**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**Theme: Jesus: “The portrait of perfection”**

**Key verse: 14:8-9 “***Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.***”**

**Outline:**

**I. 1:1-18 Picture perfect**

 **a. 1:1-5 Who is Jesus?**

 **b. 1:6-13 Who knows?**

 **c. 1:14-18 Who has believed?**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

 **a. 1:19-2:11 New joy**

 **b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

 **c. 5:1-47 New freedom**

 **d. 6:1-71 New Sustenance**

 **1. 6:1-14, 22-71 New food (6:35 First of seven truths)**

 **2. 6:15-21 New support**

 **c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

 **e. 10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

 **1. 10:7 Gate of life**

 **2. 10:11 Guide of life**

 **3. 11:25 Giver of life**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

 **a. 13:1-14:15 Prophecies (sixth truth 14:6 one direction)**

 **b. 14:16-16:33 Promises (seventh truth 15:5 abiding promise)**

 **c. 17:1-26 Prayers**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

 **a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

 **b. 20:1-31 The resurrection**

 **c. 21:1-25 The commission**

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**I. 1:1-18 Picture perfect**

**a. 1:1-5 Who is Jesus?**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-3 Without Him nothing**

**III. Vs. 4-5 In Him is life and light**

**I. Intro.**

This study is both for the “*seeker*” as well as the “*searcher*” but John uses only around six hundred different words in his vocabulary which would be about equivalent to around a six year olds vocabulary yet his is the most profound of the all the gospels. But why the need for four gospels? The ancient Christian writer Origen said, “*there are not four gospels, but one four-fold gospel*.” Each gospel presents a different perspective on the life of Jesus, and we need all four to get the full picture. Matthew reveals Jesus as prophesized King, Mark shows Him as the Servant of God, Luke in His humanity and John in His deity but it takes all four to get His true picture.

Now this brings up an interesting point as we all say if I could just have walked with Jesus seen Him heard Him it would be so much easier to believe. There is always an attempt by man to try to come up with a physical description of Jesus, we have all seen the paintings and sketches of all types yet there is no mention of what he looked like any where in the N.T. Every so often people will see His portrait in the bark of wood or moldy cheese and hundreds and thousands will flock to it to get a glimpse of Him. Now I personally always question this seeing that there is no photograph, not one drawing, why you won’t even find any words describing His physical appearance so just how do they know that the picture on the moldy cheese looks like Jesus? To further the mystery as to why John doesn’t offer any physical description is his words concerning the compilation of this gospel and it’s importance to salvation as he writes in chapter 20:30-31 that, “*truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these 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.*” It is this same John who testifies in his first letter concerning Jesus saying that “*which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life*”. Clearly on a personal note John was forever impacted by what his physical senses observed, so why not describe what he heard, looked upon and handled? Could it be that this is what John does? Consider if you will that John will offer us not a physical description but rather a character description by describing seven signs of his ministry and seven truths He proclaimed about Himself and the outcome will be that we will all see Jesus the “*Portrait of Perfection*”.

**II. Vs. 1-3 Without Him nothing**

Vs. 1 We start with what many call the prolog or summation of the entire book (verses 1-18), this gospel has been called “*a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim*” as it is simple in its stories but so profound in its theological truths that even the greatest skeptics have been converted by its words. John starts out with a three fold declaration:

* In the beginning was the Word
* And the Word was with God
* And the Word was God

The Gospel with the words, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word*” a very similar opening to the Bible itself. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). John does not say “*at the beginning or from the beginning*” but “**IN** the beginning”, the Word preceded the “beginning”. So John says, “*When the beginning began, the Word was already there*”. John has not immediately identified the “Word” he will do so gradually like peeling the layers of an onion and the first truth he wants us to understand is that the “*Word*” predates time or creation as He was there before anything was. The Word is “Logos” in the Greek and with the use of the word “*was*” in the imperfect tells us that John is not trying to speak of the origin of God but rather His continuous existence contrasted with verse 14 where John writes “*became*” flesh which speaks of the “*coming into being*” of that which had always been, or the eternal entering time, space and matter.

The Greeks had developed a philosophy from Plato that was built upon the assumption that the “Logos” the Word was the foundation of the world. The idea was that behind everything was “perfect thought” but the Jews took this thought still farther as they said behind “*perfect thought*” must be a “*perfect thinker*”. Now John expands this by saying that perfect thought and perfect thinker must not just be a philosophy but rather a “*Perfect Person*” hence the use of personal pronouns. The word God here is “Elohim” which speaks of three or more and its use here suggests that John is thinking in terms of the tri-unity of God.

Hey saints these are amazing statements and every word is a brush stroke of a master artist. You see the word Logos in the Greek means “*to collect, to place words side by side, to speak and to express an opinion*” The Word reveals the heart and mind of the person speaking and as such Jesus reveals the heart and mind of God. A word is composed of letters and Jesus is according to Rev. 1:11 the “*Alpha and Omega*” which is the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet so Jesus is God’s last word to mankind, John reveals that Jesus is the “Eternal Word” “Creative Word” “Essential Word”. But what is a word? Well a word is an audible expression of a thought, now you have all said “*I know what you are thinking*” but in truth thoughts remain just that until they are put into words. In 1 Cor. 2:16 Paul asks, “*who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?*” and then Paul answers his own question by saying, “*But we have the mind of Christ*.” When Jesus was among us as a man he expressed what was going on in the mind of God, He told us the thoughts of God, He was God's utterance on earth, unveiling to us what Paul calls “*the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory*” (1 Cor. 2:7). People often think that they create their own reality but the truth is they always start with what God thinks and then manipulate that into their own reality. Ultimately only what God thought came into reality and in the end it will be what He thought all along that will come to pass. As God thought about a universe, a solar system, an earth all sprang into being just as He thought. Then God thought about everything we see around us what we see, smell, hear, taste and touch so all came into being. Look around and you will see that what exists are the thoughts of God, now John declares that those thoughts of God put into words is none other then Jesus. It is important that we understand the distinction as thoughts are not words but they are always going to be exactly what we thought so too in the Godhead there is distinction with unity. In Psalm 138:2 we read “*You have magnified Your word above all Your name*” it is because through his Word His thoughts are made known and not by just knowing someone’s name.

Next John takes on the concept that “*And the Word was* ***with*** *God*” which carries two powerful truths:

1. That the “Word” existed eternally **with** God
2. And that the “Word” was in **perfect fellowship with God** in equality and intimacy they were face to face with each other

So here is what John is saying: There is a Being known as the Word and this Being is God, because He is eternal yet this Being called the Word does not encompass all that God is as God the Father is a distinct Person from the Word as we are told that “*the Word was with God*” I can not be “*with*” my self I can only be with someone else.

Then we come to the last of this three fold declaration “*And the Word was God*”. Now Jehovah’s Witness translation “*New World Translation*” reads like this: “*In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was* ***a*** *god.*” And in saying it this way they seek to deny the teaching that Jesus is God. Now in fairness they translate it this way with a little “G” because they say that there is not article in the Greek in that sentence but there are numerous times in the N.T. where it appears the same as it does here in John 1:1 and every other time they translate it God not “a god”. To further bolster their mistranslation they quote two Greek authorities to make it sound as if they agree. One of them Dr. Mantey demanded that his name be removed from the book the other so called “scholar” is a occult-practicing spiritist, and not a scholar of Biblical Greek. The bulk of Greek scholars call “*New World Translation*” A GROSSLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION. In fact the authority they quote as agreeing with them writes, “*It is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 ‘the Word was a god.’ But of all the scholars in the world, so far as we know, none have translated this verse as Jehovah’s Witnesses have done.*” (Dr. Julius R. Mantey). Noted Greek scholar Dr. William Barclay calls this translation of John 1:1 “*The deliberate distortion of truth and intellectually dishonest*.” So John declares that Jesus was in the beginning with God again makes the point that the Father is distinct from the Son, and the Son distinct from the Father so we see that they are equally God, yet they are separate Persons.

John declares three truths about Jesus:

1. “*In the beginning was the Word*”: Eternal
2. “*The Word was with God*”: Equal
3. “*The Word was God*”: Essential

In Deut. 6:4 we are told “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one*!” The word for “One” in the Hebrew is a compound unity meaning one cluster or 1x1x1 which is still One.

Vs.2 Here we are given the origin of the “Word” as “*He was in the beginning with God*”. John now links to gather the pre-existence of the Word with that of God the point being that the Word has always been God and this phrase is directly prior to the creative acts is show His involvement in creation is not as being created Himself and then set to the task of creating but rather that He was never created He is instead the creator!

Vs. 3 The words, “Was made” is in the perfect tense in the Greek which means that creation is a finished product not a work in progress. There are four essentials to life and John declares that Jesus is all of these:

* **Light:** John 8:12 *Jesus is the light of life*
* **Breath**: John 3:8 *Jesus is the breath of life*
* **Water**: John 4:10 *Jesus is the water of life*
* **Food**: John 6:35 *Jesus is the bread of Life*

The Word created all created things as Paul says in Colossians 1:16 “*by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him*.” Just for a moment consider the phrase “*All things were made*” John does not use the word “*Cosmos*” as he does to speak of the world in verse 10 speaking of the universe but instead he uses the word which is greater “*every thing*” not just the physical universe but what Paul proclaims in the Col. 1:16 “*all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers*”. There is nothing that has ever been or ever will be that was not created by the word. Now why is that important? Well I suggest to you in light of our science fiction world that seems obsessed with aliens for outer space this would include them and so if there is intelligent life out there I fully expect their first words to us to be “*Praise Jesus*!” Further more the Words creative ability is described in the use of the word “*made*” or “becoming” and not in a state of “being made” and such there was no effort in the creative word. If you and I sent down to create something we put forth all our energy to do so, not so with the Word the audible thought of God He simply caused that which had never been prior to BE! Now we have the words “By Him” and as such we see the Word is the agent in creation. In Hebrews 1:2 we are told that “*in these last days did speak to us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He did make the ages*” He placed time into being Christian He built the clock, so our sphere of existence “*time space and matter*” all His work. Then we are told that “*without Him nothing was made that was made*” and in saying this John dispels two false teachings:

1. First that matter is eternal: Matter is clearly not eternal as it was made.
2. Second hat angels had a share in creation: Clearly this phrase excludes there work in the creative process, not even one thing John declares.

In every cell of your body there is over 3 billion letters of code 1 a trillion atoms and people are trying to unlock the digital code in language and as such researchers are being forced to abandoned chance theories of life. The number of atoms in a single breath is 10 to the 21st power. When you take a deep breath you just breathed over 10 million molecules that Jesus breathed. The lining of our skins shed every two to three weeks and over our life times we will shed off over 40 pounds of skin, now you know why old coaches weigh more!

**III. Vs. 4-5 In Him is life and light**

Vs. 4 The Word is the source of all life and the Greek word is “*zoe*” which means “*the life principle*”, not “*bios*” just biological life. The Word not only creates life here we are told that **He sustains all life**. Jesus is the atomic glue that holds together the elements of the atom. Now in Stanford University there a Linear accelerator which is a great atom-smasher, which takes energy that is developed at the beginning of a great tunnel and increases its speed constantly until it approaches the speed of light so that the energy particles smash into a target of an atom at the end. And Heb 1:3 “*upholding all things by the word of His power*”.

In Col 1:17 we are told that “*in Him all things* ***consist***”, now perhaps you are thinking, “*Why does this matter pastor*?” Well consider the Jesus’ words in John 10:27-29 where He says concerning you and I “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand*.” Oh dear saint put your insecurity into His hands as Paul wrote of this in Rom. 8:35-39 saying “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing,* ***shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***” **He’s gotcha**!!!! So the Word does not merely contain life and light He is life and light and apart from Him there would be no life and light. John loves these two words life “Zoe” and light “Phos” as they appear in this gospel 36 and 23 times. Interesting to me that in the Greek John makes this statement “*the life was the light of men*” interchangeable with “*the light was the life of men*” physicists find in electricity the same two things “light and power” And Jesus in 8:12 would call Himself the “light of the world”.

Vs. 5 Finally John declares that the problem with mankind is not from lack of consistency from the “*light*” as he says the “*light shines in the darkness*” and the word “shines” means keeps on consistently shining. The light was shining in the darkness, the darkness could not put it out or extinguish it try as they might to put out the “Light of the Word” man kind has not been able to snuff out the flame. The longer I live the more I see satan and the world system trying to put out the light of the WORD but as Jesus will say in chapter 3:19 “*this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*”

Man kind is so prone to blame God for the darkness of life, so apt to curse Him for the darkness and death that are always lurking about but it is not God, not the Word which shines its brightness like “light house” into the dark fog of human existence. The fact that we are born with a fear of both darkness and death speaks to this. Ah but hear the words of psalm 139:12 “*the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You*.” Then in Paul’s words in 1 Cor 15:55 “*O Death, where is your sting*?” Even though the darkness of human heart would not allow illumination it didn’t keep the light from shining.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**I. 1:1-18 Picture perfect**

**a. 1:6-13 Who Knows?**

**“The Sounds of Silence”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 6-9 Say what we see**

**III. Vs. 10-13 Becoming God’s kids**

**I. Intro.**

Last week John showed his readers that Jesus was eternal, equal and essential with God yet a distinct person. He is the Word, the expression of the mind and heart of the Father, the creator in who we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). What’s more remarkable is that God desires for us to know Him, to have a relationship by shinning His light into a dark world. We are so proud of our technologies and achievements, our learning and education we tend to think with every succeeding generation that we are evolving into a state of perfection but history reveals with every succeeding generation man’s in humanity to their fellow kind is growing more wicked. How can this be? Well we are in the dark!

In the 70’s Simon and Garfunkel wrote a song called “*The Sounds of Silence*” where one the lyrics said “*Hello darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again.*” That’s an accurate description of the world we live in today isn’t it? The whole purpose of John’s gospel is to bring people to a faith in Jesus Christ. In chapter 20:30-31 he comes right and says, “*Many other things did Jesus which are not written: But these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and by believing have life in His name*” He hand selected events that would lead people to the truth so that people who life in darkness would become what they previously weren’t “*children of God*”.

**II. Vs. 6-9 Say what we see**

Vs. 6-9 John left us last week with a puzzling question as to why the world did not see the light and life of men, the Word (verses 5). He then gave the answer by saying the problem did not lie with the light but rather in man’s attempt to extinguish the light. Paul tells us in Romans 10:17 that “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*.” In the 14th and 15th verses right above this Paul asked two questions “*how shall they hear without a preacher*?” “*how shall they preach unless they are sent*?” That is the purpose of John the Baptist not to be the light but to bear witness of the Light. It seems as though the Apostle John is anticipating his readers questions as to why they didn’t receive the “Word” perhaps it was that no one heard of the light? So here we are told of John the Baptist whose sole purpose was to come to bear witness of the light that all through him might believe. John the Baptists ministry was to “*make clear*” the light. The “**Light**” of the world was shining directly into the hearts of men but they were blinded by it but not John he saw clearly what mankind had closed their eyes to and his ministry was to speak about what he saw. It is interesting that John means the “*grace of God*” so God sent His grace to tell of His grace! In Luke 3:4 quoting from Isa. 40:3 we are told that there would be a “*voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God*”, John was “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness*” you don’t see a voice you can only hear it, John didn’t come to be seen he came to herald the only One to be seen. That is **one of the pitfalls of ministry as the flesh has a constant desire to be seen and thought well of but that us not what we are called to be we are called to speak of the Light and Life of the world**. John came to give mankind the A,B,C’s or the Word. ABC’s?

* **A**dmit your need
* **B**elieve in Jesus
* **C**hange your behavior

That pretty much sums up John the Baptists ministry preparing the hearts of the people.

It is a difficult thing for us to grasp that the One that hung upon the cross for our sins was the very one that formed the tree that He hung on! The One who had been sinned against became divine grace that He might deliver those who put their trust in Him.

John was to be a witness and a witness does not tell of things he thinks, his opinions and speculations he speaks of what he knows. The word “*witness*” is a key word in John’s gospel he uses it as a noun 14 times and as a verb 33 times and it is what we are called to do “*bare witness in our life and words*”. Paul said it best in 1 Cor. 2:2 where he said *“I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*.” Notice that in verse 9 John says, “*that was the true light*” there are a lot of false lights that flicker on the scene but only one true light.

Hey saint’s that’s our job, to first open our own eyes to the person and work of Jesus and then to speak about what we see to those who are unwilling to open their own eyes. John makes sure that his readers don’t mingle the message with the messenger by clearly announcing that John the Baptist was **not** the “Light” his calling was to simply speak of what he saw. I’m afraid that far too many of us pastor types have forgotten our role to speak of what we see. There are far too many entertainers whose message can not be heard about the light because they want to be the star! James issued a warning saying “*let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*” There is a real danger as we break open the Word that what we put forth becomes “***our message***” instead of opening our eyes to see the “**Word**” and (His message). Let every teacher, preacher and worshipper heed this exhortation “*we are not important*” only Him whom we have seen! On the front of this pulpit I have placed a reminder for myself John 12:23 it simply reads “*The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified*.” This hour that we are gathered together is not to show you how great I am, not so you can be amazed by the musicians, not so you can hear of all the wonderful programs that we have in this church it is the “***Hour where we proclaim Jesus’ greatness***” and the day that we forget that is day we all should go out to look for a church that has not forgotten that! Why tell us this pastor? Because of what John has said in verse 4 and verse 7 namely that the life is in the Word and that transformation **WILL** occur for all who have come to trust in the Word of life. In fact John loves the word “*believe*” so much that he uses it over 100 times in these 21 chapters, nine times more than all the other gospel writers. There is a true sense in which I can be guilty of the greatest form of **malpractice** if I take away from the only “***Life Giver***” and rob people of the opportunity to become saved. That is John’s statement in verse 9 “*the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*” If I by my behavior or by my time in the pulpit take people’s eyes off of the “***True light***” according to Rom. 2:22-24 I become an obstruction, a hindrance to the “True Light” and my calling to speak of what I have seen is now causing others to not see. Oh how I need the prayers of the saints as Paul said in Col. 4:3 that they should “*pray also for us, that God would open to us* ***a door for the word****, to speak* ***the mystery of Christ***”. So then saints it is our invisibility in conjunction with His visibility and we must be ever aware that it can never be our visibility as such it will cause His invisibility!

**III. Vs. 10-13 Becoming God’s kids**

Vs. 10-13 It is interesting to note the subtleties of verse 11 as John writes “*He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him*.” The first time in this verse “*His own*” is translated in the Greek it refers to **creation** as it in the neutered tense and second time it refers to humanity as it is in the masculine tense. What this tells us is that John is saying that when Jesus came into His creation the wind and seas obeyed Him, the mountains were ready to have a “*rock concert*” the only part of His creation that didn’t receive Him was the very one that was created in His image. Paul says concerning this in Roman 1:25 that mankind “*exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator*”. How can the statement of John’s in verse 10 be? The Word (God the Son) came into the very world He created, to the creatures made in His image, and they did not know Him? Well this verse reveals to us the depth of how far human nature has fallen as clearly we have fallen so far that we can no longer see the Light and Life of men. The Bible says in Psalm 19:1 says that “*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.*” Then Paul writes in Rom. 1:18-20 “*men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*”. In the above two verses we see mankind’s refusal to recognize the “**Word**” prior to His incarnation, so based upon verse 11 we are told that He came into that which He alone created. What this speaks to me is that our God wants to be known, He wants people to know Him, and He desires a relationship with those created in His own image. So the Word which created all things came into that which He created, to mankind, to God’s chosen people, to His own city, His own family and they didn’t receive Him in the Greek that is they didn’t “*welcome Him*”. They didn’t invite Him into the very lives that He himself created. According to Zech 13:6 when Jesus comes back “*one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'*” You see He came to His own people and His did not receive Him. If you have ever been estranged from your children or from family you know of the heartache of this statement, God has given you a glimpse into the realm of the Holy rejection as you are walking where He as walked in our very own hearts at one time.

 Ah but “*as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*.” In contrast to those who rejected Him we have those who did receive Him as He gave them the unique privilege **to become what they were not prior,** children of God. The word “*receive*” means to “*take up as in an embrace*” in other words John is not speaking of mere intellectual agreement or some philosophical abstract truth, He is talking of ownership of this Truth. Now this phrase “*children of God*” goes much deeper than mere offspring of His creation in which all mankind is, instead it carries the idea of recreation into a living relationship with God. And John says just how such recreation is accomplished which he expounds upon it further in verse 13 “*by placing our sole trust upon the person and work of Jesus*”. Thirty Five times John will tell his readers to put their trust in or on Jesus and in verse 13 he explains just what that means by telling us three things it doesn’t mean: “*Who were born*”

1. “*Not of blood*”: **It’s not a birthright**! That means, not by inheritance, not by human ancestry. You cannot get into the kingdom of God, or be born into the family of God, by being raised in a Christian home. You can be a member of a family where every one except you is a follower of Christ, but that doesn’t make you a Christian. You can attend a Christian school and spend all your life involved in Christian activities, but until you are born again you are not a Christian. You are not saved by Christian parents or Christian grandparents or by being born in a Christian country. Just because you were born into a Christian home, with parents that went to church and read the Bible too you every day doesn’t make someone a child of God. The Jews claimed in 8:39 that they “*are* *the children of Abraham*” to which Jesus responded “*If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.*” And what was the work of Abraham? Paul elaborated on this in Gal. 3:6-7 saying “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*”
2. “*Nor of the will of the flesh*”: **Not by religious practice**! Here the idea is that we or not saved be simply going to church reading our bible, all of which is good. Sometimes you will asked someone if they are saved and they will immediately tell you which Church they attend, but salvation is not just by attending Church. Paul proclaimed before King Agrippa in Acts 26:19 that “*they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.*” The author of Hebrews calls religion “*dead works*”. You can not determine yourself to be a Christian. It’s not possible to talk yourself into being a Christian or study Christians and just act like them, join a church and sing their songs. What makes someone a Christian is not the externals it’s “*not of the will of the flesh*”.
3. “*Nor of the will of man*”: **Not by self effort**! Our good works or effort can not cause regeneration of a life. There has been nothing more damning placed upon mankind then the thought that our “*goodness*” saves us. The truth is if our personal goodness can save us then the “Word” becoming flesh and dwelling among us, taking on the likeness of fallen man and paying the price for our sin was a terrible injustice to Jesus. Paul said in 1 Tim 1:15 “*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that* ***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*”** The truth of the matter Jesus can only save “*sinners*” thank God I qualify! Our “New birth” can not be appointed by the efforts of others. No religious official can declare you a Christian, no certificate or membership affiliation can affirm it. You cannot become a Christian by a ceremony or by reciting a creed, neither does it matter if you sit a certain way have water sprinkled on you or be dunked head long into water those do not make you a Christian.

So just how is it accomplished? John in a simple three word phrase tells us; “*But of God*”! Here than is the only way you and I can be born into the family it is “of God”! Paul stated it this way in Eph. 2:8 “*by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*”. It is by Him that we “**became what we were not prior,** children of God”. Every human being came into existence through birth it is the only way we come into the world no other way. So too becoming God’s children it has to come by way of birth, “new birth”. We simply aren’t massed produced, cookie cutter creature now we are created one at a time so too “new birth” we are birthed one at a time.

These words tell us it is all by God, beyond any and all human effort, cleverness or manipulation. John already spoke of this in verse 12 when he said “*To all who received him*” did you notice that he didn’t merely say “*believe in him*”. Many people say, “*I believe in Christ, I believe that he lived, that he died and rose again. I believe he was who he said he was*.” James wrote in 2:19 “*You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble*!” The simple acknowledgement of the truths regarding Jesus does not make any one a Christian. It is when you receive him, when you yield to him, when you surrender to his Lordship that you become a Christian. In John’s first letter he wrote “*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life*.” Notice the way John put it “*He who has the Son has life!*” Let us just suppose that I had a medical condition that required me to take a medicine without which I would cease to live. Now I could know the truth of this I could even have in my possession the medicine but unless I ingested of it all the prescribed way I would die. You see mere knowledge of my need and even having the remedy on my possession would not save me.

