have the Gospels today.

As I just said, the apostle John, is the writer of the Gospel of John. He also wrote the Epistles of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, as well as, the Book of Revelation. John is not mentioned by name as the writer of the Gospel. He only refers to himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved". But all of the known early church history, affirms that indeed, John was the author of the book.

JOHN AND HIS BOOK: The Gospel of John is unique, not only in it's content, but also in the fact that it was written much later than the synoptic Gospels. Most theologians and historians date the writing of John between AD 85-95. This would have been 60 years or so after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And 30 to 50 years after the 3 other gospels were written. John was the youngest of the disciples. Many think he was most likely an older teen when He first followed Jesus. He was also the last of the apostles to die. The only one thought to die of natural causes due to old age. The best we can tell, he died in AD 100 at the age of 93.

GOSPEL COMPARISON: If you do a side by side comparison of the four Gospels, you'll see that each writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has a specific audience and point they won't to make. **MATTHEW, writing to a primarily Jewish audience, wants to make the point that Jesus is the SON OF DAVID.** So at the very beginning you have this genealogy that goes back to King David and it traces down to Jesus. The idea being that He is the PROPHESED KING that was to come, the son of David.

MARK, on the other hand is writing to a Gentile audience, mainly Romans. So, he makes the point to present Jesus as a SERVANT. The key verse being Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In that day, in the Roman Empire, a servant or a slave's genealogy was of no significance, whatsoever, so you have no genealogy in the Book of Mark.

LUKE, however, also writing to a Gentile audience, this time mainly Greeks, states his view of Jesus as the SON OF MAN. Thusly, in Luke chapter 3, you have a genealogy that goes all the way back to the first man, Adam

Then we come to JOHN. John is writing with one purpose, that you and I might fully know, might fully understand, that Jesus is the SON OF GOD! Hence, what you have in John 1:1-18 is His DIVINE genealogy. John goes back to the very beginning, beyond Adam, when he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made. And without Him nothing was made that has been made."

So, here we have 4 Gospels, and 4 different pictures of Christ.

Also, in the Synoptic Gospels, the emphasis is on the HUMANITY of Jesus, Son of Man, Servant, Son of David, He is the God-MAN. But John emphasizes the DEITY of Christ, the Son of God, the GOD-Man.

THE KEY VERSES: John 20:30-31 "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."

There's 3 very significant words here that I want you to notice. And when you do, you'll very easily recognize that there is a progression, a pattern here. The first word is... SIGNS: The second is BELIEVE: The third is LIFE. The progression here being, that when you SEE, when you really see, who Jesus is and what He can do, what He's capable of, then you will come to the obvious conclusion that Jesus is who He claims to be, and then you will BELIEVE on Him as the Savior He is, and consequently, your LIFE will take on a totally new dimension and you will experience a life in Christ you never knew was possible.

It's these two verses I want to look at today. Next week we'll start in John 1, the Prologue of the book. But today we want to take a quick look at the point John is going to make.

I have titled this series, SEEING IS BELIEVING. And I feel, as John did, that if people can really SEE who Christ is, they will BELIEVE on Him, and their LIFE will show it.

I am just going to touch on the highlights of these verses today, because we'll stop here again as we make our way to the end of our study. But notice with me...

1) THE APPEAL OF CHRIST: v 30 "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;"

As we will see in the next few weeks, John records 7 signs (miracles) that the Lord performed during His ministry.

I) THE APPEAL OF CHRIST: v 30 CONTINUED These seven signs mentioned in the body of the book were chosen specifically by the Holy Spirit to create an interest in human minds concerning the GOD-Man who performed them.

And why did the John call them signs? Why not miracles? Because the Spirit is leading him to say exactly what is needed. What is a sign, but that which points to something else? A sign points beyond itself to something greater. In other words it was not enough for the people to just believe in Jesus' works, they had to believe in the Worker Jesus.

The signs that John is speaking of is...

Turning water into wine in Cana (2:1-11)

Healing an official's son in Capernaum (4:46-54)

Healing an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-18)

Feeding the 5,000 near the Sea of Galilee (6:5-14)

Walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21)

Healing a blind man in Jerusalem (9:1-7)

Raising Lazarus from the dead in Bethany (11:1-45)

John 20:31 *"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."*

II) THE ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST: v 31a *"but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"* Here is the very clear purpose of John for writing this book.

To believe means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real.

But belief that brings Salvation must be more than just mental assent. It must come from the heart.

W E Vine defines belief as consisting of (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (John 1:12 *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name"*) and (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender. (John 14:15 *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments"*)

III) THE ABUNDANCE OF CHRIST: v 31b *"and that by believing you may have life in his name."* LIFE was the claim of Jesus in this Gospel. **John 14:6** *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."* Abundant LIFE is only found in Jesus!

CONCLUSION: Where do you stand in regard to believing in Christ? Do you know what it is to have true LIFE in Him, abundant life, joy unspeakable and full of glory? You can! Just believe.