Hey saints it’s for this express reason that we need to realize the purpose of our gathering together. Far too many times God’s people forget what we are here for; we are not here as attorney’s to debate in order to convince a jury. We are not here as entertainers to make sure we are moved by the performance. No, we are here to bear witness of the Light. I have never saved anyone, never changed a heart and I never will at best I can introduce you to the only One that can the Word of Life!

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**I. 1:1-18 Picture perfect**

**c. 1:14-18 Who has believed?**

**“Word among us”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 14-15 God made visible in the flesh**

**III. Vs. 16-18 The fullness of grace and truth**

**I. Intro.**

Just who is Jesus? This week we have been told that he was just a man who had a family and they have the names on 10 bone boxes or ossuaries to prove it and are speaking of extracting the “*DNA of God*”. A leading Hebrew University archeologist Leah DiSegni a Jewish Israeli has said, “*It’s a pity people are so easily fooled and more ready to believe in fables than in reality*”. She went on to say that she didn’t think that the film makers James Cameron and Simcha Jabobovici believed the theory themselves but were just out to make money. The tomb was actually discovered in 1980, 27 years ago, by archeologist professor Amos Kloner. His comments about the soon to be released film called “*The Lost Tomb of Jesus*” do to air on the discovery channel on March 4th were published in the Jerusalem Post where he stated, “*It makes a great story for a TV film but it’s completely impossible. It’s nonsense.*” Then we have the Mormon’s claim concerning Jesus “*as we are so once was God as God is we will become*”. To the even more bizarre a while back actress and New Age guru Shirley McClain had every one in a packed auditorium light a candle to illustrate that people are “*divine lights*” just as Jesus and others had discovered about themselves. So she had everyone in the auditorium light their candle and all the house lights were turned off as they basked in the glow of their own “*divine light*” but what she hadn’t anticipated was that soon after her proclamation that the heat from the candles would set off the fire sprinkler system, not only extinguishing all the candles but showing that her idea was pardon the pun “***all wet***”. When it comes to Jesus **people would always rather believe the ridiculous than the miraculous**. But John was an eyewitness and in these verses he is going to tells just who Jesus really is.

**II. Vs. 14-15 God made visible in the flesh**

Vs. 14 Paul spoke to Timothy in 1 Tim 3:16 “*great is the mystery of godliness:* ***God was manifested in the flesh****, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory*.” The author of Hebrews opens his letter by saying “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last* ***days spoken to us by His Son****, whom He has* ***appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person****, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*”, that is what we are looking at in John’s words.

These words of John would have blown the minds of both Greeks and Jewish readers hearing that the Word became flesh. You see the Greeks viewed their gods such as Zeus and Hermes as mere super-men and in no way equal to the Logos or thought of God so to the Greeks John says, “*The Logos the expression of the very thought of God who made everything seen and unseen, became flesh*.” Now the Jews had such a high view of God He was out of reach. In Exodus 20 after the giving of the commandments and the thundering and lighting they said to Moses “*You talk to Him*!” God was the One who had parted the sea, feed them with manna from heaven and water from a rock that He would become flesh and make His home among them relationally blew their minds. John in the 14th verse gives us *five remarkable truths concerning the incarnation*:

1. **Fully Man** “*The Word became flesh* ”. John is **not** saying that the eternal, equal and essential “**Logos**” came and **entered a man** or **dwelt in a man** or **filled a man** but literally “*became flesh*”, **He did not merely posses a man He became a man, that which is divine in nature became fully human**. That is Paul’s testimony as well in Philip. 2:5-8 where he proclaims “*Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*.” John gives us his version of the nativity as the word “*Became*” is in the tense that means “*of His own will*” so we have **the virgin birth** form the perspective of Jesus.
2. **God with us**: Next John says that He “*dwelt among us*” the word here is “*tabernacled among us*” today we would say He pitched His tent next to us. In Ex 26:14 we are told that Moses was instructed to take a “*covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent*” then in chapter 40:34 “*the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle*” Jesus was the fulfillment of this as He was the “Lamb of God” and His blood stained skin was illuminated as the glory of the Lord filling His earthly tent. The tent of the tabernacle was plain on the outside but on the interior was lined with precious silver, gold, jewels and fine linens as the glory of God would be inside the tent that was a pattern of what Jesus was while on earth. Of further interest to me is that Jesus was most likely born during the fall as Shepherds were out with their flocks which would have been during the time of the “*Feast of Tabernacles*” where the Jews would camp out as pilgrims as did their ancestors on their way to the promised land from Egypt it was the most joyous of the feasts of Israel. Hey saints think of the symbolism of this as Jesus came and Tabernacled among us leading us out of the world through the wilderness of life with great joy as we are heading for the promised land. Now we are told in Matt. 17:2 that on the Mount of transfiguration some of that glory leaked out so people saw Him as he truly is God the Son.
3. **Light of the world**: Then John speaks as an eye witness saying “*we beheld His glory*” which gives us this great picture of what James would speak of in 2:1 saying that Jesus Christ is “*the Lord of glory*”. If you have ever gone out camping and placed a flash light or a lantern in your tent at night and then walked outside your tent then you have a picture of what Jesus was as He “*pitched His tent among us*” as the “*light of men*” (verse 4) when His glory illuminated the darkness of fallen humanity.
4. **Lord of glory**: “*The glory as of the only begotten of the Father*”: The phrase in the Greek is “*only born of the Father*” which refers to the eternal relationship that existed prior to the incarnation. Why does this matter? Well remember here that John’s context is that of beholding the “*Glory of the Lord*” and here what he is declaring is that such glory is a shared glory with the Father. That is what Jesus will say to Philip after he said, “*Show us the Father*” in John 14:8-11 “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*” and “*I am in the Father and the Father in Me*”.
5. **Portrait of perfection**: “*Full of grace and truth*”: This two word description is how John describes the glory of God. Grace is best defined by the acrostic poem: **G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense “G-R-A-C-E” or if you will **grace is love giving itself**. Truth is the manifestation of all that is real and so we see Jesus was full of both grace and truth. He was the ultimate revelation of what is real in life; and he is the fullest expression of love giving itself, pouring out, reaching out to others. It is what John revealed in verse 4 concerning life and light, what is life if not love giving of it’s self? What is light if not truth manifesting all that is real? Have you ever said, “*I wish I had more light on this situation*”? You are asking for more truth and we are told that in Jesus is **ALL** love giving it’s self, **ALL** truth showing what is real, and that tells me that you won’t find Him lacking in either of these categories. Some folks are very truthful but show very little grace and being around them you feel as though you never measure up to their standards. Others are very gracious but not very truthful and they make you feel good but they tend to be on the flakey side. Ah but Jesus John say’s was neither “hard” nor “flakey” He spoke the truth in Love so that we “*may grow up in all things into Him*” (Eph. 4:15).

Vs. 15 The apostle brings John the Baptist back into this by saying that John’s witness was that Jesus was the “*glory of the Lord*”. In Matt. 3:11 the apostle John was there when John the Baptist said, “*He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry*.” Again the English lacks the clarity of the Greek as John heard the Baptist declare Jesus superiority proclaiming Him God and not just a man as he. Then the further quote, “*This one who comes after me in time was before me in time. He was indeed my first*. (That is the literal expression used.) “*The one who came before me preceded me in time.*” How can “*He who came after me be before me*?” It is a question that the apostle wanted us to search out the answer too and it is one that he had already said as Jesus shared the glory of the Father. In Micah 5 we have this prophecy that says “*Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel,* ***Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting***.” That is what John the Baptist is referring too here.

**III. Vs. 16-18 The fullness of grace and truth**

Vs. 16 John says that “*Love giving of its self*” is of an endless supply especially when put next to the “law given through Moses”. “*Grace for Grace*”, a supply that is new every time you need “*God’s love giving of its self*” in the person of Jesus. And when don’t we need God’s Love? Here aloud the words of Paul in Rom. 8:33-35 “*Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword*?” I can’t tell you how thankful I am to the Lord that He continues to offer me:

* His grace and not His condemnation!
* His intercession not just a pointing finger at all my faults!
* His arms of love instead of His doghouse!

David wrote of such in psalm 139:7-12 “*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*” We can not exhaust the grace of God. We can’t? Paul wrote in Rom 5:20 “*where sin abounded, grace abounded much more*”, who thank God for that truth as at times I’ve felt that my flesh has pushed God to the limit and beyond but not so He as ample supply for you and I. I’m thinking that there is more here today that need to hear this than just me!

Vs. 17 The law elicits the consciousness of sin and our need for redemption as Paul stated in Gal 3:24-25 “*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor*.” The law did its job bringing us to grace and truth through Jesus Christ. In Gal 3:2-3 Paul writes “*Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*” There was grace under the law as seen in the sacrifice of each animal and there was truth but the fullness of these is only found in Jesus. Here we are given two dispensations, the law given by Moses, which continues on but has reached its fulfillment in the grace and truth of Jesus. There was truth in the law and grace was present in the temple sacrifices but they were only a shadow of which Jesus is the fullness of. John uses the name Jesus 256 times more than any other gospel Matt. 172, Mark 95, and Luke 100 times.

The law was brought forth high on a hill as the mountain shook and the sky darkened as lighting and thunder roared and when it was brought forth 3000 people died according Ex 32:28. Ah but when grace and truth came forward it did so quietly in a manger and when the spirit came down 3000 were saved. The law kills but Jesus gives life! There are a great many times I’m afraid that either by my actions or words I’m attempting to be made “*perfect by the flesh*” instead of trusting in Jesus Christ to whom “*grace and truth*” came through.

Vs. 18 Have you ever asked, “*I wish I knew God better*?” If you would want to know God better than all you need to do is get better acquainted with Jesus. What does it mean that “*no one has seen God* *at any time*” didn’t Adam, Abraham, Moses, Ezekiel, Daniel and Isaiah? What John is saying that there vision of His invisibility is limited His fullness can only be seen in the words and works of Jesus and the longer we walk with Him the more we will see of Him. You see Jesus is the only visible declaration of the unseen God and that is what Paul declares in Col. 1:15 saying that Jesus “*is the image of the invisible God*”. So in Jesus we have seen the character and nature of the unseen Father in both His words and works. The words “*only begotten*” means **unique** **one of a kind** and that with the word “*declared*” tells us the Word explained by His presence who God is. The Word of God in human flesh where the Glory of God dwelled revealed the unseen Father to all of humanity. Interesting to me is the word “*declared*” in the Greek is where we get our word “*expound*” so then Jesus taught us the Father, He expound to us all that the Father is. Hey saints that is we need when we open the Word a further revelation of “grace and truth”!

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**a. 1:19-2:11 New joy**

**John 1:19-34**

**“Highway to heaven”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 19-28 Highway man**

**III. Vs. 29-34 Cure not containment**

**I. Intro.**

The apostle moves on from his summation to seven proofs as seen in the words and works of Jesus. But First he is going to address this mysterious person already mentioned in verse 6 and verse 15, John the Baptist. In Luke 7:28 Jesus said of John the Baptist that “*among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist*”. Yet in John 10:41 we are told that “*John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man* (Jesus) *were true*.” Then in Luke 16:16 Jesus said “*The law and the prophets were until John*.” John is the only one of the prophets who longed to look into that which they were speaking of and did, yet Jesus said in the rest of the verse in Luke 7:28 “*he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*” We shall look not so much at the man but upon his mission which is given to us in these 16 verses.

**II. Vs. 19-28 Highway man**

Vs. 19-21 John gives us the setting as to the inquiry “*when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"*” John had no pedigree; no papers and we are told that he had already rebuffed the religious leader’s questions by calling them a “*Brood of vipers*” in Matt. 3:7. Now more time has elapsed (at least 6 weeks) and great numbers were coming out to him and people wanted to know just who he was as his popularity was growing. But in the Greek the question of these religious leaders was not so much a question as it was a statement “*Who do you think you are*?” John was a maverick and his words and actions were stirring folks up, why he was calling the Jews to repentance and even publicly immersing them in water “*Who told him he could do that, that’s not part of our traditions*”. What follows is John’s threefold statement of who he is **not** this is followed **not** with an explanation of who he is but rather what he is doing.

Now you will notice with each of these three questions a declining response by John. First he “*confessed, he did not deny, but he confessed, 'I am not the Messiah*”, then we are told when asked about being Elijah he responded “*I am not*” and final when asked if he is The Prophet he says, “*No*”. What that suggests to me is a declining interest in answering the question as to his identity. Let me just make an observation on human nature based upon this and it is simply this; we are over concerned with “*who people are*”. When someone becomes popular everybody wants to come around to know “*who they are*” and here is my response, “who cares”? John gave them no fodder for the tabloids but rather he just spoke of what he was doing. I’m going to like hanging around John the Baptist in heaven as he always seems to be on target, he is never drawn into the “*important people trivia game*”. Instead he is like the ink on paper as his only purpose is to give hue to the word. John’s life is all about **purpose** and **not importance** and I believe personally we would all live much happier lives if we were more like John and not caught up in our self importance but consumed with God’s purpose! The truth is that those who are consumed with God’s purpose and not their self importance are the ones people remember in this life anyway!

1. “*He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the* ***Christ****.*"” John is emphatic here saying, “*I am not the Christ*”. He wanted to make “*It perfectly clear*”; as Richard Nixon was found of saying, that he was not the promised Messiah. There were probably rumors flying around that had gotten back to John and he was not going to have any of that talk. Notice that the apostle Johns says that John the Baptist “*confessed, he did not deny, but he confessed, 'I am not the Messiah*” The repeated word “*confessed*” sandwiching the phrase “*did not deny*” is clearly emphasizing the fact that John the Baptist was not vague when it came to him not being the Messiah.
2. “*What then? Are you* ***Elijah****?" He said, "I am not*.” Why did they wonder if he was Elijah? Well I think there are several reasons. **First** there was that prophetic word back in the final verse of the Old Testament written 400 years earlier in Mal 4:5-6 “*I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers*”. There was coming a prophet who would have a special ministry like Elijah of “*turning the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to the fathers*” that is a ministry of calling a rebellious nation back to God. Elijah was a rugged, fearless man who called down judgment upon the people so when people heard John, with his fearless message they began asking, “*Is this Elijah*?” The **second** thing that seemed to bring about the comparison was John’s appearance as we are told in 2 Kings 1:8 that apparently Elijah was “*A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist*.” And in Matt. 3:4 John “*was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey*.” It seems as though there was a similarity between the lives and looks of the two that drew the comparison. Hey pastor why did Jesus say in Matt. 17:12-13, “*I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished….and the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist*”? Well in Luke 1:17 we are given the answer as the angel Gabriel spoke to John's father Zechariah saying that his son to be born son was to, “*go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*”. John's ministry was like Elijah's as he went before Jesus in the spirit and the power of Elijah but he was not Elijah.
3. “*Are you the* ***Prophet****?" And he answered, "No."*” Well they thought if you aren’t the messiah and you aren’t the Elijah are you “The Prophet”? You see they remembered that Moses had said in Deut. 18:15 that “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear*” so they thought well maybe John is “*the Prophet*”? And with simply clarity John says, “No”.

John the Baptist’s father Zachariah was from the priestly tribe so John could have said, “*I’m the son of a priest, I had a miraculous birth*” but he didn’t do that. There are only a handful of people who say they are the Christ audibly but based upon Jesus’ words in John 15:5 where He says, “*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing*”, there are a bunch of us at times act as if we can do something without Him.

 No matter what this delegation did John the Baptist continued not to be interested in talking about himself. It’s cool to realize that Jesus will always be standing with you no matter what group you find yourself in if you are talking to other about Him but the moment we take the attention off of Jesus we won’t sense His presence. Hey saints that is the same with you and me we are not to draw attention towards ourselves but are rather to draw attention towards Jesus. Who are you John was the question and John answered I’m a voice, a Highway man!

Vs. 22-23 So finally in a tone of frustration they say “*Who are you….What do you say about yourself?*” These fellows who came out to John the Baptist did so with a statement “*Who do you think you are!*” Ah but in three quick answers from John they have been reduced “*We need an answer to those who sent us*”, “*Help us out John give us something*”, they pleaded. There is a lesson here that we all can learn from and that is a lesson of importance, John continued saying, “*I’m not important but let me tell ya who is!*”

John the Baptist quotes from Isaiah 40:3 not concerning who he is but rather what he is called to do. “*I’m the advance man of the great King*”. John who was a man filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb and had learned of what he was called to do in that passage of scripture. John says of himself, “*I’m just a highway builder, working for department of transportation*”. Now It’s important here to see that John saw himself **not** building a Highway in the desert for men to get to God but **rather for God to have entrance to the dry places of the human heart**. Now if you go to Isaiah in the 40th chapter verse 4 we are told how a highway is to be built “*Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth*”. If you and I were to talk to engineers (Highway builders) today and quote them this verse they would say, “*Yep that’s what we do!*” “*We fill in the low spots, level out the high spots, straighten out the crooked places and smooth out the rough road*!” Hey folk’s this is still the way repentance works in the human heart.

* You see if you feel worthless, depressed, that your life is meaningless well then you are in a **valley** and God’s way into your dry heart is to lift you out of the valley.
* Now if you are proud and self-sufficient, thinking that you are able to deal with your own life apart from God then the dry way into your heart is get you down off of your “*High horse of* ***a mountain***”.
* If you are dealing with life in a **crooked** manner bending the rules to fit your life in your business or in your relationships with other people then God’s way into your dry heart it to straighten you out.
* Maybe the way you deal with your life is by being **rough** over other people as it’s easier to fix others then deal with the person in the mirror. Well God’s way into the dryness of your life is to smooth those things out.

Only God knows the “*road conditions*” of your heart but He will meet you right where you are at and He will always choose the right highway that will allow Him to come to you.

Vs. 24-25 The apostle John adds that these questions were coming from the Pharisees from the self righteous and they wanted to know what the significance of baptism in light of the fact that he wasn’t the Messiah, Elijah or the prophet. The Jews had a form of baptism through ceremonial washings but this full immersion was reserved for Gentiles who wanted to become Jews. Now notice that John doesn’t answer their question as to “*why*” but speaks of a greater baptism by a greater person. In the Greek it is clear that John the Baptist is contrasting what he has done with what Jesus will do and as such is saying “*I’m dealing only with the externals*”. Now skip down to verse 28 as the Apostle John tells us that “*These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing*.” Bethabara is the right name not Bethany which is up on a hill not by a stream. The name means the “*house of the ford*” (no not the car) but the “*place of passage*”. To the Jews this was very significant spot as it was where the Israelites entered the promise land under Joshua. Now you put it all together and you get the picture that John the Baptists ministry was preparing peoples dry hearts for Heaven “*the promise land*” and the Highway was the way of repentance from “*valley’s, mountains, crooked ways and rough spots*” so that Joshua (another way of saying Jesus) could come into their hearts and lead them to the promised land, heaven. “*You want to know who I am”*, John said, “*I’ll tell you what I’m about and tell you who He is.*”

Vs. 26-28 After telling them what his ministry was John the Baptist goes on to speak of Jesus. The phrase “*But there stands One among you*” is in the *present continuous* in the Greek which means that Jesus was actually standing in the midst of the crowd when he said this. Now this is important when compared with the other gospels as it reveals that this all took place around six weeks after Jesus had been baptized by John in the Jordan River which is what we will see in verse 32 as the apostle John recorded what was said by John the Baptist the following day. According to the other gospels right after Jesus’ baptism by John (spoken in the past by John in verse 32) Jesus left to go into the desert for forty days and forty nights being continually tempted by the devil. All of which had taken place before the Pharisees had sent their delegation to question John the Baptist and by the time they came Jesus had come and was now standing in the crowd. Can you just imaging everyone looking around trying to see who it was that was standing among them whom they didn’t know? That’s always the case though isn’t it? We spend most of our lives right next to Jesus and because our hearts and lives are in a desert we never realize that He stands right at the door of our hearts knocking desiring to have a relationship with us.

 Untying a sandal strap was the job of the lowest servant and John is saying that position is too good for him. Among the Rabbis they would have disciples who were to show their hunger to learn by doing what ever the Rabbi said but so this wouldn’t get abused there was something that a Rabbi couldn’t ask his student to do and that was to untie his sandal and here John says I’m not good enough to do this for my Rabbi.

**III. Vs. 29-34 Cure not containment**

Vs. 29-30 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*!” Hear the words of John the Baptist prior to the baptism of Jesus in Matt. 3:11-12 as he spoke concerning Jesus saying, “*His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” Then the baptism and the dove lighting upon Jesus head and John’s confession in verse 31 “*I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel*” and Jesus immediately went out into the wilderness for 40 days and has come back and John must have thought of those scriptures and now says, “*Behold the Lamb of God*”.

This phrase to the Jews was huge for since the beginning they had practiced the sacrificial death and the shedding of blood of an innocent one to cover their guilt and sin. All down through time God’s people had known about the sacrificial lamb, they knew of God’s provision in the garden for Adam and Eve, they knew of Abel’s offering that was accepted, they knew of God’s substitution for Abraham on the very hill where one day Jesus would be sacrificed, they knew of the pet lambs blood that was sprinkled on the door posts in the sign of a cross so the angel of death would Passover. They knew of the daily sacrifices and the season of Passover but on that day at that very statement “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the* ***sin*** *of the world*” that which the author of Hebrews in 8:5 calls the “*copy and shadow of the heavenly things*” appeared! It is what Paul spoke of in Col. 2:17 all those events for thousands of years were merely “*a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ*” and right at that very moment the shadow passed as the substance stood before them. This is by the way the first time in the New Testament that the word lamb is used in the Bible and the first time the word lamb was used in the Bible in the Old Testament was in Genesis 22 where we were told by Abraham at the inquiry of Isaac “*God will provide Himself, a lamb*” not “*God will provide a lamb for Himself*”. So for all that time the scholars wanted to know “*Where was the Lamb provided for Abraham*” as God provided a ram in the thicket that day and here John answers the inquiry “*Behold the Lamb of God*”!

There is often a miss quotation of this verse that John the Baptist spoke and it is in adding a letter, we often say that John said “*sins*” of the world but he did not, he said “*sin*” of the world, **singular** not plural. Had John said sins he would have been speaking of the ***effects*** of a **cause** but not the cause its self and as such we would have had no ***cure*** only ***containment***. Like a person who has a tumor in their brain may take a pain killer to stop the pain but it offers no cure. But Jesus came not just to contain the effects of our sins but cure the cause of it! Paul said it this way in 2 Cor. 5:21 “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*.” The prophet Isaiah, makes the same proclamation in 53:5 saying, “*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And* ***by His stripes we are healed*.**” Read that last phrase again “*by His stripes we are healed*”, “***healed***” my friends not just coping with, made to feel better, to lesson the symptoms of but cured! And in that one letter we have the truth that Jesus didn’t just atone for all our acts of sin, He died for what we were by nature sinners! Do you not now want to know Him who has done this for you in your stead? In Hebrews 10:4 we are told that “*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*” The author of Hebrews says, “*these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year can’t, make those who approach perfect for if they did they would have ceased offering them*”. There for when “*He came into the world…through the offering of His body…offered one sacrifice for sins forever*”. That is what John the Baptist meant when he said, “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*”.

Vs. 31-33 Here recorded for us is the commencement of Jesus ministry which began at his baptism when the Spirit of God fell on Him and He was identified with fallen man and the heavenly God. In the Old Testament we are told that both the priest as well as the sacrifice had to be washed and this is the only time where we see the Priest as the sacrifice being prepared for the sacrifice.

Vs. 34 John the Baptist is the first of ten times in John’s gospel that the phrase “*son of God*” will appear and it will be said or implied by seven different people:

* John the Baptist 1:34
* Nathanael 1:49
* Jesus 3:18, 5:25, 10:36, 11:4 (5 times Jesus uses it of Himself)
* Man born blind 9:35-38 (implied, said by Jesus)
* Martha 11:27
* Jews before Pilate 19:7
* Apostle John 20:31

 **The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**a. 1:19-2:11 New joy**

**John 1:35-51**

**“What do you seek?”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 35-42 What are you looking for?**

**III. Vs. 43-51 The answer**

**I. Intro.**

Most scholars feel that the apostle John is around 15 years of age at the time of the events recorded here, yet when John wrote this he was 90. Look for a moment at verse 39 as John wrote down *the very hour of day* that this took place. Seventy five years have passed and John can still remember the ***very hour*** in which he and Andrew first met Jesus. What that tells us is that John’s encounter with Jesus was unforgettable as we are further told that they “*remained with Him that day*”. John **heard** those words; “*Behold the Lamb of God*” then 75 years later according to Revelation 5 he would **see** the “*Lamb of God*” in heaven while on the Island of Patmos. Simply put nothing had happened in 75 years to lessen John’s opinion of Who he meet that day. No tomb of bones, no hidden picture in a painting, no new fictional book by Judas. Friends John had been sentenced to death for his testimony concerning that encounter 75 years earlier had there been any doubt, any other reasoning for his decision to follow Jesus that day I’m convinced John would have never maintained his witness.

What we have recorded for us in these 17 verses is the calling of the first six disciples. They are not what you would think that would shake the known world in 70 years in fact they look far more like the ***dirty dozen***. They are ordinary men with the same concerns that people to day have yet each of the six recorded here come away forever changed by there meeting. It is my prayer that each here today would come away forever changed by their meeting with Him this day as well.

**II. Vs. 35-42 What are you looking for?**

Vs. 35-37 John tells us that Jesus began with two men who had already been in training under John the Baptist. It is clear from that account that John the Baptist intended these two disciples to leave him and join Jesus. In Chapter 3:20 John the Baptist will say, “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” it appears that John understood that once the Messiah appeared his own ministry would fade away. Men had followed John and now he indicates to them that it is time for them to follow the One he came to announce.

John the Baptist wasn’t trying to hold men unto him self, his purpose wasn’t to build a group around himself. Far too often this happens in ministries and in churches where a person is trying to draw a group around themselves. Not so with John, he was seeking to point men to Jesus, he did not care about gathering disciples after himself. He was perfectly satisfied to have these disciples leave his circle and follow Jesus. It fulfilled his ministry; it did not take away from it. What a great example that ought to be to us not to draw people to our church but to push people to Jesus. It is easy to fall into this isn’t it? Hey saints it is our responsibility to make sure that we are not drawing people to our personalities, our opinions but always be pushing them to Jesus.

Have you ever wondered about why John introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God again after having already done so in verse 29? It may not make sense to us gentiles but it would to Jews as they were familiar with the sin offering and John understood that the first problem that people have to settle with God is the problem of sin. The only real access we have to the Living God is through the doorway of forgiveness of sin. When we are ready to deal with our sin and to bring it to God, then we have an open door into the Kingdom of God. We will never find Jesus until we find him as the “*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*” That is how John announces him, “*Behold, the Lamb of God.*” So the first time John the Baptist utters these words they were in reference to Jesus’ **mission** and this time (a day latter) it was a reference to His **ministry** and as such it is an invitation to join Jesus. But my mind wonders of those who heard the same words that Andrew and the apostle John did and yet did not leave him and follow Jesus. There are a lot of folks like this aren’t there? People who have had their hearts stirred, been challenged yet are unwilling to take the next step even when they are being told by the person they are following to do so. There are churches full of folks like that, perhaps some even sitting here this morning who hear me speak of the “*Lamb of God*” yet do not “*follow Jesus*” now I’m glad you’re here this morning but why not today, this very moment decide to follow Jesus?

Vs. 38-42 We are told in verse 40 that one of these two that followed Jesus that day was Andrew who was Simon Peter’s brother but who was the other disciple? Well when one considers that in this gospel John never speaks of himself it is almost universally accepted that the other disciple is none other than John himself.

But what fascinates me more than this unmentioned disciple is Jesus’ question to the two of them; “***What*** *do you seek*?” These are the first words of Jesus in this gospel as well as His public ministry and they are in a form of a question. These four words cut to the heart of it don’t they? I mean Jesus didn’t ask “**Who** *do you seek*?” that would have made sense but “**What** *do you seek*?” Have you ever pondered that at some time in your life? “*Why am I here*?” “*What do I really want out of life*?” This question is so penetrating that even the framers of our constitution put the quest of it in the preamble saying that we all had the right for the “*pursuit of happiness*” and there have been folks involved in that “pursuit” but never seem to find it. On vacation we stopped in San Juan Puerto Rico where the guy that first discovered the Island was in search of the “*Fountain of Youth*” he was on just such a quest.

I suggest to you that most people never arrive at the “***whom***”, because they are in a never ending rat race of “***what***” they can plug into their lives to get what they want out of life. “*What do you seek*” a job, a spouse, health, more friends, “*If I just had this, or that then I’d be happy, then my life would have meaning*”. The truth is most of us never have the means by which we can pursue the “*the what*” we simple lack the resources to do so but their was one fellow that had it all and even wrote down that there never was a “***what***” that could bring any meaning to life, **Solomon**. Here is was a guy who had it all and sat out on the quest seeking the meaning of life in all the “***P’s***”. The “P’s”? Yeh you know “***possessions, pleasures, power and prestige***” only to declare that in the end all of it was “*vanity and grasping for the wind*”. You know what you have in you hand after grasping for the wind? Why you have nothing! Have you ever noticed that in your own life that **the pursuit of something turns to nothing once something became everything?** Look out at the “*Who’s who of today as tomorrow they will just be the, Who*?” At the very end of the book of Ecclesiastes as Solomon tells us the conclusion of his pursuit in chapter 12:13 as he writes for all “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all*.” This reminds me of a fellow who was walking through a cemetery one day and came across a very interesting exhortation writing on a tombstone it read, “*Remember, friend, as you walk by as you are now so once was I, and as I am now, you to shall be, so prepare for death and follow me*.” Underneath those engraved word were hand written ones that replied, “*To follow you I’m not content until I know which way you went*!” So you see Jesus is asking them to define their purpose and goals “*what do you seek*”, what are you pursuing to find meaning and happiness in you life? Many come to Jesus with hopes that adding a little of Him to their lives will help them obtain the “*what*” they are seeking. It is always good to ask ourselves “*What do I have in mind, am I seeking Jesus so that I can get “what” I want?*”

We are not told which of them responded but we are told how they responded. “*Rabbi, where are You staying?*” Did you get that? Jesus asked them “*what they sought*” and one of them responded not with a what answer but clumsily with a who answer, “*We aren’t seeking a what to the meaning of life we are seeking a who and we think it might be You*!” “*We want to make our home with you*.” And where was Jesus home? Well He would later say, “*Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air of nests but the Son of man has no where to lay His head*.” Jesus was homeless and He was inviting them to be as He was. He saints this is not our home and if we are coming to Him in order to benefit our worldly existence then we are there for the wrong reasons. All of the promises of God are wrapped up in a ***Person*** not in a different situation, God never creates joy from new and better circumstances He creates new circumstances by giving you Joy.

Jesus invited John and Andrew to be a part of His life He didn’t live a private life He invited people to live with Him. Friends there can be no “*Come and see*” by Jesus until we have first come to the conclusion that the purpose and meaning of life is not in a ***what*** but in a ***Who***. Jesus’ answer is an **invitation to investigation** isn’t it? They took Jesus up on the invitation and stayed with Him the rest of the day and what they heard and saw kept their attention and convinced them enough to seek out others. The Greek reading of this says that Andrew was “*first*” to find his brother which suggests that John went to find his brother as well and that Andrew found Simon Peter before John found James. All four of them were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee and had probably traveled those 70 miles to bring their fish to market in Jerusalem.

Andrew had only one message, “*We have found the Messiah*” (verse 41) and that was enough to get Simon Peter to come with him. So in one afternoon Andrew and John had come to the conclusion that they had found the mean of life the One in whom all of History had pointed towards. And even more remarkable to me is that Peter went with his brother to see for himself. Did you know that this is what evangelism is all about? It is simply telling folks what that you have found the person who hung the stars in the sky and put the color on the pedals of flowers and that He is the reason for life giving them the same invitation to investigation that Jesus gave you. It is the nature of Christian experience that those who enjoy the experience desire to share their experience with others.

Literally verse 42 reads, He *looked down into* Peter and said “***You are***….then He said….***You shall be***”. Oh how wonderful that our Lord pears down into what we are and says, “*I know who you are ah but I also know what you shall be.*” That is what Paul spoke of to the Philippians in 1:6 saying, “*being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*”. When Jesus saw Peter He said, “*I know you, you are shifting sand but also know what you will be*”. Those of you who are builders know that you can’t build much of anything on shifting sand but you can on a rock and that is what Jesus can do for a heart that trusts in Him. He can cause that which no one can build upon or count on to become “*rock*” solid. Jesus saw what Simon Peter was a person “*easily influenced by what others are saying and doing around him*.” Ah but Jesus didn’t stop with what Peter was He saw what he would be an anchor a “*rock*” a steadying influence for all around him.

**III. Vs. 43-51 The answer**

Vs. 43-44 There is nothing dramatic recorded about the call of Philip as Jesus simply says “*Follow Me*”, and Philip does. Bethsaida was on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee near the area where Jesus fed the five thousand men plus the women and children, it is the hometown of Peter and Andrew (verse 44). Now that’s interesting to me as Bethsaida is a barren place yet it will a place where God will feed those in need. In my life it always seems to be in the barrenness places where there is nothing outwardly to suggest the presence of God that He will bring forth a feast for others.

Notice that it says that Jesus found Philip not that Philip found Jesus and that Philip was from the same city as was Andrew, Peter, John and James yet they did not go and get Philip. Have you ever felt like Philip you are always being left out of the loop? Here these two have just met the most exciting person ever and they simply didn’t get Philip in fact this is the only recorded action of Philip as the other gospels just mention his name. I suppose that Philip was vote **most forgettable** in his high school year book but he wasn’t forgotten by Jesus. He will appear later in this gospel dealing with loaves and fishes, when gentiles wish to see Jesus and final with the question about seeing the Father and appears to me that Philip is a thinker but a bit on the shy side so Jesus has to go and get him and with a two words statement invites him by saying, “*Follow Me*”. How simple this is we want every thing put in place and Jesus says it is rather simple “*Follow Me*” and it will be put in the proper place in the proper time. That is so often my problem like Peter I lose focus on Jesus and get my eyes on the wind’s and the waves and begin to sink when all I need to do is simply “*Follow Him*”.

Philip finds Nathanael and proclaims that they had found Jesus instead of Jesus finding him. That’s the way we are though isn’t it Jesus does all the work and invites us to investigate and then we see for ourselves that He was worth finding. Ah but to Nathanael all of Philips words concerning Jesus being the fulfillment of all that Moses, the Law and the Prophets wrote was lost when Philip gave Jesus’ home town, Nazareth. With this, Nathanael prejudices himself against Jesus. If Jesus comes from Nazareth, that is all Nathanael cares to know about Him! Nathanael was from a larger city right over the hill Cana of Galilee where the next chapter will take us. Today the roles are reversed as Nazareth in the larger town and Cana is a small village but it was the opposite then. Don’t pass by the skepticism of Nathanael as he may question Jesus being all that Philip said he was but at least he went to see for himself. I don’t have a problem with skeptic’s only dishonest ones who say, “*Oh Jesus Isn’t who you say He is they found his bones in a tomb and I’ve read the fictional book of Judas who says it was a all a scam*”. So the dishonest skeptic will take the word of fictional writers and those out to make a buck without any investigation on your own that makes a person a scoffer not a skeptic. Look at Philip’s response to Nathanael’s prejudice “*come and see*”, I like that response as a way of handling those who have prejudices against Jesus. Instead of arguing against Nathanael’s prejudice, Phillip simply invites him to meet Jesus for himself.

Now as soon as Jesus saw him He responded very interestingly saying, “*Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.*” Now that’s and interesting play on words as the word “*deceit*” in the Greek would be used as the name for Jacob and Israel was the covenant name given to Jacob by God. So Jesus tells Nathanael Ah here is one who is ruled by God instead of one who is ruled by self. And don’t you love Nathanael’s response “*How do you know me*?” “*I’m Israel in whom there is no Jacob! Nothing false about me, nothing hidden*.” Now Jesus used a Rabbinical here saying that He saw him “*under the fig tree*” as that term was used of a person who was meditating and studying a portion of scripture. You see many make the miracle of this passage that Jesus saw Nathanael under a fig tree but the miracle is that Jesus saw what Nathanael was studying under the fig tree and referred to it by calling him an Israelite in who there was no Jacob. That is why Nathanael responses the way he dose saying, “*Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel*!” And then in verse 51 Jesus tells Nathanael that the very portion he was looking (Genesis 28:12) at was speaking of Jesus saying “*I’m the link that bridges heaven and earth, I’m the latter by which people can come into the kingdom of heaven*.”

The title “*Son of man*” is the favorite description of Jesus about Himself as it is used 83 times in the gospels and 13 times in John’s gospel. The idea behind this phrase is not “*the perfect man*, *the ideal man* or *the common man*”, it is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14, where the King of Glory coming to judge the world is called the Son of Man. Jesus used this title often because in His day, it was a Messianic title free from political and nationalistic sentiment. When a Jewish person of that time heard “King” or “Christ” they often thought of a political or military savior so Jesus emphasized another term that didn’t have those connotations.

So by the end of the 4th day Jesus had six men who trust in Him but they didn’t immediately forsake all and follow Him as that would come a year latter that He will say to them “*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men*.” (Matt. 4:19-20) Is that not interesting that the immediate was proceeded by a year of preparation before they were ready to “*immediately leave their nets and follow Him*.”? In Luke 9:62 Jesus told one fellow “*No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*.” Yet we can clearly see that there may be some time before a heart is ready to put their hand on that plow but once they have they can not take it off.

As we look this section we are shown four ways of coming to Jesus:

* Andrew and John came to Jesus because of the preaching of John the Baptist.
* Peter and James came to Jesus because of the witness of their brothers.
* Phillip came to Jesus as a result of the direct call of Jesus.
* Nathaniel came to Jesus as he overcame personal prejudices by a personal encounter with Jesus.

But each of them found the answer to what their hearts longed for in Jesus. We often put too much upon how a person enters into a relationship with Jesus and not enough on how they finish.

 **The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**a. 1:19-2:11 New joy**

**John 2:1-11**

**“From emptiness to joy”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-5 Is it my time?**

**III. Vs. 6-11 The joy of transformation**

**I. Intro.**

The story before us has two parts and great mysteries in both. The first section (verses 1-5) introduces us to the time, location and people present for the miracle and we are brought into a conversation of Mary and Jesus which is puzzling to say the least. Then in the 2nd section (verses 6-11) we are taken into the miracle it’s self and left with questions as to how this miracle recorded was a sign of Jesus’ manifested glory (verse 11). I’m not saying that turning 120 gallons of water to wine isn’t a neat miracle but let’s be honest this is happening in vineyards all over the world it is just taking a lot longer.

When I start out studying the text each week I do so with a 3 x 5 card to write out my first impressions and on this occasion I simply wrote out a question, “*How do these 11 verses manifest Jesus glory so that His disciples believed more in Him*?” To further my question is the statement in verse 11 that the miracle was more than just a miracle it was a “*sign to manifest His glory*”, not merely a miracle John says but a sign! Not every miracle is a sign you see, a sign has a point to it, conveying a truth that would other wise not have been known. Furthering my frustration His disciples got the sign and ***I hadn’t***.

I don’t know about you but I never like to be the odd man out when everyone else gets something and I don’t. You may remember those weird pictures that sold in shopping malls where you have to stare at them for a period of time before you can see the picture hidden in the portrait I hated those things because I never could see the dumb picture. I felt the same when I finished reading this section I must be missing something but unlike those pictures in the mall I was determined to stay here in this section until I saw what those other disciples saw, His manifested glory.

**II. Vs. 1-5 Is it my time?**

Vs. 1-2 Being that John wrote his gospel some 75 years after the event took place and that he tells us in 20:31 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*”, I am convinced based upon his statement that every detail in this story is of utmost importance and that John has had 75 years to think about them before he wrote them down. So let’s look at the details John gives us:

1. **Time**: He starts out with the time in which the miracle took place being the 3rd day since Jesus first arrived in Galilee, (1:43) which makes it seven days since John the Baptist was first questioned in 1:19. If we are to follow John’s time table of the event being now the third day that would place this event just three days from when Nathanael became a follower making up the 6th of Jesus disciples. Again taking in consideration that John had 75 years to think about this do you not find it rather significant that he mentions that this occurred on the “*third day*”? So what other event took three day’s before the disciples understood the significance of it? Well we are told that on the third day was the resurrection! The prophet Hosea had said something very interesting 100’s of years earlier in 6:2 “*After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight*.” I rather think that John is giving us a clue as to the meaning of this miracle of water to wine as a forerunner to the resurrection, a miracle of transformation that is symbolized in the water being transformed into wine!
2. **Location**: Second John tells us two important things about the location of this miracle:
	1. That it was at a wedding: Jewish tradition tells us that weddings usually lasted a week and were far more about a celebration then they were about a religious ceremony, in fact Rabbis only had a small part. Since they would last a week they required careful plans as it was seen as a social taboo to run out of wine or food and it was the groom’s responsibility to make sure that didn’t happen. Based upon the master of the feasts comments in verse 9 the fact that they had ran out of wine shows me that Jesus and his disciples arrived late in this seven day celebration and probably were not expected to be coming. This is further brought out as they had ran out of wine and the fact that the groom is visible as he and his bride would only come out near the end of those seven days.
	2. The second point is that this took place in a city of Galilee called Cana. As we mentioned before Cana was the larger city at this time when compared to Nazareth but more interesting is its proximity to Nazareth as it was only 3 miles away from where Jesus had been raised a fact I believe has much to do with this story.
3. **People**: The final part of the information that John gives us is those who were the primary people involved in the story. We have Jesus who only a short time earlier has began His earthly ministry. His mother Mary who appears to have been at the wedding from the beginning as she seems to be helping out a custom that was common in that culture where if you were helped at a wedding of one of your children then you would serve at theirs. Finally we have these wide eyed brand new six disciples who were invited to a wedding along with Jesus no doubt at Mary’s request. Is it not a wonderful thing to realize that Jesus’ first miracle that was to be a sign of His glory took place at a wedding? He was invited into a social gathering, a celebration of two becoming one and He gladly came. I rather think Jesus enjoyed gathering together with people of all types. In fact in Luke 7:33-34 Jesus said, “*John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon. The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners*!”

All of these facts will give us important clues to unravel the two mysteries **first** of the conversation between Jesus and His mother and **second** of the sign of this miracle as it relates to His glory.

Vs. 3-4 Now to the first great mystery, the dialog between Mary and her son Jesus. First we are told that they had run out of wine and as such we know that doing so at a wedding was a major blunder and to do so in a small community was seen as a social disgrace one in which the stigma would continue for the rest of their lives. You see to the Jew’s wine was a symbol of joy and to do so at a wedding was saying that this marriage was not going to be full of joy.

But of further interest to me is the statement of Mary and the response of Jesus to her. Why did Mary make the statement to Jesus? Notice that she made a statement not a request yet clearly Jesus understood it as a request. Several things come to mind, first the fact that there were seven new guests perhaps made Mary feel some what obligated as the increase number had perhaps caused the shortage. But more important to the story I believe is the proximity of Cana with that of Nazareth, three miles. You see since before His birth Mary had been treasuring things in her heart. There had been the incident when Jesus was 12 at the Passover where He had stayed behind unknown to Mary and Joseph and when they came upon him at the temple discussing the truths of God’s word His reply was only that He was “*about His Fathers business*” (Luke 2:49). And we are only told in the 50th and 51st verse that they did not understand the statement and then that Jesus was subject to them. It appears that Mary expected Jesus to help in the situation and personally I believe that she was expecting for far more personal reasons then having invited seven more people then were expected. No she was wanting **something that would vindicate her after nearly 30 years of suffering** through all the whispers concerning His birth. She had no doubt heard the recent story of the dove lighting upon Him and a voice from heaven saying “*This is My beloved Son*”, and recalled the promise that was told her by the angel that she was to give birth to the Messiah. And when her pregnancy showed before her marriage to Joseph I’m sure she told what had happened to the ridicule of all, “*No it’s neither Joseph’s nor another man’s it’s by way of the Holy Spirit*”. Perhaps she thought finally as Jesus was beginning to fulfill His destiny that in so doing it would **relieve her personal embarrassment**. Can you imaging what it was like for Mary all these years the whispers, the scorn, the ridicule? In John 8:41 in the words of the Pharisees to Jesus we have a bit of understanding as they said to Him, “*We were not born of fornication; we have one Father; God*.” And I think this is an indication of what people had said of Mary for those 30 years. When she was first told the news of her pregnancy she was a young teenager and in Luke 1:48 she rejoiced saying, “*henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*” But 30 long years have passed with nothing but treasured memories of a promise she and her now dead husband Joseph had believed; “*When does all generations calling me blessed begin because they have been calling me everything but blessed for 30 years*.” I suggest to you that based upon Jesus’ words to her here that her statement was more in line with, “*Oh show them what I know to be true about you, my son.*” The fact that this was at wedding perhaps brought her back to her own betrothal and wedding and how that which ought to have been full of Joy was left empty because of the false speculation and the proceeding 30 years had not lessened the social embarrassment. I rather think she and Joseph tried to tell them at least initially that the child in her womb was not of any man’s inception but of the Holy Spirit. And now finally after 30 years she thought they will see and leave this poor widow alone. Do you see the similarity of the running out of wine with Mary’s own lack of joy at this wedding?

If all we had was Mary’s statement we would not have any answers but we have in Jesus’ response what she meant by her statement. Now much has been made about Jesus use of the word “*Woman*” here but what the Greek tells us is that this is no sign of disrespect only a statement that her maternal authority no longer existed over Him. His response was not rude or disrespectful, though it may sound that way to us. If I was to say to my wife or mother “*woman*,” I’d be in trouble but Jesus uses a common title of respect, in fact Jesus will use the same word while on the cross to her as He gives her care over to the apostle John (19:26). Jesus’ reply serves as the interpretation of Mary’s statement concerning the wine as He says two things:

1. “*What does your concern have to do with Me*?” Literally Jesus says, “*What is it to us*”. The use of the word women in conjunction with this suggest respect but also correction.
2. “*My hour has not yet come*.” And finally we have in these words the reason for Jesus’ reply the hour of His death burial and resurrection which would forever prove who He was that hour won’t come until the 17th chapter.

So by this statement we know both what was the heart of Mary’s statement and at the heart of Jesus’. “*Woman… Mary…mother, I know what you have gone through, I know what embarrassment you have gone through in your life because of my birth but now is not the time when they will know who I am*.” He is saying, “*You don't understand*”. **Clearly by His actions He is not saying that He isn’t going to do anything only that what He is going to do will not accomplish the alleviation of her embarrassment**. All of Jesus miracles did not change people’s minds concerning Him did they? In Matt. 12:24 they accused Him saying, “*This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.*” Ah but in John 12:32 He said, “*If I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself*.” That is what He is saying to His mother. I can understand her frustration she wanted vindication, she wanted acceptance from those around her, we all want that don’t we? We would just like to look a little better, like our reputations to be seen better, we are tired of being misunderstood! But listen up dear friend now is not the time, there is coming a time in which everything will get cleared up and His side of the story will be all anybody knows and it will last forever but it’s not now. So don’t try to settle accounts and give your side of the story it will only make things worse as no one will believe you anyway.

Vs. 5 She seems to be satisfied with his response, and says to the servants, “*Do whatever he tells you to do*.” To Mary’s credit she responded with a submissive heart, “*Whatever He says to you, do it*.” Mary heard in Jesus’ words the “***Not yet***” for the answer but yet she still made preparations for the immediate need. Jesus had told her that what He did now wouldn’t solve her problem and wouldn’t clear up all of the misunderstandings but she knew her son so she prepared to meet the practical instead of her emotional need.

Did you realize that they are the last recorded words of Mary in the Bible and she is directing people to do what He said instead of acting as a mediator or liaison? This is the only time Mary is ever seen interceding on behalf of Jesus and when she does she simply tells them to do whatever He says; now I think that is good advice for us all don’t you?

**III. Vs. 6-11 The joy of transformation**

Vs. 6-9 We now come to the 2nd part of the story the changing of the water to fine wine. These water jugs totaled around 120 gallons and were used for purification. And verse 11 tells us that this miracle was a “*sign…that manifested His glory*” but the question remains is how did it do so? This water was used for purification, Jewish sanctification. In the Mitzvot there are over 31 chapters dedicated to ceremonial purification by water, certain times of the day, certain ways the water had to run off the arms. The Jews were obsessed with purification for by it they were “set apart” sanctified to their proper purpose. Do you see what Jesus does by turning this water of purification into wine? What Jesus is demonstrating is that **we are set apart, sanctified by His miraculous work of transformation not human self effort and that is why it is joyous not a labor**. Combine that now with Mary’s statement of request and Jesus’ seeming denial as she wanted what we all want, to be understood to be accepted to be “set apart”. She who had been told she was to be set apart for a holy purpose to be the incubator for the divine instead of being called blessed for 30 years had been ridiculed and doubted. Do you now see the fullness of the miracle? That which sets us apart is His work of which He said His hour had not yet come and it is He that completes us and because of that purification, sanctification is Joyous.

 Look at this miracle again and the striking thing about this miracle is the use of the ordinary and common place to do the extraordinary:

* Six jars used for purification
* Servants who were there to tend to the needs of the celebration

*And with this simple scene Jesus quietly, discreetly manifests His glory through what He accomplished in others*. “*Fill the jars with water*” and in their exuberance we are told they filled them to the brim, mind you that’s no small task and they didn’t do so half way. Then Jesus said, “*Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.*” There was no prayer, no theatrics or pleading on His part why He didn’t even touch or taste the water and even more amazing to me is that neither He nor those servants tested the results they just take it to the master of the wedding. And when the master of the wedding declared it as the best wine. Now I kind of think those servants just smiled as they knew where the wine had come from yet didn’t say a word and when spoken too it appears the bridegroom was a bit puzzled. I think it is good for us to see some application here for our own lives concerning allowing Him to transform others through us.

1. **Jesus began this miracle with what was on hand, six water pots and willing servants**. *He used* ***what*** *He had on hand and* ***who*** *he had on hand*. Now I like that, these fellows were just serving at the wedding and Jesus uses them as a blessing, He could of done it all by Himself but He wanted them to share in the work so they could share in the blessing. Remember as well that there were six new disciples there with Him just like those six water pots, what a great lesson this was for them.
2. **Next we take note that these fellows had to act in obedience**. They didn’t ask why, they didn’t make alternate suggestions they simple did what they were told. Could it be that we don’t see more fruitful service more miraculous things in our life because we fail to simple do as Mary had said “*Do* w*hatever He says*!”
3. **These guy’s filled these water pots up to the brim**. Now this tells me that they did so with great expectations and with anticipation not feet dragging. Clearly they had the attitude of “*we get too*” instead of “*we got too*”. At a 120 gallons this was no small task and they didn’t do it half way but to the brim. Oh to God would do “*whatever He asks*” to the brim with gusto!
4. **There was an element of trust as Jesus told them to draw some out and take it to the master of the feast**. Can you imagine how angry the master of the feast would have been if they had brought him water to taste instead of wine? Jesus did His best and they need to trust in Him for the results!

Vs. 11 The significance of this miracle is recorded in the 11th verse as we are told “*This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*” Three things come to mind at John’s comments about this miracle:

1. **First** John does not say that this was beginning of miracles Jesus did but rather he says, “signs”. Not every miracle is a sign but this miracle was meant to be a sign it had a point to it, to convey a truth that would other wise not have been known.
2. **Second** this sign was a picture of cooperation between the human and the divine, as men drew water but Jesus turned water to wine. This sign is about what God can do through those who obey His word and trust in His work, and may I just say that it will always be unexpected and produce Joy! When ever Jesus is allowed to touch the human life no matter how empty and void of joy His presence will take our parched lives and fill them to the brim with the Joy of His presence.
3. **Finally** this sign was to manifest His glory we are told and fixate upon the fact that there were six stone water pots that were empty and that Jesus brought with Him that day six men who had been empty before He came into their lives only a few days earlier but now they were filled to the brim with Joy. That is what manifests His glory is Him in you as He is full of grace and truth and clearly His disciples believed Him. Jesus first miracle was not one that everybody recognized or even new happened yet *all tasted of its truths*. Yet Jesus always offers the best with the promise of better yet to come! New life in Jesus is always going to produce joy, glorify Jesus and deepen our trust of Him.

If you compare the first miracle of Moses with that of Jesus you will see that they both involved water Moses turned it into blood (death) and Jesus turned it into wine “Joy” and there you have a great comparison of their ministries as the law kills but grace and truth came from Jesus.

Hey saints don’t you also like the fact that this took place at a wedding? Many people today feel that there is no joy in their marriage the romance has become well, watered down, the relationship is empty. Ah but when Jesus enters the marriage man He will turn your watered down relationship into the finest wine of Joy. Oh if we would only allow Him to fill us to the brim with the water of His word He will transform our lives to the wine of His joy.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 2:12-25**

**“Remembering the Word”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 12-16 Cleaning up religion**

**III. Vs. 17-25 Setting the temple in hearts**

**I. Intro.**

In chapter 2 John began with a miracle of transformation (changing water into wine) now he shows Jesus at work in cleansing the temple. Hey come to think of it isn’t that the way Jesus always works in people converting them from emptiness to joy before cleansing them? I’ve got to say that the first few months with Jesus must have been very stretching to say the least as these six men spent time with Him; they had seen the miracle at Cana and no doubt began to see things that they had longed to see in their religion, tenderness, miraculous power, and an innate ability to make you feel as if you were the only person in the world that mattered. I think that their trust in Him as the Messiah was growing moment by moment and those words of Andrew and Philip “*We have found Him*” were becoming a greater reality but something was going to happen in this passage that was going to challenge their growing belief as Jesus was about to respond in ways that shocked them and perhaps caused them to wonder just who He was. John tells us three things as it relates to the story of cleansing the temple:

1. Vs. 12-13 Where Jesus was
2. Vs. 14-16 What Jesus did
3. Vs. 17-25 The response to what Jesus did

**II. Vs. 12-16 Cleaning up religion**

Vs. 12-13 In verse 12 and 13, John reduces a week’s time into two verses telling us where Jesus was at immediately after the miracle at the wedding (which was a sign of His glory) as He went to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days and then that He and His disciples left and went up to Jerusalem. The grammar here leaves no room for any other interpretation other than that Mary had other children, something which is further supported in other passages. Apparently Jesus loving correction of Mary in verse 4 didn’t deter her from submitting or following Jesus.

Hey Christian as I look at Mary’s response I see a great example for you and I. How So? Well there are times when the Lord has to correct us where we have an expectation of Him that can’t be met and He says no. But unlike Mary we tend to pout and walk away from our Lord because He has not met our expectations. I encourage you to be a little more like the mother of Jesus who continued to obediently follow her Son even when He didn’t do what she wanted Him to do? In fact it appears based on verse 12 that she drew nearer to Him instead of distancing herself.

 Then he went up to Jerusalem as the feast of the **Passover of the Jews** was at hand as each head of household was required to attend three annual feasts a year Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. The reason John mentions that this was the “*Passover of the Jews*” was because at the time John wrote this the temple would have been destroyed and thus the commotion that Jesus found that day 75 years earlier no longer existed a interesting point in light of Jesus words in verse 19 “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*”.

Vs. 14-16 So having not stayed many days, Jesus and His disciples take leave to go up for the Passover the first of His public ministry, a trip that it appears He will make each of the following years. Passover was linked with another feast that happened right around the same time called the “*Feast of unleavened bread*”. It was during this time that the Jews would search their households and rid themselves of any yeast which was a symbol of sin. In a city and a nation where they observed this feast of Passover with a clean house, a house swept clean of yeast of sin and hypocrisy Jesus came into the house of God filled with sin and all seemed to be oblivious about the temple being filled with the yeast of religion and consumerism?

 I firmly believe that Jesus had been to the temple many times in His life yet never before had He taken such action, so why the difference now? Well this time He goes up as the prophesied Messiah and according to the prophecy of Malachi in 3:1-3 “*the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, ….And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.*” It is interesting to note that the word for temple in verse 14 is different then the word He used in verse 19 where. You see here in verse 14 the word speaks of the outer court or the court of the gentiles and in verse 19 when Jesus used it of Himself He used the word that speaks of the Holy of Holies. In front of the temple were four courtyards each separated by four doors that restricted access first was called “*the court of the Gentiles*”, which was available to everyone next was “*the court of the Israelites*” where Gentiles were barred under penalty of death. The third courtyard was “*the court of men*” where only Jewish males were allowed access and finally connected to the temple itself was “*the court of priests*”, where only priests were allowed admittance. So where was it that Jesus found those folks doing business? Well it was in the place where all were suppose to be welcome that is where the priests set up shop. They were keeping people away from God so they could make money by selling “*temple approved*” oxen, sheep and doves and exchanging at higher rates money and had turned the court of the gentiles into a flee market where a portion of the profits were kick backs to the priests. As Jesus cleansed the temple He didn’t destroy the property as seen in the fact that He didn’t release the birds.

Of further interest is that once a year, every Jewish male had to go to the temple and pay a half-shekel tax at the Passover season. The tax could not be paid in Roman or Greek coin but had to be paid in a special temple coin, so it was necessary to change the Roman or Greek coins that were the normal currency into this special temple tax. That is why they had money-changers available for the people the problem wasn’t in having them there but rather that they were extorting the people in the exchange, so that half of the money went into pockets of the money changers. That is what Jesus found as He walked into the temple that day **the extortion of those seeking to worship God**, so He made a whip out of the cords that held the animals together and drove these extortioners out of the temple. He made his point saying, “*Stop making God’s house the place for the worship of God and cleansing of the heart of men into a flee market*!” (verse 16) That is what the Greek word house of merchandise means it is where we get our word, “*emporium*” which means a place of trade a commercial center where people are concerned about making a fast buck. In Isa 42:6-7 the Lord spoke of the purpose of Jewish nation when He said, “*I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house*.” And instead of doing so they were keeping the very people that God wanted to be let in and doing so to make money. So where did they get the idea to do this? Well the idea was to make sure that the heart of the person sacrificing was offering their best not their cast offs but the problem was that the religious leaders were taking advantage of this to extort the people fleecing the flock instead of feeding the flock.

Hey Christian it’s important that we don’t lose sight of the fact that what was started as a convenience in ministry towards the people ended up as a business and that which was to be a place where the Jews would meet with gentiles to share their faith ended up becoming a marketplace that kept them out. Listen up folks because a lot of times the Church has done the same thing with its activities. Jesus came into the temple and saw that the people were being ripped off and robbed form the opportunity to be enriched by the presence of God, He found religion made easy, Judaism had been reduced to a faith of convenience all for a price of course. It was safe, predictable and acceptable and all it cost was the loss of money but that is not what God had in mind it was to cost us our lives not just our wallets. **They had reduced it to picking pockets while Jesus was into harvesting hearts**! So he made a cord out of rope and drove those that were a hindrance out of the temple.

Notice the differences between Jesus at the wedding feast and here. At the wedding feast He came when they lacked joy to supply it ah but here the situation was different as the temple was full of things that were ripping people off from the presence of God so we seen Him clearing the temple. Oh dear saints we need to be careful as Jesus’ Church has been guilty of the very same thing at times and as individuals we can get into this consumer mentality can’t we? Some times folks Jesus has to come in and clean house in order for us to experience more joy doesn’t He? We often get the picture here that Jesus was out of control in some sort of blind rage but when we read that He said to those who sold doves “*Take these things away*” we get the picture that He was very much in control.

**III. Vs. 17-25 Setting the temple in hearts**

Vs. 17-25 The condition of the temple was an indication of the spiritual health of the nation and as such we get a picture of Judaism at that time as a dull and un relating to the people ruled by men who were only out after their own gain. Jesus’ zeal was not only manifested by His concern for the temple but also by His willingness to give up His own life and as such Jesus was more concerned for what the temple showed Him about the hearts of people then a cluttered courtyard.

I often wonder why no one stopped Him as He was trampling on their livelihood and in my opinion it is that Jesus was no wimpy fellow He was big enough that no body wanted to step in and stop Him. He is claiming ownership of the temple as clearly the disciples remembered the verse in Psalm 69:9 as a Messianic claim. The Jews wanted to know what sign did He have to do what He was doing a clear indication that what they were doing was wrong and they didn’t question that, they didn’t say “*What are you doing*” instead they asked “*What authority do you have to do what you are doing*?” It is this that prompts Jesus to respond with the destruction of His earthly body and its resurrection to which they could only think of the building but John looked back to this event 75 years earlier and then His resurrection and clearly understood what Jesus was saying. In Mark’s gospel in 14:56-58 we are told these words of Jesus are the ones that they will use against Him at His trial.

Recorded for us is three lessons that those new disciples' learned as they watched Jesus that day.

1. Vs. 17 The first impression was immediate as they were reminded 69th psalm verse 9 “*zeal for Your house has eaten me up*”. Jesus’ actions that day must have startled them they hadn’t been with for more than a few weeks and had not seen this side of Him as yet. They had been amazed by His words and by His actions but this was something that they hadn’t expected. When we were told in verse 11 that after the transformation of water to wine that they “*believed in Him*” as He had manifested His glory in that miracle it suggests to us that their trust and surrender towards Him deepened and I can’t help but wonder what they were feeling as He made that whip of cords and knocked over those extortioners that day? I can’t show you in the text but I rather think that they may have been a bit embarrassed as I think I would have been in their shoes. The things that Jesus did were right but the activity in the temple that day had been going on for 100’s of years and even though it wasn’t right it was common place and had become accepted. I suggest to you that more than tables were being overturned and animals being driven out of the temple that day as clearly verse 18 suggests when the Jews ask Him, “*What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?*” By Jesus’ actions He was **overturning the accepted and driving out the common place** wasn’t He? Hey, saints don’t think this is all that removed from what He will do to our experience as we get into that mode of, “*But this is the way we have always done it*!” Apparently even at this time this psalm was regarded as a Messianic psalm as it describes the suffering and the agony of the One who was to be the Messiah and with that a greater realization that with God there is no compromise with sin he doesn’t ignore it, wink at it and say aren’t they cute, no He deals with it abruptly turning things over driving things out. So here the disciples come face to face with one of the great paradoxes in Christianity the love of God with the holiness of God or if you will how He loves us right the way we are but love’s us to much to leave us the way we are!
2. Vs. 18-22 The second impression left these disciples is in verses 18-22 and is a delayed reaction. The Jews came up to him and asked, “*What sign have you to show us since you do these things?*” Jesus made no attempt to correct their misunderstanding concerning His words about His body being the temple He knew what lay in the heart of people and their said nothing. Jesus said, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*” The Greek word for temple is the one that they would use for the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the covenant was behind the curtain. What this suggests is that Jesus is making a reference to Himself some even think that He pointed at Himself upon saying it as in verse 21 John give us his commentary. Here they ask for a sign and Jesus had just demonstrated the sign of Malachi 3:1-3 coming into His temple and purifying the sons of Levi. The real temple was not the building; it was his own body, and bodies are the true temples of God not wood or stone buildings! When Solomon dedicated the temple he acknowledged the fact that “*Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!*” (2 Chronicles 6:18). Paul said it this way in 1 Cor. 6:19 “*do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own*?” So the disciples learned that the Lord of the temple cares about the inward clutter, confusion and immorality of His creation and He will have to over turn and drive out those things before He can make His home there.
3. Vs. 23-25 The third and final thing the disciples learned is in verse 23-25. Apparently while there at the Passover Jesus performed miracles that are not given in any of the gospel records as Nicodemus alludes to in 3:1 by saying “*Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*.” So it is these signs that verse 23 speaks of. Jesus always tied His miracles to His message and for the most part people were ready to believe based upon the miracles but when He delivered the message they would not want any part of Him. There are many today just like these who profess to believe in His name upon seeing the signs which he does yet there is no change, no reality to their Christian life as they go on living just the way they were until finally they go back into the world in which they claim to have come out of. I find it interesting that we in the ministry put a lot of emphasis upon a person’s commitment but very little upon Jesus commitment towards people. You see you will be able to see if He was committed towards them in the way in which they are committed to Him.

As Jesus stood amidst the overturned tables, coins rolling animals running, they came to Him and asked “*What sign*” not “***Why did you do this***” as they knew the why they only question the authority to do so. Asking for a sign to authenticate a sign and Jesus replies (and I rather think pointed at Himself) “*Destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up*”. Oh how picturesque is this all Jesus drove out the riffraff and said “*I am the temple it’s in Me that it has its true fulfillment.*” In all of this what those disciples remembered was that Jesus is the real thing, He is just who He claimed to be irregardless of how others saw Him or expected from Him. Oh to be sure they no longer saw Him as safe He will come in over turn lives and drive out the clutter to inhabit people, He knows what is in man. The practices of the temple is what concerns Him and He will not compromise with that or look the other way as you are far to precious to Him, so why not invite Him to come into your temple?

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 3:1-10**

**“You must be born again”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-2 Nicodemus: religious, rich, and ruler**

**III. Vs. 3-8 Born again**

**IV. Vs. 9-10 How can these things be?**

**I. Intro.**

The “*New Birth*” is the theme for the 3rd chapter of John and ought to be the theme of our lives. Well known British evangelist George Whitefield wrote a letter 1700’s to inventor and statesman Benjamin Franklin with just such a request writing, “*I find that you grow more and more famous in the learned world. As you have made such progress in investigating the mysteries of electricity, I humbly urge you to give diligent heed to the mystery of the “new birth*”. Everyone today is familiar with the term “**born again**”, it has become so popular that it is used for all kinds of situations that have nothing to do with the way the New Testament uses it. If a football team has a bad season and the next year comes to life again and does much better, the sports writers say it has been born again. If all this happened in line with the New Testament view of that term it would be very encouraging. How glorious it would be if whole football teams and other movements truly experienced what Jesus speaks of here to Nicodemus.

**II. Vs. 1-2 Nicodemus: religious, rich, and ruler**

Vs. 1-2 The phrase “*there was a man*” is placed in contrast to the men mentioned in 2:23-25, here was a man named Nicodemus to whom Jesus could commit too. Three words come to mind in describing Nicodemus: religious, rich, and ruler but put yourself in Nicodemus’ sandals, he didn’t know he was talking with the Son of God he had just heard and saw this thirty-year-old Carpenter and came with some questions. John mentions **two things about Nicodemus**:

1. **Who he was**: His name is a Greek name and means “*victory of the people*” and it only appears here in the gospel of John, (three times in the 3rd chapter once in the 7th chapter and then finally in the 19th chapter). Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the council of seventy men who ran the religious affairs of the nation and who had religious authority over any Jew anywhere in the world. That council was almost entirely made up of Pharisees if ever there was a group, which could be called religious fanatics, it was the Pharisees. They were a select group (never more than 6,000 of them) who had taken a solemn oath before three witnesses that he would devote every moment of their lives to obeying the Ten Commandments, as a way of pleasing God. These men spent their lives studying the Ten Commandments and applying them to situations of life so that the Pharisees could carry out these commands and thus obey God. It is amazing that he would come to Jesus at all, because the Pharisees regarded themselves as superior to other men in spiritual status before God due to their total dedication to obeying the law of God. But this man came albeit at night but that can be explained as he would have been involved in the Passover and Jesus was surrounded by people so his coming at night was so that he could give proper attention to the investigation. Oh maybe his coming at night was a cautious inquiry but he came with others didn’t to investigate Jesus.
2. **What he said**: John tells us that he began his word with a courteous introduction. “*Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.*” **Before we look at the truth of Nicodemus’ statement let’s first examine the words he uses:**
	1. “*Rabbi*”: His calls Jesus “*my teacher*” the same word John and Andrew used in 1:38 even though Jesus had not gone to any recognized rabbinical schools. There were there degrees of words a person would use when saying Rabbi and this was the one in the middle. Still this is a huge declaration for a Pharisee to make; clearly he was impressed by Jesus words and actions.
	2. “*We know*”: It seems by this statement that Nicodemus was not the only person amongst the Pharisees that had been so impressed though he was the only one who dared to investigate.
	3. “*You are a teacher come from God*”: Again this is a most remarkable statement by Nicodemus as he was one of the religious elite and he was coming to an obscure peasant with no known formal education. In that one week of observation his experience through a hand fill of incidents Nicodemus breaks forth away from his presumptions and personal prejudices and at least entertains the possibility that this man from a fishing village has been sent by God to teach the nation.
	4. “*For no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*”: The Greek text says “*can go on doing*” these signs. So Nicodemus was weighing Jesus as being a teacher from God not because some one time act but a continual string of words and works that had brought him by night to inquire more of Jesus. “*These signs*” to which John does not mention individually moved the crowd to recognize the possibility of Jesus being the Messiah but it did not move them to appropriate the truth to their lives. It was for this reason that we were told that **He did not trust His person to them because they hadn’t trusted their person to Him, (Jesus had no faith in their faith in Him)**. Or if you will their faith in His name didn’t led then to a decision to trust in. Ah but here we see that it had led Nicodemus to come by night to investigate further. In the Greek the phrase “*you do unless God is with Him*” is presented as a possibility not a definite act which is why Nicodemus had ventured out that night.

But is Nicodemus’ statement correct? Not according to Paul who would warn the Thessalonians in 2 Thess 2:9 “*The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders*”. It is for this reason that John had said in 2:22 that he and the rest of the disciples believed “*the scripture and the Word which Jesus has said*” as well as remembering psalm 69:9 concerning the cleansing of the temple. Hey saints it important that we believe not just signs but that we take those signs to the word of God as Jesus always placed the Word above the signs.

**III. Vs. 3-8 Born again**

Vs. 3 Notice how Jesus cuts right to the heart of Nicodemus by saying “*Most Assuredly*” or as some versions say “*truly, truly*.” It’s a phrase John records Jesus saying 25 times (and only used here in John). It was used when Jesus was about to say something extremely important and should not be missed. Nicodemus came to Jesus and said what so many say about Him today didn’t he, “***You’re a great teacher***”? In all my years I have never heard anyone deny that about Him but here we see Jesus response to someone who says that, “***You must be born again***”. Jesus didn’t answer Nicodemus saying, “*Oh, you’re aware of My miracles and you’ve heard Me speak have you? Well just say I’m a good teacher and I’m fine with that!”* But instead, Jesus cut through the flattery and drew Nicodemus’ attention to the kingdom of God. Jesus is saying that “*new birth*” is absolutely essential to enter the kingdom of God not a suggestion but a “***MUST***” (verse 7); you won’t leave to go home with out Him. The phrase “*born again*” has three meanings in the Greek:

* 1. It means to do it a second time
	2. It also means to begin radically, completely, a new beginning
	3. It also means from above, thus it signifies God must do this

So saints we understand this word to include all three of those meanings. Being born again means that we have undergone a 2nd birth, that which was radical, a new beginning, which God has done not we ourselves. Jesus was referring to a transfer of citizenship, a radical departure from what we once were.

It appears by Jesus words that He is addressing Nicodemus’ reasoning by speaking of a 2nd birth as the sole basis by which “***God is with***” someone. The Jewish identity as far as relationship with God was based upon being physically born a Jew which placed them into the kingdom of God but Jesus shatters this misconception by saying that it is not physical birth but spiritual birth that places a person into a relationship with the living God. The Jews didn’t look to the Messiah as the door into heaven as much as they saw Him as the way by which Israel would become ***permanently preeminent*** among all people. The words “*can not see*” in the Greek implies can not participate. The just of what Jesus is saying to Nicodemus is that, “*It is not the signs that indicate God is with me, rather it is My relationship with my Father and unless a person is born a 2nd time (from above) they can not participate in God’s kingdom*.”

Vs. 4 Nicodemus doesn’t say “*what or why*” but “***HOW***”! What’s the process? “*How can a man be born when he is old?*” Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:14 “*the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” That is Nicodemus problem as the things of God and His kingdom are spiritually discerned and apart from the Spirit of God they will remain a mystery. Jesus said that to Simon-Peter in Matt. 16:17 upon his declaration of Jesus’ identity saying, “*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven*.”

Now there are several O.T. passages that indicated a yet future work a “*New Covenant*” that God would do in Jer. 31:31-34 The Lord said “*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah… this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*. Then in Jer. 32:39 we read of the further effects of this new covenant as being when God “*will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them*.” The Lord spoke through the prophet Ezek. in 11:19-20, 36:26 saying “*Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.*” From the prophets **the Jews new three things about the New covenant**:

1. That it would be a time of regathering of God’s people Israel
2. That it would be a time of the reign of the Messiah over the world
3. That it would be a time of spiritual transformation for God’s people

It is to the third that Jesus address to Nicodemus and it is one that he didn’t grasp he was puzzled by Jesus words of the 2nd birth as he can only relate to it as natural birth through the womb.

Here was a fellow who was doing his best to obey what he thought God wanted, yet he had an empty and unsatisfied heart that led him to seek Jesus that night, at the risk of the displeasure of his peers, to talk with him about the kingdom of God. Jesus in effect says, “*You’re wasting your time if you think you can enter the kingdom of God the way you are. You cannot do it. You must be born again*.” Nicodemus misunderstood, he took the word “***again***” to mean **only a second time**. With a puzzled look on his face he said, “*How can this be? How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born*?” Nicodemus is thinking gynecology isn’t he? “*How am I going to get back into my mother's womb and start life all over when I am already old and grey? How can I do that*?” Many people think like that don’t they? “*Oh, if I could just do it over again! If I knew then what I know now, and could go back and live it all over again, I think I could get it right!*” Take the illustration of a baby in the womb whose life is tied to its mothers by the umbilical cord yet only 4 inches from where that baby is at is a world waiting for them full of color, scents, sounds tastes and textures there is no way they could imagine it. And so too with the person today apart from Jesus now they can’t imagine what awaits them just out side the womb of this world they need new birth.

Vs. 5 Here in these verses is Jesus reply to Nicodemus' question, “*How can a man be born when he is old*?” “*By water and by the Spirit*,” is Jesus' reply. “*Nicodemus, listen to me; it would make no difference if you could go back into the womb a 2nd time as you would come out no better than you were the first time*.” The question is what does Jesus mean by “*born of water*”? What ever Jesus’ point to Nicodemus it has to have been something that he would have known of and there are four possibilities put forth by and all have some merit to them:

1. **Physical birth**: Since the baby comes forth from a watery sack people think that this is what Jesus is speaking of. And though it seems to fit the words of verse 6 “*that which is born of the flesh is flesh*” as well as well Nicodemus’ misconception of “*new birth*” in verse 4 it seems to state the obvious. Since Jesus is speaking of new birth can anyone be born anew who has not been born in the first place? The simple answer is NO, so why would Jesus use an illustration of something that was irrelevant to the point he was trying to get across? The answer is He wouldn’t!
2. **Word of God**: Others think that Jesus is using the phrase born of water as a description of the Word of God since else where the word of God is associated with water as in Eph. 5:26. And though this is biblically correct would Nicodemus have understood it and replied as he does in verse 9 “*How can these things be*”. Though this interpretation is correct theologically it is not correct contextually, that is to say it doesn’t fit the passage. Why would Jesus not just say this “*unless one is born of the scriptures*” if that is what He meant to say?
3. **Holy Spirit**: Some say that Jesus is making a reference to the Holy Spirit as He will more fully elaborate upon in the 7th chapter verses 37-39 where Jesus says “*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” And like the above interpretation I again think this is correct but clearly in John' own commentary of John chapter 7 the concept of being born of the Holy Spirit had not yet happened and I’m again left with the same point as above namely it being theologically correct but not contextually correct.
4. **Water baptism**: This view would make baptism essential for new birth something we clearly see is not the case else where in scripture. Further more Baptism is a typology of death not birth. Others seek to reconcile this by saying that Jesus is making reference to what baptism symbolized namely repentance and since the priests had come out to John the Baptist seeking answers to what he was doing perhaps this is what Jesus is speaking of. In this interpretation they would say that Jesus is saying unless one is repentive in their heart the Holy spirit can not come into their life therefore they can not enter the kingdom. Again this view of baptism and repentance is true theologically but is this contextually true?

There are two things to look at in helping us unravel the interpretation of what Jesus meant:

1. First is the fact that this is a dialog between Jesus and Nicodemus and as such each statement they make leads to the next. Nicodemus came to Jesus investigating Him, searching to see if He was the Messiah and Jesus’ reply is to get Nicodemus to think beyond just the regathering of the people and the political world importance of Israel to the “***spiritual transformation of the people***” something they perhaps already thought they had or didn’t need.
2. Secondly, is Jesus response to Nicodemus’ 2nd words of verse 9 “*How can this be*”. The emphasis is upon the fact that Jesus clearly expected Nicodemus to know these things. Would Jesus expect Nicodemus to know something as a teacher of Israel that had never been known before? No, the rebuke is not upon that which Nicodemus couldn’t have known but rather what he should have known but instead of believing questioned. So the question we are to answer is what are the “***these things***” Jesus is referring too in verse 10? The only conclusion I come up with is the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah which is the very reason Nicodemus came to Jesus in the first place.

In the Prophecy mentioned in Ezek. 36:25-28 we are told this, “*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.*” Do you see that before the “*dwelling in the land that God gave before to their fathers*” and before the “*you shall be My people and I will be your God*” was a cleansing and a new birth so that which had caused the separation would be dealt with and forever changed with a new heart that would want to walk in God’s word? It is this I believe that Jesus is pointing to as it **fits both theologically as well as contextually**. Nicodemus came to Jesus in search to see if He might be the Messiah and Jesus questioned not the search but that which he was using as the basis of the search ***outward signs***. “*The inward cleansing of the heart and the giving of a new heart which will cause you to walk in My statutes and keep My judgments so that you will dwell in the land that’s the sign you should be noting*”. **Nicodemus was struggling with what the rest of Israel was battling namely “*the benefits of the kingdom of God with out the transformation of the heart*”. Yes by the word of God and the Spirit of God which causes our repentance**. The cleansing of the temple pointed to the cleansing of the heart of which Ezekiel spoke of and Nicodemus knew in part but had left off the first and most important part of the ruling and restoration work of the Messiah and that is over individual hearts and lives. In Isa. 44:3-4 we read the word of the Lord promising, “*For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring; They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.*”

Vs. 6-8 That is why Jesus further defines what He means with the phrase, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” “*You can’t enter the kingdom of heaven because you are the children of Abraham, your still flesh you need what Ezekiel spoke of a “new spirit” in you*”, that is what Jesus is saying. There is a clear and radical difference between the old and the new birth when He says, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*.”

Jesus apparently based upon the facial expression of Nicodemus said, “*Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.*” The words do not marvel speak of unintelligent wonder or if you will disbelief as **Nicodemus was stuck on his own goodness and wanted a national and political transformation for the nation without seeing the need for a personal transformation**! And to make sure that Nicodemus didn’t miss the point Jesus restated it again “*You must be born again*”.

While he and Nicodemus were talking they could probably hear the wind blowing through the streets of Jerusalem. Jesus said, “*The wind blows where it wills*”. It is sovereign; no man directs it. There is a work of God’s Spirit within a person’s life whereby that person becomes into a totally new dimension of life, the dimension of the Spirit. Paul described it this way in 2 Cor. 5:17 “*if anyone is in Christ, he is a* ***new creation****; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*.”

The weather forecasters tell us each day where the jet stream is, but they cannot say where it is going to be tomorrow. The Greek word “*wind*” here and the word “*Spirit*” is the same word and Jesus’ point is to tell Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit works like the wind moving the way the He feels best and we don’t necessarily have to understand it completely to experience the effects of its moving an so too with the work of the Holy Spirit in our new birth it will result in a totally new lifestyle; that will cause the person never be the same.

**IV. Vs. 9-10 How can these things be?**

Vs. 9-10 Nicodemus answered Him and he said, “*How can these things be*”? That’s a question that is asking for the process isn’t it? “*What’s the process that can transform a man into a new creation*?” So Jesus puts a question back “*How can you be a teacher and not know*”? Nicodemus had came that night in the dark inquiring of Jesus as too Him being the Messiah but it was the darkness of his own intellect that held him from receiving the truth at that moment.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 3:11-21**

**“For God so loved the world”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 11-13 Two places at one time**

**III. Vs. 14-16 The antidote for snake bites**

**IV. Vs. 17-21 Two groups**

**I. Intro.**

Nicodemus came to Jesus on that night (because of the signs he had heard and seen) wanting to know if Jesus was the hoped for Messiah. So when Jesus addresses him for the first time it is along the lines of the need for **personal transformation** **not national preeminence and politically importance**. Now based upon Nicodemus’ twice repeated questions “*How can*” we know that he was searching for the process on new birth. He doesn’t deny the need for personal transformation but he questions the process. In Isa. 59:1-1 The Lord spoke to mankind saying, “*Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*” John the Baptist came as a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare hearts but Nicodemus and others hadn’t been listening. Jesus would say in Luke 16:16 “*The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it*.” Then in Luke 24:44 Jesus said “*all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.*” In this section we will see that Jesus answered Nicodemus question of the process in four ways:

1. Vs. 13 Life through light
2. Vs. 14 Life through My death
3. Vs. 15-16 Life through love
4. Vs. 17-21 Life through loving the light

**II. Vs. 11-13 Two places at one time**

Vs. 11-13 The problem of the Pharisees was a problem of the heart not of lack of understanding the process. So in verses 11-13 Jesus speaks as a teacher to a teacher, “*Hey Nic, your difficulty is not as much in your not understanding the process but rather in you over looking it*.” You see Nicodemus had spent his life studying the word of God so much so that now he was considered a teacher of the people, he knew the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel where God had spoken of a “New Covenant” saying that He would take out the old heart of stone and gives a new heart of flesh. All through the Old Testament there are statements about a new birth, a new beginning, a new creation, a new life that would come as a gift of God. In John 5:39 Jesus would say “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me*.”

 Now notice that Jesus goes back and deals with Nicodemus opening statement and his words “*we know that You are a teacher*” and so Jesus says, “*We speak what We know and testify what We have seen*”. “*I’ve told you earthly things, (birth, water, wind) and you do not understand how are you going to understand heavenly things.*” Jesus is speaking of the incarnation which has two specific purposes doesn’t it? **To show the way and to be the way!**

* 1. **To show the way:** Jesus earthly life showed the way as He would say in John 14:6 “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”
	2. But in His death He became **the way**: It is this mystery that caused even more confusion as we are told in John 12:32-34 where Jesus said “*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself*.” *This He said, signifying by what death He would die. The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?*”

In the 13th verse Jesus speaks of His incarnation and says something often over looked read this carefully, “*No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the* ***Son of Man who is in heaven***.” Did you see that? Jesus is right in front of Nicodemus who is questioning the process of the new birth and Jesus says, “The Son of Man who ***IS*** in heaven” not **WAS** but ***IS*** folks. Jesus is speaking and testifying of things He was seeing at that very moment as He was in heaven and on earth at the same time. “*Nic, It’s why I’ve come, I’ve come down from heaven but I’m also still in heaven why I’m speaking to you*”. In Matt 19:25-26 upon hearing that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle that for a rich man to enter into heaven the disciples in astonishment said, “*Who then can be saved*?” and Jesus replied “*With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*.” That is just what Jesus has shown Nicodemus isn’t it “*How can these things be*?” “*Well they are impossible for man but I’m not man I’m God*!”

**III. Vs. 14-16 The antidote for snake bites**

Vs. 14-16 The story in Numbers 21:4-9 would have been one familiar to Nicodemus it is the story of sin and rebellion of the nation and God’s judgment upon them by sending fiery serpents that bit the people. You could say pardon the pun that the people were snake bit with sin. But it is also a story of God’s grace as Moses interceded on their behalf.

Brass is the metal of judgment and Jesus is the Lamb of God how picturesque as we see the symbol of sin (the serpent) being judged lifted up because the Lamb of God would be lifted up that whosoever would fix their trust upon Him would not parish from the snake bite of sin. So Jesus’ answer to Nicodemus 2nd question “*How can this new birth be?*” “*Well when I am lifted up put your trust in Me*”! Jesus says in verse 14 that the lifting up of Himself is a “***Must***” that those that would look upon Him would be saved from the snake bite of sin, it’s a “***must***” there is only one cure for what ails mankind. People are oblivious to the fact that they have been bitten since birth, they aren’t aware they are dying from the effects of the bite of sin but the poison is circulating through out. What is interesting as those Israelites came to Moses to intercede on their behalf God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent instead of just healing them out right. You see in the provision for their healing God gave them a responsibility to look up and to trust in God’s provision but if they wouldn’t do so they wouldn’t be healed. That’s what people reject about Jesus isn’t it? Oh they want God to provide the antidote for their snake bite but they don’t want to take any responsibility for either being bitten in the first place nor the need to continue the relationship afterward.

 Interesting, to realize what happened to the bronze serpent upon the poll. It seems according to 2 Kings 18:4 that the pole later became an idol and they began to worship it in later years. It was during the reign of Hezekiah as he had to take that which had in years past was a symbol of healing as sin was judged and break it on the ground because people were worshipping it. The people had forgotten what it symbolized and made it an object of worship calling it Nehushtan, which simple means “*a brass thing*”. Most traditions show the serpent being wrapped around the pole, and it is this image that the ancient physicians used as a figure of healing and medicine. Is that not ironic that man has grabbed the symbol of God’s healing and used it for their healing? Hey saints we need to be careful not to make idols out of symbols because when we do that which God once used in our life is quickly reduced to a “brass thing”. Whenever we begin to worship the relics of our past no matter how instrumental they we were in our healing we are showing that God’s work in our lives is past history, which is a sign that we have lost God in the present! Paul wrote in Philip. 3:13-14 “*but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*.”

Vs. 15 So Jesus identifies what that bronze serpent upon the poll in the desert symbolized when He tells Nicodemus in verse 15 “*that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*.” Jesus tells him right in verse 15 and then repeats it again in verse 16 “*Whoever believes in Him*”.

They had to trust in that which appeared to be foolish, something that didn’t appear to be sufficient to safe them but there wasn’t a plan “B”. That is what the Lord said through Isa. 45:22 “*Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other*.” Think of that for just a moment Jesus says that the cure is universal it doesn’t matter how much of the poison of the snake bite of sin has ruined your life you may be on your last breath or you may by feeling no ill effects at all “whoever” you are Jesus’ blood is the anti-venom that will cure you no matter what state you are in. Ah but look at “*believes in Him*” as that tells us that it is not good enough if your snake bit to know that Jesus’ blood is the anti-venom you have to take it trust in it alone, that is what Jesus means by the use of the word “*Believes in Him*”. Think of it this way you get up into an airplane over at Hamilton airport and you strap on a parachute you get up there a few hundred feet and you jump out of the plane free fall a while and then pull the cord causing the parachute to deploy and you glide safely to the ground. You get back in the plane this time with the parachute next too you. You believe in the parachute you have deployed it before but this time you jump out of the plan without it on your back and the fellow up there throws it out after you. Now all the way down you can be saying I believe in the parachute you will save me parachute and bring me safely to the ground but what is missing is it is not on your person. That parachute must be your savior not just the savior! Did you know that you can put any name that there has ever been in place of the word “world” and it is still correct?

 Hey did you know that Jesus did not die in order for the Father to love sinners, no the Father so loved us that He gave Jesus. This for ever is the proof of what John would write in 1 John 4:8, 16 that God is love it His very nature. God loved, God gave, I believe and I have everlasting life. Ever lasting life is far more than endless existence it is life enjoyed in His presence without end!

Vs. 16 To communicate something that you know so well and love so completely is difficult but to do so in 25 words is utterly amazing. You see in verse 16 Jesus uses only 25 words to communicate three truths about God the Father:

* The Father’s heart: “*He loved the world*”
* The Father’s plan: “*He gave His only begotten Son*”
* The Father’s will: “*Whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*”

In verse 16 we learn five things about God’s love:

1. We learn the object of God’s love: For God so loved the world. God did not wait for the world to turn to Him before He loved the world. He loved and gave His only begotten Son to the world when it was still the world!
2. We learn the expression and the gift of God’s love: He gave His only begotten Son. God’s love didn’t just feel for the plight of a fallen world. God did something about it, and He gave the most precious thing to give: His only begotten Son.
3. We learn the recipient of God’s love: Whoever believes in Him. God loves the world, but the world does not receive or benefit from that love until it believes in Jesus, the gift that the Father gave. Believes in means much more than intellectual awareness or agreement. It means to trust in, to rely on, and to cling to.
4. We learn the intention of God’s love: Should not perish. God’s love actually saves man from eternal destruction. God looks at fallen humanity, does not want it to perish, and so in His love He extends the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.
5. We learn the duration of God’s love: Everlasting life. The love we receive among people may fade or turn, but God’s love will never change. He will never stop loving His people, even unto the furthest distance of eternity.

And in the English translation of this verse the 13th word is Son which tells me that Jesus is at the center of the Father’s heart, plan and will concerning His manifested love for you and I. Surrounding the word Son are 9 other key words: God, loved, world, gave, whosoever, believeth, perish, have, and life. Although most of us have this verse etched on our brains why not for the next 9 days spend a few minutes upon each of those 9 other words as they relate to you and me?

**IV. Vs. 17-21 Two groups**

Vs. 17-18 And to encourage the most need to come Jesus says that He has not come to condemn. You may be here today and are afraid because of something in your life now or in the past and you are concerned about Jesus’ involvement in your life but what you read here ought to set your heart at peace. Hey friend there is no fine print, no hidden clause that would exclude your sins, so now you have no reason not to trust Him. According to verse 18 there are only two types of people:

* He who believes
* He who believes not

And right now hearing this verse you are in one of those two categories. Notice it is not about Jesus coming to earth doing miracles it’s about your trusting in Him not just for the moment but completely, absolutely. Now if you are in the group that “believes not” I’d like to invite you right now this moment to get out of that group because it says that you are in the group that “is condemned” not will be but already are. So if you are in the group that is condemned it is not because of all your sins but rather because “*you have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*”. So the only question folks have to ask is are they going to stay in the dark and perish or come into the light?

Jesus came to this world not to put people down but rather to pick people up not with a pointing finger but with an embrace. That’s the difference between all other religions and Christianity they tell man what to do to reach heaven and Jesus came down from heaven to take everybody that trusts in Him back. God didn’t send His Son Jesus into the world to remind us what a bunch of screw ups we are, give us a bunch of cleaver sayings He came with only one aim “*that the world through Him might be saved*” His coming was for us! Is that not the most amazing revelation ever? Suppose you had the opportunity to meet the physical Jesus, I mean He came up too you in a crowded mall or up on a trail in the Bitterroots and introduced Himself to you. So in front of you is the word of life the creator of everything and you ask Him “Why are you here?” Well HE would answer in one word, “**YOU**!” “*I’m here for you; I want you to be a part of My family!*” WOW! You are the singular most important person to Jesus did you know that? Ah but let me ask you is He the singular most important person to you?

Vs. 19-21 Finally we have the answer from the lips of Jesus of one of the most perplexing questions that haunts mankind, “*Why don’t people come to Jesus*?” I mean He is the cure for what ails them and He has been given free of charge but people make all kinds of excuses, tell us not today or that if it works for you or my favorite “I’m a good person!” So according to Jesus, “Why don’t people come to Jesus?” The issue isn’t intellectual it’s not really about evolution, Cain’s wife, the Pigmy’s in Africa or the Immaculate Conception. No according to Jesus, the one and only reason people don’t come to the Him is because they prefer darkness of their sinful life.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 3:22-36**

**“He Must Increase”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 22-26 All are coming to Him**

**III. Vs. 27-30 Competition or completion**

**IV. Vs. 31-36 Four truths about Jesus**

**I. Intro.**

One of the perplexing problems in life is that disobedience seems like fun while doing what is right seems to be hard and not fun. Take for instance the food groups why is that everything that we like isn’t good for us while everything we don’t like is? I mean why didn’t God make it the other way around? Or to state it another way, “*Since God made life, why is it so hard to be good and so much fun to be bad?*” I bet you would like an answer to that question wouldn’t you? Well I’m going to give you one but it’s going to be a little difficult to grasp. You see we live in an upside down world a world that has been changed an altered by sin. It is a world of pain and sorrow of death and it has tainted or taste buds as well as every other part of our senses. Do you hearing what I’m saying? God didn’t make it backwards we are the ones that became backwards! And Jesus is the one who has come to right the world back to the way it was created and so heaven won’t be less fun it will be more fun but just not the way the world in sin is now!

**II. Vs. 22-26 All are coming to Him**

Vs. 22-24 Some time after Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus Jesus and His disciples came to the area of Judea and were baptize and based upon chapter 4:1-3 this was a deliberate act intended to speak to the Pharisees even though Jesus didn’t do the baptizing but His disciples did. Jesus was carrying on a ministry similar to that of John the Baptist at this time and in close proximity to each other. John the last and greatest of the prophets and Jesus the heir of all things the beginning or the consummation of that which all the prophets and John had been sent to tell God’s people. The apostle John gives us a little further insight that all of this took place before John had been thrown in prison. So why does he tell us that, I mean it would have been a bit difficult for the Baptist to be baptizing in the Jordan after he was in prison. Well he mentions this not with the Baptist in view but with the Messiah in view. It is to show us that Jesus ministry was going to have a radical change after John the Baptist was in prison but prior it was similar to His cousins John’s.

This is the last time in this gospel that John’s word are recorded and they are most profound as they hold the key’s to happiness and harmony in the Christian life and it’s all about remembering that we are living in an upside down world and that Jesus has come to correct this. What set this discussion up was competition and jealousy. Competition is one of the ugliest things to enter the family of God, when rivalry between churches comes in as it impedes the progress of the gospel. So here we see the new Olympic sport of “*competitive baptism*”, how many could be dunked in an hour. “*John they are over there starting a new denomination they isn’t Baptist*”, they cried.

There is a practical application in these verses dealing with why John the Baptist was baptizing in Aenon as it simply says, “*there was much water there*”. John wasn’t there because the location fulfilled some O.T. prophecy. No, he was there because it best suited what God had told him to do make hearts ready for the Messiah. Far too often we make knowing God’s will to difficult thinking that we have to be at some specific location to be in God’s will. Hey saints it’s the location of our hearts that maters most and some times He will closes a door and move us out of our comfort zones because it better suits His work in us. What a great word that is today “*Go where there is much water*” let the word of God direct you.

Vs. 25-26 The argument began on doctrinal grounds but then moved to personal grounds as success was reduced to numerical popularity of Jesus when compared to John. I must admit that when I read their statement to John my heart goes out to them. They had followed John at a great cost they were outside the mainstream, trend setters, ushering in reforms that needed to take place with in Judaism and crowds were coming things were happening and their invisibility had become visible, their obscurity had become popular as all of Israel was coming to see. But now the movement was losing ground and what had become a necessity was just becoming a hassle as only those who came to debate were attending. When at first they came they did so convinced of what John was saying and doing but at some point during the crowds something had crept into their hearts that had caused this statement. Hey saints listen up as it can happen to you and I, you see these fellows began to love what ministry brought them as far as an identity more than the reasons they were attracted to John’s words in the first place the need personal reformation. Once when noted missionary Hudson Taylor was being introduced with great words of praise just before he spoke, when he finally got up to speak he said, “*I am but a little servant of an illustrious Master*”.

 What John’s disciples saw as ***competition*** he saw as ***completion*** and friends that will always be what challenges us in our service. I’ve served as a pastor in churches for 20 years now and through out those years people have come to the church I’ve served at from other churches and they have left the church I served to go to other churches. Now I have a choice I can view their departure as **competition or completion** that’s up to me. We ought to praise God when they come and praise God when they go because perhaps they will be better ***completed*** in Jesus by fellowshipping else where just as many were better completed in this season of their lives by coming here.

**III. Vs. 27-30 Competition or completion**

Vs. 27-30 In verses 27-36 there are two statements concerning Jesus:

1. Vs. 27-30 **Jesus is the focal point of history not mankind**. That is the main reason people aren’t happy today is that they think that they are the focal point of life. Books have been written and our whole society has been told that “*If it makes you happy do it*” “*live for the moment*” and all. It is these philosophies that reveal that we are living in an upside down world as they do not take in consideration what happens if doing what makes me happy makes those around me miserable. Here is what John the Baptist says in these verses to his followers who had become jealous of the popularity of Jesus, “*Life isn’t about me, I’m not the One who can change the world, all I can do is be useful in pointing people to the only One who can and in so doing I’m become full of joy*”. This competition is not removed from today is it? It’s the old numbers game, “*How big is your church, how many got baptized*” And in this is the question of “*Who is the most popular*”? And John’s answer is “Jesus” but he does so in **three ways**:

a. Vs. 27 **All positions come from God**: It is God who places people where they are for His purpose and plan and it has nothing to do with us. John the Baptist had been given a role by God and it wasn’t to be the center of attention that was the role of Jesus his was the role of pointing people to Jesus and it was his pure joy and privilege to do so. Hey saints, **don’t let God’s work in you go to waste by what He has accomplished through you**. What? **The greater work God does in our individual lives isn’t what He does through us it is what He is doing in us**. Don’t get a big head and all remember He was able to make a donkey speak and as far as I know He is doing so now. Paul would say to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 4:7 “*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*”

b. Vs. 28 **Stay on course**: The best way not to get lost in life is to stay on course. That is what John tells his followers, “*I haven’t changed what I told you guys, it’s not about me it’s never been about me and it’s never going to be about me.*” Oh don’t miss this as we are so prone to get off course aren’t we? Here I believe we get an insight into where we get astray with regards to our heart and it is when we lose sight of our purpose and calling and get an over inflated view over our importance. So John says, “*I’m not the most important person there has ever been I told you at the beginning I wasn’t I’m just here to point you to the One that is.*”

c. Vs. 29 **Take joy in your calling**: When John saw the crowds leaving him and following Jesus it brought him the greatest joy because he knew that Jesus could do for them what he could never do and that was save them. “*Hey fellows*”, John say, “*It’s not my wedding therefore it’s not about us it’s about Him*”. In a Jewish wedding it was the **best man’s responsibility to bring the bride to the groom and it was kind of like an inspection and only after the groom spoke would it mean that he accepted her**. John saw himself the “best man” at the wedding but not the “better man” and as such it was his great joy to bring the bride to the better man. Did you ever notice that the bride never chooses the “best man” she always chooses the better man?

 Vs. 30 John then utters one of the most truthful yet in light of living in an upside down world amazing statements ever uttered, “*He must increase, but I must decrease*.” Verse 30 contain seven words that sum up what being a Christian is all about and I find it interesting that it came right after John’s word about being full of joy at hearing Jesus voice. A old wise pastor once told a room full of seminary students this truth when he said, “You can never at the same time convince people that you are a great preacher and that Jesus is a great Savior” it will be either one or the other you will make the choice but only one can save souls. God’s use of us is in spite of us not because of us.

When John the Baptist first met Jesus he was still in his mother’s womb and leaped for joy and now here at the end of his ministry he is till leaping for joy. It was the “best man’s” responsibility to escort the bride and groom into the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage once in the room with his bride the groom would tell him that everything is great which would bring joy to the best man. Do you hear what John is saying? He is saying that which brings the greatest joy in the heart of those who bring the bride to the groom isn’t what we get to do but what the Groom does in taking the bride as His own. There are far too many who serve in ministry whose joy is all about what they get to do instead of what Jesus is doing and you will find that out if you dare change what they were doing. Hey what brings you joy hearing the voice of the Groom or is it about you?

Did you notice that John the Baptist said first “the Jesus must increase” before we can decrease? There is my friend great truth in the order of John’s words and trying as we might to decrease will never work it is only when we allow Him to increase in our lives that we will decrease. Struggling with some old fleshly habit or attitude trying to rid yourself of it will not work instead feed your self with more of Jesus allow Him to increase and in so doing you will automatically be decreasing.

There are three “Must’s” in John chapter three and as such three must’s in a Christian’s life:

1. Vs. 7 “*You must be born again*”: The First MUST is what we all start with the **recognition of our own need**. You see when we come to Jesus and are Born again we do so by admitting that we are sinners in need of salvation. Jesus hasn’t come to reform sinners He has come to transform sinner. There are far too many people that are wrong on this point aren’t there?
2. Vs. 14 “*even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*”: The second MUST deal with **the instrument of that transformation** and that of coarse is Jesus. Our transformation has occurred because our sin was judged upon our savior on His cross and it is only when you and I have looked to that work and trust in it alone that we are transformed.
3. Vs. 30 “*He must increase, but I must decrease*.” Finally the third MUST is that which happens after our transformation as it is the MUST of a servant. We need to get our of the way and point people to HIM and not ourselves our activities, our church. This ought to be the heart of every believer in Jesus especially those who are pastors and teachers. It is not our popularity and notoriety that saves people its Jesus. It’s not Calvary Chapel’s programs or visibility in our community that saves anybody its Jesus, to He must increase and we must decrease. You and I ought to do what Jesus said in Matt. 6:3 “*do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing*”. The truth is it is in our invisibility that His visibility is best seen.

**IV. Vs. 31-36 Four truths about Jesus**

Vs. 31-36 Now we come to the second great truth presented in this section, **Jesus is the only one worth listening too**. Here we see the difference between John the Baptist who was the “*voice in the wilderness*” and Jesus who is the “*Word of God*”. John first declares two things concerning Jesus:

1. Vs. 31-32 John says that Jesus “*comes from above*” and therefore testifies of what He has seen and heard. In other words John the Baptist is saying that **Jesus is an eyewitness** of the things He is proclaiming His word is not hearsay as Jesus is speaking on earth of that whish He is seeing and Hearing.
2. Vs. 33-34 The second point John makes is that of the **reliability of the witness** of Jesus as receiving His testimony is agreeing with God as Jesus speaks the Word of God and He does so by the Spirit with out measure. John declares four things about Jesus:
3. Vs. 31 “*He who comes from above is above all*”: Notice that John doesn’t say “came” past tense but “comes” present tense as being there now. So John is saying that Jesus is superior to himself in “**Person**” because Jesus comes from above “heaven” where as John comes from the earth and speaks of the earth.
4. Vs. 32-33 “*What He has seen and heard, that He testifies*”: Because of Jesus character and position His testimony is more accurate then John’s therefore Jesus offer more reliable “**Proof**” then John did. It’s for this reason receiving Jesus testimony is certifying that they believe God.
5. Vs. 34 “*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure*.” There is no limitation in the anointing upon Jesus life as He is perfect man because He is God; therefore John declares to his followers that Jesus is superior to himself in “**Power**”.
6. Vs. 35 “*The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand*”: Finally John declares that Jesus is superior in “**Position**” as He is the Son of whom the Father loves and whom He has placed all things into His hands.

Vs. 36 It is for the above reasons that man has no excuse in rejecting Jesus testimony and in rejecting Him God’s judgment remains upon. You can say that what a person does with Jesus is a life or death sentence receive Him and you have everlasting life, ah but reject Him and the wrath of God abides upon you. Jesus is essential and what a person does with Him will be the only standard by which man will be judged.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 4:1-26**

**“The road less traveled”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-6 The need to go**

**III. Vs. 7-15 Better water**

**IV. Vs. 16-26 Woman believe Me**

**I. Intro.**

John was an eye witness of some of this and Jesus must have told the disciples of the conversation afterward. It is interesting to note that Jesus departure from Jerusalem and from there went to Judea and now into Samaria, finally He will arrive in Galilee (the end of the earth) is the same route that Jesus will exhort his disciples to travel after receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8. So? Well I rather think that it is not where He went as much as it is how He went that we are to follow the same path as He did and it is in this that we will draw our application this morning.

**II. Vs. 1-6 The need to go**

Vs. 1-6 The first six verses serve as a background to the story at hand and John reveals three reasons for Jesus departure of Judea.

1. “*When the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*”: Notice the words, “*When the Lord knew…He left…but needed to go through Samaria*” The word “*left*” in verse 3 sheds light on one of the reasons Jesus left as it only occurs here in the N.T. and it means an “*intentional break or departure*” “*send away or to dismiss*”. Else where in Greek literature the word is rendered “*abandoned*”. Jesus abandoned Judea as the Pharisees were making Him popularity an issue. We see one of the most remarkable things about Jesus has to do with **His priorities**. This being early on in His earthly ministry Jesus was on the verge of national popularity which had reached the Pharisees yet He takes leave of them and instead heads back home to Galilee. Oh mind you it was the easiest and quickest route but because it went through Samaria it was ***a road never traveled***. So why did He “*need to go through Samaria*”? Well there was an ostracized Samaritan woman by a well late in the day after all others have gone that He needed to speak with**. Jesus was never concerned with popularity, His only concern is for people (any and all people), it was this that directed His route in life**!
2. “*He needed to go through Samaria*”: Jesus could have taken one of three routes: Along the coast, Across the Jordan and then up through Perea, or straight through Samaria. Jews would never go through Samaria as they had a great racial hatred of the Samaritans. The Samaritans grew out of the Assyrian Captivity of the 10 northern tribes that were rejected by the Jews because they could no longer trace their ancestral heritage. When the Babylonians conquered the nation they took only the best people leaving the lower class people who inter mixed with the people brought there originally by the Assyrians. Because of this rejection they established their own form of worship because they were bared from the temple in Jerusalem. They built their own temple on Mount Gerizim and although they still believed in the first five books of Moses they changed the stories, according to them the Garden of Eden was on Mount Gerizim, Noah’s ark landed on Mount Gerizim and Abraham offered Isaac on Mount Gerizim. The name Samaritan is what they will call Jesus in chapter 8:48 and us such we know that it became a swear world. This is more that just a revelation of the route taken, as there was racial and religious prejudice between these two groups. So Jesus traveling this direction was setting a clear signal of where He stood on this sort of thing, HE brought people together not tore them apart. You see Jesus cut through the narrow minded bigotry that occupied people’s hearts.
3. “*Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well*”: Finally John takes us to the location in which this story took place right below the twin mountains of Gerizim and Ebal where every year the Jews gathered and read the blessings and curses of the law. Jesus didn’t “need” to go through Samaria **geographically** nor **politically** but He needed to do so **relationally**. “*He needed to go through Samaria*”, NEEDED a strong word. Geographically the quickest way but not the normal way Jews would go to Galilee. So His NEED was a need brought about by the reason of another’s NEED.

**III. Vs. 7-15 Better water**

Vs. 7 Several things makes this women by the well unusual. Typically women would travel together in the morning to get water for the day, further more their would have been a well in Sychar but we see her having to come alone outside of the city in a time of day when no other person would be gathering water and she had done so for some time. We note that she is woman not a young girl any longer but a woman, her youthful foolish decisions have more than caught up to her she has lived a life styled that now causes her to carry the burden of her choices everyday. All of this suggests that this woman was an outcast among a people of outcasts; she has been shunned by people who had been shunned. It would no doubt take her an hour or so to walk one way along that dusty dirty road alone with her thoughts, oh how heavy those foot steps must have been. She had been through five husbands and now she is with a man not her husband. What that tells us is that she has not learned from those foolish choices instead she is left just carrying those choices.

As she came to this well because of her own foolish choices but this time there was someone sitting by the well of those choices, Jesus. Oh do not pass by the reality of this my friend, maybe you have come today to the well of your foolish choices that you haven’t learned from and now you aren’t young any more. Your impetuous dreams of being someone famous and important have long ago been swallowed up by the choices you have made. Don’t get me wrong I’m not here saying that you made the choices because you just wanted to screw up your life. You didn’t sit down one day and say I think I’ll mess up my life, I think I’ll do drugs become an addict have children outside of marriage, go to jail, but that is where you are now an outcast living outside of outcasts coming each day to the same pit to get a little something to quench the heartache. But this day Jesus is sitting at the well and He is waiting for you and what you haven’t seen is that He has been at the well everyday of your life but this day you have seen Him.

Jesus seeks out folks just like this woman those that because of their own failings society has deemed unworthy of attention and love and He finds them in their station alone in life parched having adapted a lifestyle around their sinful choices. Notice that Jesus gave this woman by the well the opportunity to turn Him down, He gave her that choice it wasn’t Him that didn’t want her it would be her choice not to want Him. Do you not know that right this moment Jesus is sitting on the well of your choices giving you the opportunity to stop coming to that well all together but it will be your choice.

 One of the vaccinating things to observe in this passage of scripture is this women’s growing understanding of who Jesus is. In verse 9 she calls Him a “***Jew***”, then in verses 11 she is more respectful calling Him “***Sir***”. Next in verse 12 she asks if He is greater than the patriarch “***Jacob***”, in verse 19 she calls Him a “***prophet***” and finally in verse 25 she alludes to the fact that He is the “***Messiah***”. This completed progression all took place in a matter of minutes as she saw His heart towards her. I wonder if she ever gave Him that drink (*verse 28 says that she left her water pot but it never says that she filled it*) but there is an indication that received His “living water”.

Vs. 8-10 The fact that the disciples were in town buying supplies from Samaritans shows us that clearly the Jews did have some dealings with Samaritans. His words shocked the woman, “*How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?*” She had two strikes against her, one she was a woman and no respectable Rabbi would speak to a woman in public not even their own wife and she was a Samaritan and no Jew would ever drink from a cup of a Samaritan, Jews did not offer or accept hospitality from them. Something that Jesus will say again in Luke 10:33 in the parable of the “*Good Samaritan*”. In Matt. 8:13 Jesus said, “*I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*”, so we like this women by the well qualify. Jesus told her that she was ignorant of **three things**:

1. **Who He is** “*If you knew the Gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink*”: She had question how it was that He being a Jew would ask a favor from a Samaritan woman and Jesus says, “*You don’t know who I am, that is why you question Me*.” This woman had been around men, she knew men, she knew what they wanted and here she has come to a well and yet another man asks for something. He had asked her for some of the water that she had to drink, He wanted her to give to Him all that she (*yes by her own making*) had been drinking year after year and she said, “*What are you saying, you want to drink from my cup an outcast of outcasts?*” Then Jesus said if you knew the “*gift of God and who it is that says to you*”. She had probably know many men at least six of them that had thought they were the “*gift of God*” if you know what I mean. Maybe she thought, “*Oh I’ve heard that line before*!”

2. **What He offered** “*He would have given you living water*”: He had asked for water from her and what He wanted was to give her that which would satisfy the longing of her heart. This woman had religion but she didn’t know that her problem was spiritual and she didn’t realize what He was offering yet as she was ignorant of both the gift and the giver. Combine two things in this story verse 7 “*Give me a drink*” and verse 16 “*go call your husband*” then I will give you living water. Do you see that? As we give to Jesus that which can not satisfy as the well is to deep, give to Him our sin our substitute for Him and in so doing He will replace it with Himself.

3. **How to receive it** “*Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep*”. Here before her was the living God offering her an exchange of her daily trip to that which never satisfied for that which if she would receive it would forever satisfy. She seems to be concerned with “*where…do you get that living water*” (verse 11) instead of simply asking for a drink of it.

Vs. 11-15 Jacob’s well today is around 150 feet deep, I find it odd that in most every other case it is Jesus who is the one giving and serving but here in this story he invites the Samaritan woman to get Him a drink. Though this is not strange for mankind it is for Jesus, so what is behind this request? Well in this case it was demonstrating to her that He was not against her that He saw her as valuable. Jesus always reached people where they were at to an aging Nicodemus He spoke of being born again, to fishermen He spoke of making them fisher of men and to this woman by a well He spoke of her about living water.

 Oh this poor woman she can’t seem to move beyond the physical, she has been seeking drinking from the physical world to satisfy what only the spiritual “*Living Water*” can satisfy. **Oh how many of us have lowered down our rope day after day into that pit only to find it dry**? The need is to get people away from the watering holes that the world offers and into the fresh streams of living water. The she asks, “*Are you greater than our Father Jacob*” and Jesus could have answered, “*Hem let me think, I know I’m a better wrestler than Jacob, I know that Jacob liked to sleep at the bottom of my latter*. *Yeh I’m greater than Jacob, you may know* ***Jacob’s well*** *but I know* ***Jacob well!***”

But that is not how Jesus answered instead He went right back to her need as he sat on the lip of the well “*Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again*”, “*You keep coming back to this well and it well never satisfy you*”, Jesus said. Then He tells her that His living water is superior in **three ways** to what the world has been giving her:

1. **Content** “*Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.*” Living water is superior in that it quenches what the world can not satisfy.
2. **Location** And it “*will become* ***in him*** *a fountain of water*”: Secondly it will be a source of refreshment from the **inside** so that a person will never have to seek refreshment from the outside, from what the world offers again. Jesus is speaking of availability of water not that there will never in this body a thirst but when there is water will be instantly available.
3. **Duration** “*springing up into everlasting life*”: Thirdly, Jesus says that it is superior as it will never end, she will be fulfilled forever.

Jesus has brought her to her need that the water of this world has not satisfied her so. How was that possible is what she wanted to know, Jesus had said in verse 10 by way of the “*Gift of God*”. It is interesting to note that in 3:16 Jesus was described as the gift of God but so also is the Holy Spirit. And so it is when we are parched of soul we only need to turn to our living water source Jesus who promised us the Holy Spirit to quench the longing in our hearts. The word “*Drinks*” in verse 13 in the Greek is a continual action where as Jesus says, in verse 14 speaking of the water they He shall give the word for “***Drink***” is a completed action a one time sip. Jesus answers His superiority based upon what He offered when compared to what she had continually been drinking. Her twofold response is honest as she tells Jesus why she wants His water:

1. “*That I may not thirst*”: She is tried of living in serial relationships that never satisfy.
2. “*Nor come to draw*”: She tired have the outcome of her behavior as it has keep her from true companionship.

**IV. Vs. 16-26 Woman believe Me**

Vs. 16-17a The only way to prepare this woman’s heart was dig up her sin as Jesus caused her to see and confess her failure. This was her shortest reply in the entire conversation, “I have no husband”. Jesus asked for her husband because there is no conversion without conviction and confession.

Notice that Jesus mentions the truth about her five husbands but doesn’t go into the sorted details; you see Jesus was into the gospel not into gossip and it would us all good to be into the same! There are those who want living water but not at the expense of their habitual traveling to the pit of stagnate water but you cannot have living water until you give what you are drawing for yourself to Him. She came back with one of those statements we do when convicted you know, “None of your business”. But Jesus loved her so that He made her His business no to ridicule her but to rid her of that which never satisfied.

Vs. 17b-22 Jesus now needs her to move her to conviction so He brings her to her personal sin. “*Your right*”, Jesus tells her. “*You don’t currently have a husband but you’ve had five and the one you’re with now you can’t bring yourself to trust in another person so you’re just playing house without commitment*.” So she was right she had no husband and Jesus says well you’re partly being honest. She then tried the theological shuffle to miss direct her need to which Jesus simply responded that worship is in the location of the heart not on the location of the body. Jesus says, “*Let’s get beyond what* ***OUR*** *fathers said and move to what* ***THE*** *Father says about worship*.” “***Woman, believe Me***”, He says. Oh how simple a life can be changed from emptiness if only people would trust in Jesus to satisfy the longing of the heart instead of the world.

Vs. 23-26 Then Jesus makes it personal as He says, “*the hour is coming when YOU…the hour is coming and NOW is*”. “*The time is now and you are the person that I’ve come for*”, Jesus tells her, “*I’ve come to make you a true worshipper*.” The well of the world was dug along ago and people have been coming to its water for far too long, why not now hear these words of Jesus to you, “*I who speak to you am He*”.

Don’t you find it interesting that Jesus says to her that those true worshippers are those who worship in Spirit and in truth? Oh dear saints don’t just read this and push it off as words spoken to an immoral woman you see Jesus is still seeking out people to worship the same. Look out at the landscape of Churches and you will see there are those who worship in the “Spirit” and when the service is over they will say, “*Man the Spirit was moving, I got the Holy Ghost goose pimples*”. Then there are other churches where they worship in the “truth” and any sign of emotion or enthusiasm is reserved for after church when the T.V. is turned on to watch the ball game. Hey folks Jesus spoke of “*true worshippers*” being balanced between the “*Spirit of God and the Word of God*”. Is it not a wonderful thing to realize that the Father is seeking those to worship Him? Have you gone through a time where you feel distant from God, perhaps a time when you’ve walked away from His love for you and you don’t know how to get back well He is seeking those that will worship so why not just start thanking Him and praising Him?

This is the first of Jesus’ I am statements and this one deals directly with Him being the Messiah. You can meet Him anywhere and everywhere if only you bring to Him that which you have been trying to medicate your life with so that He can replace it with that which heals. What did she do when Jesus said, “I who speak to you am He”? Well verse 28 says that she “left her waterpot”; she left the well and the waterpot for the living water.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 4:27-42**

**“Look at the fields”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 27-30 The plowing**

**III. Vs. 31-38 The planting**

**IV. Vs. 39-42 The harvest**

**I. Intro.**

John moves on to give us **three different perspectives of the conversion of the women at the well**.

* 1. Vs. 27-30 First we are given the immediate work in her and we are told that she left her waterpot, her illusions about life and in so doing she found the gift and the giver. She left her waterpot because she found in Jesus that which satisfied the longing of her heart. Folks, often times the heart or area that looks most hopeless for the gospel is the one most ready for the harvest.
	2. Vs. 31-38 Second we are told that her conversion created an opportunity to teach His disciples. Reading this story causes me at times two wonder if these were not the “B” postles because they certainly didn’t act like the “A” postles. These fellows failed to realize that Jesus saved them in order for them to be useful in bring others to Him? Most often the trouble is not that the fields are not white to harvest but rather the problem is that the laborers are not ready.
	3. Vs. 39-41 Finally the conversion of the women at the well revealed something about evangelism. That Jesus never hung out with sinners to go on with them in their ways, no He sought them out to win them from their ways. And if someone can spend 48 hours with Jesus they will not only learn to trust Him as their Savior they will come to see Him as the Savior not of just Israel, or Samaria but of everyone everywhere!

**II. Vs. 27-30 The plowing**

Vs. 27 I’m sure the disciples were shocked after all Rabbis, according to tradition, would never talk to a woman alone. But yet they didn’t dare say, why are You talking to her? Instead they were thinking it as they come at the point of her conversion they had two questions on their minds:

1. **The first had to do with the woman**: “*What do you seek*”, that is the right question it had been what was behind Jesus conversation with the woman, “*What do you seek, what is it that you are trying to fill your life up with.*” She had been trying to satisfy the longing of her heart with failed relationships with men. When she had first said to Jesus in verse 25 “*I know that the Messiah…will tell us all things*” she hadn’t realized that the “*all things*” would be the “*all things she ever did*”. Yet she had come into this Man’s love and she finds herself without her waterpot back into a city where they wanted nothing to do with her set free from the bondage of her own foolish choices. Ah but they didn’t ask the question because they didn’t mean it the same way that Jesus did, they meant it “*What do you want*?” That is why Jesus will speak to them about the “*food He has to eat which they do not know*” (verse 32).
2. **The second question has to do with Jesus:** “*Why are You talking to her*?” They didn’t see the need, He had left Judah at the beginning of His popularity moved away from the crowds and now was seen talking to an outcast woman by some forgotten well. Again it is the right question but not the way they meant it as they meant to say, “*What’s the point*!” “*You left prominence and popularity for a spiritually and culturally confused woman*”. Why would anyone leave something so promising for that which didn’t seem to hold any opportunity? And it will be this second question that Jesus will speak to in verse 35 “*Do not say, There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest*!”

Vs. 28-29 Is it not great to see that immediately she wanted to share her faith others especially men. Her testimony was simple she had tried to get into a theological debate with Jesus (verse 20) but she only tells how meeting Him has transformed her life. She was the least likely prospect for salvation but it was her that Jesus would use to evangelize all who had rejected her prior. Two things are recorded for us: What this woman did and what she said as she came back into the city. First two things of note about what she did:

* 1. “*The women left her waterpot*”: She had came there that day as she had done countless times before willing to drop down her bucket 75 feet and pull out that which never satisfied it was a metaphor for her life as she had stated in verse 15 “*give me this water*”, she said so that I may not thirst, nor come her to draw. She was tired of drawing out in relationships that which never satisfied and she was tired of the consequences of those actions, “so she left her waterpot”. My friend this is the surest sign that we have met the Messiah that we leave behind that which we just to use to draw that which never satisfied from the world’s pit. Hey friend is it time to leave behind your waterpot?
	2. “*Went her way into the city, and said to men*”: The city that had ostracized her, the city that didn’t want her around, She came back into that city. And to men, MEN? Men had been her vice; men had been her drug of choice. It has been well said that she went to the men as the women wanted nothing to do with her. Perhaps, but she went to them and said “*I have met a man, and I won’t be needing you any more!*” “*Where’s your waterpot*?” “*Don’t need it any more, I’ve moved on and left it behind*.” I suggest to you her statement of verse 29 would not have meant as much with out these two actions.

Vs. 30 The woman left her waterpot, she had received water, and she was never going to be thirsty again. I’m sure that the women weren’t talking to her as she had been a threat to every marriage in town. But the men, they all knew her and she said to the men, “*Come, see a man, which told me all things that I ever did*”, I imagine that worried them. She was the village fool but she had left her waterpot and confessed her sin in an open transparency. To this they had to come and see, she didn’t seek to cover up or make excuses of her failed life. Think of this, you’ve met someone who knows you completely, knows you’re ever fault and you’re happy, you’re so excited you have left your waterpot. The only way this makes since to our experience is if we understand that He who tells us “*all things we have ever done*” also loves us. That is what drove those folks from their city to Jesus. Christian it is what will drive people from their comfort zones to Jesus today if only we will leave our water pots and go to our cities and speak honestly about our failures and God’s love for us in spite of them. She says, “*Is this not the Christ?*” What other conclusion can one make when we consider the Lord who knows everything about us and yet loved us enough to take our sins (our rope and bucket)? So in verse 30 we are told that “*they went out of the city and came to Him*”. They never responded to her testimony before, but now they do, because God is working in her. Perhaps they went out to see Jesus to find out how much Jesus knew about them seeing that she had said that He had told her “*all things that she had ever done*” and she may have done some of them.

**III. Vs. 31-38 The planting**

Vs. 31-38 Now we move to the second perspective from the conversion of the women at the well and this has to do with the disciples. Jesus teaches them three things about ministry:

1. Vs. 32-34 **Satisfaction from obedience**: “*Rabbi eat!*”, the disciples urged. “*Eat*”, Jesus replied, “*Why I can’t cram in another bite*”. They thought that Jesus was speaking of literal food and wondered where He got it. They were satisfied with bread from the village and He was satisfied with doing the Father’s will. They came to get food Jesus came to be food for the soul, oh if we in His church would only learn this lesson. It’s the familiar theme of “*It’s not about us it’s about Him*”. What the disciples hadn’t done when they went to the village Jesus returned a woman to take their place. The Rabbis had a statement that went like this, “*Better the law be burned then given to a woman*” but Jesus used her testimony to change a city. It is never the instrument that the Master uses that soothes the soul it is the Master’s skill in playing it. Nothing will fill you up like obeying God’s will in your life. Again they wondered, “*What is He talking about food, who brought Him food*.” To which Jesus answered what was in their heart, “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work*”. Often I sit down with the Lord and request form Him things that are on my heart concerning this life of mine. “*Oh my house Lord please bring in a buyer for it!*” “*Oh this and that Lord please work in this situation*!” But as I was looking at this story in front of us I realized that I never approached prayer with, “*Lord what is Your food, what is the work You want me to be involved with.*” Asking that question and being obedient to the answer is our food in life!
2. Vs. 35-36 **Lack of fruit is not a problem in the field it’s a problem of vision**: In the natural life four months elapse between sowing and harvesting, but in the spiritual realm it can happen instantly. “*Lift up your eyes look at the fields*”, said Jesus. They saw fields empty not ready for harvest but Jesus said, no they are ripe and ready. They were weighing external things and using those as evaluations as to where people were. The disciples thought, “*What a waste of space in this God forsaken place*”, but God doesn’t forsake places people forsake God! It is interesting to note that where John the Baptist had been in 3:23 Aenon near Salim is close to Sychar, so John was still the forerunner to Jesus as he was preparing the soil. No place is a waste of time when the Lord calls you to it and latter on there would be even a greater harvest amongst the Samaritans. Jesus left popularity in Judah for an obscure Samaritan city because of fruitfulness. How many times have we walked away from a situation or stayed in a situation based upon our evaluation instead of “*lifting up our eyes*” and then looking at the fields? Oh to be certain their will times of sowing into the field but all will rejoice when the fruit is brought in. Far too much of my life is living as if the temporal world is the eternal world and the eternal world is the temporal. “*Oh look at the fields they are already white for harvest*”, Jesus said. There is an abundance of food in the field that we need not wait for. The field is right in front of us at Super One or the house right next to us. “*Oh no they aren’t ready for Jesus, I’ve tried inviting them to church they won’t come*.” Jesus came to love mankind into fellowship with the Father and work is not finished yet and are fullness in life Christian is when we are engaged in that harvest. Then Jesus said, “*Do you not say, There are still four months and then comes the harvest*?” There are two problems as it relates our reaching a world, the first Jesus already addressed the elevation of the temporal above the eternal the second is the faulty concept of time. We tend to look at the time involved in plowing a field, planting and watering a field before we can harvest and say it’s too much work but Jesus says you’re not looking at the right crop. Those disciples walked into a city full of people and walked out with nothing but food, Jesus took the hardest person in the city and turned her into an evangelist in a matter of a few minutes. And she went into that same city and led them to Jesus. So why the difference? Well it was not in the field (the world) it was not in the grain (people) it was in their view of these two things.
3. Vs. 37-38 **We are all on the same team**: Regardless of what God had called us to do plowing, sowing, watering or harvesting we are all on the same team. One time you may be involved in all the prep work the next time you are harvesting a soul it doesn’t matter as all are equally important. “*Lift up your eyes*” get them off of this world and look upon the fields of the Bitterroot where we have been placed and you find a harvest waiting of people. Latter on Jesus would say in Matthew 9:37,38 “*Pray to the Lord of harvest, that He would send forth workers into the field. The harvest is plentiful, but the reapers are few*”. Jesus doesn’t say that their aren’t seasons of sowing seed but He suggests that it doesn’t matter as these two jobs (sowing and reaping) have the same joy seeing those gathered to eternal life. We can be out in the field working throwing seed one minute and the next harvesting the crop. The prophets had sowed seed for generation, others had done the same and along comes the disciples to enter into what others had begun. That is true today isn’t it, we have been called to harvest what others have planted. Paul picked up on this in 1 Corinthians 3:7 when he said, “*One sows, one plants, one waters and God gives the increase. So he that plants is nothing, neither he that waters but it is God who gives the increase*.” Several years ago the Lord began speaking to me about a move He was going to do in my life as I had pioneered a new work He spoke to me from this verse, “*I have sent you to reap that for which you have not labored*.” The interesting thing is that the pastor who took over me could say the same thing.

What does this teach those disciples? Only that we are designed to be feed and satisfied from the spiritual above the physical. They had gone into a city to purchase a meal and saw only commerce all the while Jesus had sat down by a lonely well tired and in need of refreshment and He and the lady came away completely satisfied yet neither of them received what they initially requested. What a great lesson this is for you and I, as far too often we move around the physical world and are blind to the spiritual, to outcast women by wells and forgotten spiritual mixed up people of the city.

**IV. Vs. 39-42 The harvest**

Vs. 39-42 We move now to the final perspective of the conversion of the women at the well as it deals with those whom the women testified to in the city. In verse 38 Jesus had spoke reaping that which they had not sown and then in verse 39 we are told that many “*Samaritans*” believed in Him because of the word of the woman. The disciples went into a city to purchase food and the changed woman came to “Men” (men had been her problem) and invited them to see a Man, see what a real man looks like, a man who told her “*all things I ever did*”. They could have asked, “*Hey where is your waterpot*?” “*Oh I no longer need that old bucket and the rope, I’ve kicked the bucket, I’ve met a Man who is the Messiah*!” Her testimony brought them out of the city and to Jesus to hear His words, her transformation brought to His feet and the out come was that they saw Him not as her Messiah, her savior but the Messiah and the Savior of the whole world. Oh what a glorious two days they had in this town and what changes had taken place. The city came to Christ by believing the testimony of women by the well. They saw what God has done in her life, they are affected by it and they believe but that was not the end of their story. They saw for themselves, they experienced what she had experienced and what was at one time her experience became theirs. Then after two days with Jesus the whole city was beginning to believe. Jesus had not experienced this among the Jews. The Samaritans moved from merely believing him to be the Messiah to come to the truth that was the “*Savior of the world*”, Savior of anybody, anywhere, anytime.

In Luke 9:51 Jesus will send His disciples to get some supplies from another Samaritan village and they didn’t want to do business with them James and John asked Jesus “*Do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?*” To which Jesus said, “*You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.*” Then In Luke 17 Jesus will pass by Samaria again to another village where there would be 10 outcasts as they were lepers and they would all be cleansed but only the Samaritan fell down at Jesus feet to thank Him. Finally in Acts 8 :4 **six years later** God will send another to this spiritually and culturally lost people by sending Philip. Why did it take so long well I suggest that **the harder work was not the hearts of the sinners of Samaria but rather the needed transformation in the hearts of His servants**. There are people right now here in our area that are waiting for someone to sit by the well of their choices and offer them living water, “*Oh Lord show us our women by the well*”. Nothing causes the soil of hearts to be better cultivated for the Lord than brokenness. Daniel wrote in 12:3 “*those who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever*” and Solomon said in Proverbs 11:30 “*He that wins souls is wise*”. Sounds like we all ought to be looking for Samaritans doesn’t it?

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**b. 2:12-4:54 New hope**

**John 4:43-54**

**“A sign of trust”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 43-48 Come down**

**III. Vs. 49-54 Go your way**

**I. Intro.**

Christian Tom Landry former coach of my beloved Dallas Cowboys once described the job of a coach as, “*To make men do what they don't want to do, in order to achieve what they really want.*” That is what Jesus does, doesn’t He? He puts us through circumstances we do not want to go through; causes us face things we do not like to face, in order to achieve what we have wanted with all our hearts all along, a greater trust in Him. That is what the story at hand will teach us as Jesus continues on his journey departing from Samaria on His way to Galilee.

**II. Vs. 43-48 Come down**

Vs. 43-45 Apparently Jesus sole reason for going to Jerusalem was to attend the feast as we were told in chapter 2:13. And while there we are told that He did three things:

* 1. 3:1 He did signs
	2. 3:2-21 Spoke to a religious leader in Nicodemus
	3. 4:45 And did so to reach the people from Galilee that need to witness His majesty

The Galileans were considered hicks; as there was a large gentile contention there but Jesus’ words in verse 44 aren’t a reference to Galilee but to 4:3 where we were told that He “*Left Judea and departed again to Galilee*” those words were pointing us back 2:23-24. Jesus was never identified with Judea even though he was from the tribe of Judah and was born in Bethlehem. And now at the beginning of His public ministry when people were curious but faith was shallow He left them to where He could truly minister. Jesus is back in the country of His up bringing having left the country of His birth, which He could not trust them as they didn’t trust Him. It is interesting to note that not one of Jesus disciples came from Judea; there would never be a significant work there, because “*a prophet is with out honor in His own country*”. Oh to be certain in Judea He was popular but none received Him as they did in Samaria and Galilee. There is a lesson in this Christian and it lies in the fact that God has not called us to be popular, He has not called us to be where the entire world gathers. No He has called us to go out into the highways and byways to seek and save that which is lost. The Galileans’ received him for now, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast but they too will not want Him as their Savior their interest will not be in who He was, but only in what He could do.

Hey saints, the world is interested in a person who will perform what they want when they want without intruding upon their lives but Jesus won’t commit Himself to that person, He departs from them and seeks out those who want transformation. I believe Jesus is leaving some areas and coming to others seeking out those who would be saved and often they are in the most unlikely territories. He left because a prophet is without honor in his own country. Jesus was prophet, priest and king but they didn’t want Him for that they wanted a side show, someone to amaze them but not someone who would “*tell them all things they ever did*”.

Vs. 46-47 There was a revival in Samaria and yet we are told here that Jesus leaves it for a Nobleman who has a need. Galilee was called “*Galilee of the gentiles*” as it was a dark area spiritually because this area was always the first place invading armies would come into and ransack. Yet according to Isaiah 9 it would this area of darkness and death that Jesus would come into to be a light. Are there areas of darkness and death in your life, places where the enemy always invades first? Well that is the very area Jesus wants to come into to shine His light upon, you may have given up on every seeing wholeness and victory in that area but rest assured Jesus wants to come and shine His light and love there.

Nazareth was only two or three mile from Cana and when Jesus arrived there was a noble man from Capernaum some 25 miles away seeking Him concerning his dying son. The word for “*nobleman*” in the Greek means “*king’s man*” which means he was an officer for the king one of Herod’s officials’. Most scholars feel he is related to Herod as he would not have been placed in a position of authority over people if he wasn’t. Many believe him to be Chuza, Herod’s steward the husband of Joanna mentioned in Luke 8:3. Others suggest that that his identity is to be found in Acts 31:1 when revival was breaking out in Antioch we are told of another “*king’s man*” named Manaen who had been brought up with Herod and some believe this to be this man. It matters not as who ever he was he came from a high position in society but there came into his life that which his position and wealth could not be changed by his earthly position. We are told in verse 47 “*When he heard*”, someone came to this father in Capernaum and told him that there was this Jewish carpenter that had performed some amazing miracles in Jerusalem but his son was near death he couldn’t be moved, perhaps if Jesus could be moved to the little boy.

Desperation had driven him out side of his comfort zone and travel to get help. Desperation has brought him to seek, it has brought many a person to seek as we all at one time have put our trust in our resources and have seen those exhausted. This man was popular, prominent, and powerful a man of Herod’s court and this may have bought him the best doctors, medicine and care of the day but no change in the condition of his son. It doesn’t matter how rich, powerful, or successful a person is sooner or later, we all experience sorrow and tragedy. So he begged Jesus, this proud man was reduced to begging a Galilean carpenter for help to heal his son.

There are those who tell us that it doesn’t matter what you place your faith in Buddha, Mohamed, or a door knob as it’s your faith that saves not the object of your faith, not so. You could have interviewed this man and asked him and he would not have said, “*Oh it wasn’t Jesus I’m coming to trust in it is just a higher power*.” **A higher power was Herod but Herod could not bring back his son**. You will recall that the Samaritans simply heard the Word and believed but the Jews wanted a sign or wonder before they would trust and this fellow wanted to give directions (instructions) to Jesus, “*Come down before my son dies*”; there will be a Roman Centurion who will say “*Just speak the Word*”. Why do I mention this? Well truth be told **there are a great many times we would like to direct or instruct Jesus on how we want Him to work instead of leaving that up to Him**, “*Just say the Word Lord*” that is all we need. Have you ever noticed how much of your prayer is giving directions and instructions to Jesus? “*Lord, I’m not sure you know but I’m a little low on funds, so here is what I want you to do, bring in some bread so I can spend it*”. “*Lord I need an answer and the clock is ticking and this is the answer I want*!” So what should we do? Well we should come to Him and say, “*Lord here’s my heart, here’s my struggle change me, speak the Word*”. So many of us hold to the saying “*When all else fails, Pray*” oh to learn to reverse this too, “*Before everything fails, Pray*”. “*Oh, if You will travel with me 25 miles my son will live, he needs Your touch, I’ve heard what you can do*.”, said the nobleman.

Vs. 48 Jesus words here seem almost harsh, “*Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.*” But notice carefully the words “*you people*” is plural not singular as Jesus was not addressing the father with a broken heart but the class of people whom he belonged too the “*kings men*”. At Jesus’ trial Herod will want an audience with Jesus because of His miracles and signs hoping to see one. To this man Jesus corrects the order of belief as it is not first the sign and wonder then the belief but first the trust in the word then the sign or wonder. Signs and wonders can validate the messenger but they are not the sole basis of belief, they are **not** God’s way of proving Himself to His creation. It is easy to see how many times people have believed a sign or a wonder but not the God who produced them. Listen up, the foundation of our faith is not signs and wonders but His Word.

Hey Christian, putting your faith in signs and wonders or some formula is shallow and it puts the wrong object as the source of our belief the “*outcome*” instead of Jesus. **To make our trust in Jesus dependant upon Him meeting our expectation or experience is to place our trust in ourselves instead of His character and nature**. There are many in this world who would like to keep Jesus in a bottle so that upon needing His services they can let Him out to grant them their wishes but when He has done so they want Him back in the bottle so they can do life the way they want with out interference from Him. Simply put they want a Savior but not a Master and Jesus won’t be your savior if He isn’t your master.

**III. Vs. 49-54 Go your way**

Vs. 49 He is insistent saying, “*Sir, come down before my child dies*!” This grieving father begs Jesus to come down before his little boy dies, he doesn’t argue about the truth that some just want a performance out of Jesus; instead he insists that is not his motive. “***I’m not look for a show, I need a miracle***!” that was his plea. Desperation moved this father, desperation moves many a person having exhausted hope one finally turns to Jesus “come.. before my\_\_\_\_\_dies!” You can fill in the blank with marriage, business or loved one but it is desperation that has brought you to seek out Jesus. “*Oh if Jesus will come to my situation, if he will only do that which I need the way I expect it then that which is dead will become alive again*.”

Vs. 50 But look at Jesus words carefully as He didn’t do what this “*king’s man*” expected Jesus didn’t come down, He said instead, “*Go your way; you son lives*”. “***Go my way; I have come that you would go my way!***”, said this heart broke father. When Jesus said “*Go your way; your son lives*” He gave him no sign; Jesus didn’t do what he had asked for. “*Come down*”, he begged and Jesus didn’t respond the way he wanted instead Jesus said, “*Go…your son lives*”. “***I’ll give you the help you asked for but not the way you want it.*” “*I won’t give you a sign, I’ll give you My Word and if your trust My Word you will receive a sign and a wonder*!**” That is the problem with a great many of us isn’t it, we come to Jesus seeking from Him a touch upon that which is dead but we can’t see Him doing so unless He does so our way. Oh how we limit Him, don’t we? You see Jesus refused to grant the request in the manor in which the father had wanted but didn’t refuse the need, “*Your son lives*”. What was greater for that father, Jesus doing what he wanted the way he wanted it as or the outcome? Don’t pass by this quickly as it is the key to us always seeing our prayer answered. “*Lord I trust you to do that which is best the way in which you see is best*!” Faith is to be founded upon Jesus Word not upon our experience. Oh to be sure our experience will inevitably prove that our trust in His Word was right but we are to never trust our experience above His word or make our trust conditional upon our experience. So Jesus gave him the opportunity to trust His word but to do so he would have to walk away from his experience.

Now remember they didn’t have cell phones and 25 miles was a long walk and with every step he was either moving away or closer to trust. Jesus has heard those words from parents praying for intervention for some child many times. He has sat up with us as we sought Him, cried out to him and in the stillness of those moments says, “*Go your way; your son lives*”. What did it take for this father to turn away from Jesus with tears in his eyes and trust even though it wasn’t going to be the way we thought Jesus should do something? Don’t miss this as this father simply responds to Jesus’ word not a sign or a wonder instead he followed in response to Jesus’ word. How many times fear and doubt must have came at him, what must have ran through his mind when he saw his servants at a distance? He would have had to continue to take the thoughts obedient to the Words of Jesus. “*He believed Jesus Word and went his way*”, Hey saints **that is what life in this journey of ours will be like, believe His word and go our way!**

This father showed which was more important by “*believing the Word that Jesus spoke and going his way.*” (verse 50) We come to Jesus, you and I, because we believe He is who He said He was but then we ask Him to do something our way then we will trust Him. Jesus will always correct us “*Trust Me because of who I am, then you will see that your trust in me was right.*” **Friend’s, faith, isn’t measured by what you feel it is measured by what you do**! Now notice that if this father hadn’t gone his way, left his method he would not have run into the results of the miracle on the road. Oh he still would have received the results but would not have done so with the joy of trusting obedience which is what led to the faith of his household (verse 54).

 Vs. 51-54 This fellow made two errors concerning this:

A. **Location**: That Jesus had to be present to heal

B. **Timing**: That death would render the healing impossible

Jesus fixed these two errors by saying “*Go your way; your son lives*” which forced the man to trust His word not His location or timing. The father thought that the healing would be gradual when he inquired at what time his son “*got better*” but the servants corrected him saying that he was instantly better. His faith was confident, then it was confirmed finally it was contagious as his whole household believed.

The first miracle at Cana was one that showed that He was over time seeing that water would turn into wine but not instantaneous, this miracle shows Him over space as he need not be in the same location. Hey saint’s the distance of our circumstances is not a hindrance that God needs to overcome it is rather the distance of what we put our trust in. The first miracle Jesus preformed in this region was a time of **celebration of gladness** and here the 2nd one is a time **uncertainty and sadness** that about covers the spectrum of our human experiences doesn’t it? And you know what Jesus is able to transform any heart if we simply trust His word; **He can work at a wedding or a funeral in gladness or sadness**! It is a wonderful thing to see how Jesus works with what little trust in Him we have and moves us along to where we trust Him more and more in our lives. There will be in this life a continual need to grow in our trust of Jesus and trials will do just that. We will never see God’s work done in our lives as long as we don’t trust Him. Amazing to me the things we trust in above Him, our own resources, intellect etc. Now notice that this man’s whole house was touched by his trust in Jesus. Hey Christian listen up our houses, neighbors’ workplace and friends are watching us to see if we truly trust in the One we proclaim or not and often it is our trust or lack of it that determines their trust.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 5:1-47 New freedom**

**John 5:1-16**

**“Take up your bed and walk”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-9 Steps of transformation**

**III. Vs. 10-16 Lifted burdens**

**I. Intro.**

In a 2001 “Sports Illustrated” article titled “*The greatest come backs of all time*” the author discussed what he considered the “Greatest Comeback” surprising his readers he mentioned his number one comeback of all time as the “resurrection of Jesus Christ”. That being so the miracles of countless hearts that trust in Him are right next it, one of which we will look at this morning. This is the third sign that demonstrate how a person is saved.

1. The first (water to wine) shows that salvation is through the Word of God.

2. The second (healing the nobleman’s son) shows that salvation is by faith.

3. This third miracle demonstrates that salvation is by grace.

How does this story demonstrate salvation is by grace? Well most commentaries favor this feast being Pentecost, now we associate this feast with the Holy Spirit and His empowerment of believers but that is not what the feast meant to the Jews to them it was the celebration of the giving of the law. Now if that is the case it suggests to us that Jesus choose the time in which Jews celebrated the giving and keeping of the Law to heal this man. Yet Jesus, as we shall see, does so apart from this man keeping the law.

**II. Vs. 1-9 Steps of transformation**

Vs. 1-2 We are told that the location of this miracle took place at the pool of Bethesda located near the sheep gate and that this pool had five porches. John is very descriptive here isn’t he? The name “*Bethesda*” means “**House of Mercy**” and this house of mercy hade five porches or covered decks and they symbolized the first five books of the bible called the Law. So you see the way this was laid out the Law covered mercy. Now hear me out as we Christians don’t associate Pentecost with the celebration of the giving of the Law we associate it with the giving of the Spirit, don’t we? Of further interest is the fact that we are told here in verse 5 that this man had an infirmity for 38 years and based upon Jesus words in verse 14 the cause of inability to stand or walk was because of sin. Now of historical interest is that the Jews wondered in the wilderness for 38 years before they came into the land of promise (Deut. 2:14).

Do you see what I’m seeing here? How like people today as they think, “*If I can just keep God’s perfect law, I’ll be saved*” but nobody is able to do so. Here is a man who came on the day in which the Jews celebrated the Law to the pool of mercy covered by the Law and waited for a stirring in the water of mercy but could not get into the pool. And isn’t until the Spirit of God illuminates the Word of God that Mercy of God transforms a life. And this all take place by sheep gate where the lambs were brought in for sacrifice of sins. “*Who ever stepped in first*”, that is what religion emphasizes doesn’t it, “*Be first, try harder, fight your way to the front, God helps those that help themselves*”. But Jesus said in Mark 10:31 “*But many who are first will be last, and the last first*.” Jesus saw a multitude of sick people but He chose only one man and healed him! This man was no more deserving than the others, but God chose him. This is a beautiful picture of salvation, and how it ought to humble us to know that we are chosen “in Him” and not because of our own merits but because of His grace (Eph. 1:4).

Vs. 3-4 There are those who get all “*stirred up*” with the phrase saying that “*an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water*” but that is what it says. Apparently this fellow had spent quite a few years by this pool as he says in verse 7 as numerous times he had tried to get down to the water but other step down before him.

Notice that this man didn’t seek a savior the Savior sought him. There are so many who think if only I had someone help me into the pool then I’d have a “*swimming chance*” but Jesus doesn’t want to help you into the pool but away from the pool of religion altogether. This man didn’t need help; he needs healing! He didn’t heal everyone at the pool that day nor did he wait until just he on this hopeless and helpless man was alone instead while others waited and jostled for the opportunity to be first Jesus went to the man who **wouldn’t be first, couldn’t be first** (versed 7). There are events my friend that even desperation won’t be enough to get you placed into “*stirred waters*”. Your legs won’t carry you and others are quicker to the pool and 38 years has come and gone yet you come to the pool to get relief. Long ago this fellow’s friends and family had stopped asking if he got into the water that day, instead they most likely wondered why he continued to go. Perhaps he went now out of habit not hope he had become addicted to the pursuit and not the cure. Oh friends there are a lot of folks like this today who have built their whole lives around the routine and have long ago forgotten why they are the way they are. But Jesus saw him there, oh my how glorious is this revelation today, that Jesus sees us where we are crippled by the waters edge.

Vs. 5-6 Notice the way this is worded here “*When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well*?” That seems like an obvious question does it not? There are some who have not reached the place of helpless yet, they’re not ready to give up on human efforts to solve their problems. They are still determined to get into the water when it is stirred and to those folks Jesus can do nothing for them. And even after having an infirmity “*feebleness*” for 38 years he was come to these pools hoping for strength. People can become quite comfortable in their afflictions as it affords them a lifestyle that reasons away responsibility. As strange as it sounds people don’t always want out of their present circumstances opting rather for a “*comfortable prison cell*”.

Notice Jesus wasn’t interested in helping the man be first in the pool, no His interest was in getting in out of the competition altogether. Jesus spoke to this man only **three times** and very direct but in so doing He outlines the keys to personal transformation as three things must change in the disfigured human heart.

1. Vs. 6 **Desire** “*Do you want to be made well*”: Not “*will you*” or “*would you like*”, but “**Do you**” what’s the difference you ask? Well “*will you or would you*” implies that Jesus would be asking this man to make a “**DECISION**” but when He said “**do you**” Jesus is not asking him to make a choice He is questioning him if he has the “**DESIRE**”. That’s a great question to ask folks because a lot folks can’t make the right decision because they haven’t addressed whether or not they desire change.
2. Vs. 8 **Direction** “*Rise, take up your bed and walk*”: Then came Jesus’ threefold command, command not a suggestion. What did Jesus say to those who have tried and failed time and time again? “*Rise, take up your bed and walk*.” Notice that Jesus didn’t say, “*Oh hang in there keep coming one day you will get there*”. Neither did he say, “*Oh let me help you into the water my friend*” or “*Not to worry friend you will get use to it to your condition one day!*”
	1. ***Rise***: **Jesus asks the impossible**. Do what you can not do because I tell you to do it. Jesus tells this man to do what he couldn’t do, hadn’t done for 38 years. Is this not a cruel thing to say to a man who for 38 years hadn’t stood? He asked him to do the impossible and the question that needs to be asked is “*When does the impossible become possible*?” And the answer to that question is when it is no longer I who do it. Do you understand what I’m saying to you this morning? When you and I transfer our trust, our faith from ourselves to Jesus the impossible becomes possible. We will continue to be feeble in our faith, in our walk as long as we continue to try to stand in our own strength. Ah but when we have given up standing in our strength and trust His strength we will raise. Many miss this fact when they are looking for help from God as there is always something God tells them to believe, do, or act on. Jesus does not say, “*Well friend you need to work on some leg strengthening exercises, then vision yourself walking*” No instead He says, “*Transfer your trust, to Me and I’ll do the rest*”. Obviously it was Jesus' will that this man should do what he told him to do, and the moment the man's will agreed with the Lord's will the power was there. I do not know whether he felt anything or not. All I know is that strength came into his bones and into his muscles and he could stand. He knew he could stand, and he did.
	2. ***Take up you bed***: Jesus **removed the possibility to relapse**. Take away any crutch you may have to go back to your former life. Notice that Jesus said “*Take up your bed*”, why did He tell him that? G. Campbell Morgan put it this way, “*In order to make no provision for a relapse*.” Don’t miss this as there are a great many people who have risen from the things that crippled their lives, they have trusted the Lord but they thought to themselves “*I’d better leave my bed, I may need it if this doesn’t work.*” Jesus said, “*Take up your bed. Get rid of it; don't leave it there.*” Paul wrote to the Romans in 13:14 to “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts*.” That’s the idea here making no provision to go back on what you have trusted Jesus to transform. Get rid of the alcohol, drugs, porn! These are bridges that need to be burned so that you will cut off any possibility of going back. Friends the enemy has ripped off far too many people who was really touched by God, delivered from some inner attitude, a bitter spirit but then allowed the past to come back in and they find themselves back where they were.
	3. ***And walk***: **Jesus expected continual success**. “*Keep going by putting one foot in front of the other and repeating those steps in the right direction*.” Don’t expect to be carried your going to have to walk. Friends, Jesus has the power to cause you to rise then He has the power to cause you to walk. Far too many folks trust Jesus to cause them to rise but then don’t want to learn to walk. Paul wrote to the Galatians in 5:16 “*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*.” Its key my friend that you begin to put one foot in front of the other by trusting the Lord.

Hey Christian have you ever felt like that spiritually? Weak, unable to stand or walk like others of the faith? I think there will be times friends where we need a stirring in our hearts but we haven’t moved for 38 years. Don’t settle for anything else friend but a full emersion into His presence. Sometimes our inability to grow may be because of some habit that has weakened you, and your heart wants to let go of it but you just haven’t been able to become victorious. Now verse 9 tells us that this man at once followed those three things, man I love that he was transformed as he trusted and followed the Lord. And I just wonder how many there are too day waiting for a move of the Lord in their lives but aren’t willing to trust and obey?

**III. Vs. 10-16 Lifted burdens**

Vs. 10-13 Here we are given the response of the religious leaders to this mans healing. It is important to realize that this was not a violation of the Law but rather a violation of how the scribes had interpreted the law about work on the Sabbath. The rabbis had carefully studied the regulation and had come up with 39 different ways by which the Sabbath could be violated by work one of which was carrying any kind of a load on the Sabbath. So the man replied that his carrying his bed was in obedience to Jesus’ words. That is when they showed their real motive behind their confrontation by asking him, “*Who is the Man*”. And all they heard was “*What somebody healed on the Sabbath”*. These guys were concerned about the letter of the law but at the expense of the mercy of God. This fellow could have been in real trouble as the penalty could have been death by stoning. “*I’ve been crippled for 38 years and now I can walk and you tell me I picked the wrong day to do it*?” All these religious leaders can see is the burden this man was carrying but they can not see the greater burden that God had lifted of this man.

Notice that it says that “*Jesus found him in the temple*”, why the temple? Well because the law required that the person healed go into the temple to give thanks and that is where Jesus found him. Isn’t that great the minute this new believer got in trouble Jesus is there to help him out? Notice the way Jesus addresses him “*See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.*” He didn’t shake His finger at him saying you better never sin again or you will lose your healing. No He said, “*You’ve been made whole, don’t go backward go forward*”. We are not told what had caused this man to lie crippled for 38 years but we are told that it had to do with sin. Now not all illness is caused by something we personally have done but all illness is a result of sin in as much as it is because of the fall of man. Hey saints that will be the case if we don’t guard our hearts against sin as a worse sin will befall us. Jesus work on the cross has cleansed us from our sin it has removed the penalty do us but it doesn’t remove the what will happen if we go back and continue in our old ways. That brings us to the third step in our transformation a change in our:

c. Vs. 14 **Destination** “*See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you*”. This fellow had remained in this condition as a result of arriving at the same destination through consistent habitual sin so Jesus warned him to change his destination or his condition may become permanent, he was in the temple praising God, thanking God that was the right destination so keep coming there not anywhere else. Notice that Jesus finds this fellow in the temple, he went to worship he hadn’t been in church for 38 years and that is the first place he goes so he can worship God thank God for his life. And that is where Jesus meets him in a place of worship and thanksgiving. That is why Jesus warns him saying, “*Hey, your in the right place you’ve been made whole and you are now able to do what you were designed to do, so keep walking this way other wise you will end up worse then when you were*.”

The religious leaders, ignored the man with the right “***desire***”, ignored the man going the right “***direction***” ignored the man arriving at the right “***destination***” and their only concern was that he had done so the way they wanted he broke their rules. It is clear that this fellow tries to get them to focus upon the miracle of his transformation but they only heard that a “*man had told him to do so*”. The fact that this man who had been lame for 38 years doesn’t excite these religious leaders only that it had happened on the Sabbath. And these religious folks won’t be satisfied until they have Jesus crucified on the Sabbath which was a violation of the Sabbath.

Here is a guy who has been lame for 38 years and for all those years he hasn’t been in church he has stayed trapped in the consequences of his own habitual sin and now he is walking and productive and all the religious folks care about is that he is going against their customs. Oh how many times well meaning Christians and Church leaders have failed to rejoice in lame folks walking because they didn’t do the way they do? These religious leaders had the wrong idea about the Sabbath as they thought the Sabbath meant inactivity but it meant rest from our own activity because we have entered the rest of God’s activity! They were to rest in God’s work the Spirit of God working in conjunction with the Word of God transforming the child of God through the mercy of the Lamb of God’s sacrifice. Oh how you and I need that stirring in our heart!

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 5:1-47 New freedom**

**John 5:16-30**

**“Most Assuredly”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 16-18 Will not slumber**

**III. Vs. 19-23 Impossible for God**

**IV. Vs. 24-30 He that wonders shall rein**

**I. Intro.**

John’s record seems to follow every sign of Jesus with a teaching by Jesus. Last week **we saw the impotent man meeting the omnipotent man and the out come was that the impotent man was transformed**. His burden had been lifted by Jesus and all the religious leaders could see was that he was lifting a burden on the Sabbath. Their religion had done nothing but keep him by their pool day in and day out waiting for a stirring, waiting for a man to place him further into its depths. Note that friend, what religion couldn’t do in 38 years Jesus did instantly not by helping him into the pool but by removing him altogether, so what are you waiting for? The reason why you see a man carrying his bed on the Sabbath (a healed whole man) is because God will not rest in the presence of human agony even when it is the result of personal sin. God has no rest until every man, woman, boy and girl finds rest in Him, “*My Father has been working until now*”, Jesus said in verse 17. ***Our misery has released His mercy our groans His grace our wonderings has caused His workings***!

**II. Vs. 16-18 Will not slumber**

Vs. 16-18 It is interesting to note that the Jews didn’t prosecute the man who was healed instead they began to persecute Jesus. Chronologically Jesus had healed the demoniac on the Sabbath earlier (Luke 4:31-37) and in the days following the miracle recorded here in John 5, Jesus would stand up for His disciples when they picked grain on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-8), followed by His healing of the man’s withered hand on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9-14). Based upon these four events we see that Jesus deliberately challenged the scribes and Pharisees views of the Sabbath who had taken what God meant for a day of rest for mankind and had transformed it into regulations and restrictions.

So when they confront Jesus He simply replies that He was doing only what His Father was at that moment doing! There is behind all these words of Jesus a fundamental overriding principal that governed every aspect of Jesus’ life and it has to do with His relationship with the Father. It is the truth of this that ought to cause you and me to ask ourselves, “*What is the principal that that governs my life*”. It doesn’t have to be evil our unbiblical to cause us to get off target it only has to be something other than our relationship with our Lord. Hey saint’s that is the key to effective ministry to find out what the Father is doing and become involved with what He is doing. It is true personally as well as God is at work in your life and we can either work with Him, yielding our lives to Him or resist Him. That is what Peter said in 1 Peter 1:24-25 “*all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.*” This verse doesn’t discriminate, it can be religious work, good work in and of it’s self but if it is not God’s work it will wither and fall away. Jesus is saying, “*You guy’s go the law and to all that the rabbis added but I go back further to what God is doing, He work’s on the Sabbath and He is merciful and compassionate, since I’m His Son when He works I work*.” In Mark 2:27 Jesus said, “*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*.” The truth is God’s Sabbath rest has been broken by man’s sin according to Gen. 3 so ever since the fall of man, God has been seeking lost sinners and saving them. Isn’t great to know that the Godhead doesn’t take holidays or vacations? One version puts it this way, “*My Father is working straight through, even on the Sabbath. So am I*.” In Psalm 121:3-4 we are told that “*He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep*.”

But that is not what upset the Jewish leaders alone instead is was when Jesus said “*My Father*” instead of the usual “*our Father*,” by which Jesus claimed equality with God. There are still folks today that claim that Jesus never said He was God but here is yet another clear declaration understood by those present that He was claiming His deity.

The healing of this man and the reaction that it caused among the religious leaders leads to one of the most amazing self declarations Jesus ever made about Himself. It was that He also said “*that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God*”. And the next two verses (19-20) serve as His initial reply to their reaction to His statement of being equal with God. These men who had observed a man unable to be functional for 38 years stuck by the pool of religion which emphasized law over the mercy of God, legalism instead liberty and grace. To these hostile religious people Jesus stood up and simply gave them reasons of why what He said was not blasphemous and He must have known that what He was saying was going to be twisted into charges that will lead to His death. I often wonder which took more power to heal a man who for 38 years was in bondage or to courageously stand up and speak to those who would use your words to kill you.

**III. Vs. 19-23 Impossible for God**

Vs. 19-23 From verse 19 to verse 30 we have Jesus’ answer to their criticism concerning His relationship with the Father and amazingly Jesus reinforces the very thing they objected. That’s important you see if Jesus was misunderstood as some claim here would have been a perfect time to correct the misconception but instead of doing so knowing that this would cause these religious people to send Him to His death He plainly tells them that they are not misunderstanding, He doesn’t deny it, no endorses it! There are only two possibilities concerning Jesus claim He is who He claims to be, or He is a liar; and if He is a liar that He can not clearly be a “Good” anything. Clearly Jesus’ followers believed Him to be who He claimed to be and were willing to be put to death proclaiming exactly what Jesus had claimed.

How did Jesus show that He was equal with God? Well Jesus in verses 19-25 will proclaim **four ways He is equal to the Father**:

1. Vs. 19 **Life**: He was one with His Father in His works, which would make Him one with the father in life. If healing a man on the Sabbath was a sin, then the Father was to blame. The Greek has this “*what He sees the Father*” in the present tense meaning that Jesus is saying that at the very present moment Jesus saw the Father healing so to the Son. In verse 20 the word “*shows*” is again in the present tense so it would read “*showing*”. Do you see what Jesus is saying these religious leaders who took issue with Jesus use of the phrase “*My Father*”, He is telling them that He is only doing that which He is presently watching the Father do. Jesus declared that He didn’t do anything independent of what the Father was doing He and the Father worked together, doing the same deeds in the same way that is what Jesus will say in chapter 10:30 saying, “*I and the Father are One*”. Jesus starts this discourse with the angry religious leaders with the words “*Most Assuredly*” in fact in the 14 verses we will look at He will say it three times. Where ever Jesus used this phrase is was to arrest attention to tell who ever He was speaking with “*Pay attention, what I’m about to you is extremely important*”. And the first that Jesus tells them about his deity is rather remarkable as He says, “*I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself.*” That does not seem to fit our concept of God does it, when we think of God we think of unlimited power and the ability to do what ever you want whenever you want but Jesus doesn’t say that. Instead Jesus in His incarnation speaks of submitted power, channeled ability. It is this very point that satan didn’t grasp when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness in Matt. 4:3 “*If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.*” Not only does satan tempting Jesus in the area of proof he is also asking Jesus to exercise His power and ability for His own purpose. In this one verse Jesus has answered the question of atheists when they ask “*Can God make something so heavy He can not lift it*?” The answer is **no,** for God’s power is never foolish never random displays without purpose or point. You see God’s omnipotence (all powerful) never works outside the realm of His other attributes such as His all knowing and every where present at once. So Jesus is telling these religious leaders that He is God the Son but that doesn’t mean that He is working independent or outside of the Godhead He is working in conjunction with the God head in all wisdom. Mankind (and apparently satan) is mistaken as it relates to God’s power as it is never separated from the rest of His attributes. How thankful I am of this truth as other wise God would have power apart from all wisdom which would be quite dangerous. God’s power is always exercised with His perspective and further more for our benefit. People ask “*Is anything impossible for God*?”, and answer may surprise you, YES. **It is impossible for God to do anything against His nature, such as lie, do wrong, not love, go back on His word, leave us or forsake us**! And every situation you and I face must be interpreted through the lens of this truth and not merely His power to accomplish a task. And so Jesus always operated within the frame work of “*what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner*”.
2. Vs. 20 **Love**: In verse 19 Jesus spoke of how God’s power always works in connection too God’s other attributes and never separate from them. Now in verse 20 Jesus tells them that **God’s power in operation is not like some lighting storm it is relational and intimate operating through the channel of love**. In verse 19 Jesus that what the Father does the Son does and here He says that the “*Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He does*.” Simply put **the revelation of what the Father is doing is never outside of the relation of love**. Back to the anger of healing this man afflicted for 38 years Jesus is showing that such a work never violated the law as God’s law was always operates in the relationship of love, it was their interpretation concerning the Sabbath that was outside of God’s will. Jesus words revealed two important things about love:
3. The love the Father had for the Son: “*And shows Him all things that He himself does*”. The idea here is that The Father shares His heart only with His Son which shows His unique love for Him.
4. That they shared the same love for mankind: “*He will show Him even greater works than these, that you may marvel*”. This is a reference to the cross and resurrection and by this Jesus is saying that the Fathers passion and Love is His as well. Based upon verse 24-29 Jesus meant more than resuscitating people who were dead like Lazarus He was speaking of those who were spiritually dead that He rose to spiritual life.
5. Vs. 21-22 **Works**: Here Jesus tells them that He is equal to the Father is works and He lists two works that were specifically equated to God the Father, **life** and **judgment**.

As far the Jewish leaders were concerned God alone had power to do three things:

1. Deut. 28:12: “*The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend too many nations, but you shall not borrow*.” To open the heavens and give rain
2. Gen. 30:22: “*Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb*.” To open the womb and give conception
3. Ezek. 37:13: “*Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves*.” To open the grave and raise the dead

In verse 21 Jesus speaks of what “*greater works*” He was speaking if in verse 20. That greater work in this man by the pool for 38 years was not causing him to stand and walk but rather it is to be found in the 14th verse where he was found by Jesus in the temple worshipping with a thankful heart. Jesus making this dead man alive was greater than making him who had not stood or walked 38 years move. Then Jesus continues that judgment as been committed to the Son. They were upset over what was done on the Sabbath and in Mark 2:28 Jesus had declared that the “*The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.*” So what a person does with Jesus is of greater issue than what they do with the Sabbath. All life belongs to God it is only on loan for a short time with us and all life will give account to Him who created it. Jesus claimed to be equal to God in judgment in verse 22 and according to Gen. 18:25 God was “*the Judge of all the earth*” and yet Jesus applies this distinction to Himself. In Acts 17:31 we are told “*He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*”

Vs. 23 Therefore based upon His life, Love and works Jesus claimed equality in verse 23 by saying that honoring Him was honoring the Father, “*he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him*”. If Jesus was not God, then it would be wrong to honor the Son just as we honor the Father but since He is God, if we do not honor the Son, we do not really honor the Father either. In saying this in the Greek Jesus is claiming the same right to be worshipped as they would the Father. There folks today, who say that they believe in God, but deny the deity of Christ and in so doing according to Jesus they do not know the Father because they do not know the Son!

**IV. Vs. 24-30 He that wonders shall rein**

1. Vs. 24-27 **Words**: This is the 2nd time Jesus uses the words “*Most Assuredly*” it is as though He was saying, “*Pay attention to this*! *What I am about to say is important*!” Here Jesus address how a person can be granted eternal life. To the man, woman, boy or girl who “*hears his words and believes in Him who sent him,*” to the one who is willing to listen to his claims, believe his credentials, and act on that basis, to follow him and be his obedient disciple. Notice Jesus doesn’t say “*might*” have eternal life but “HAS” in the Greek is in perfect active tense meaning “*to pass from one place or state to another permanently*”. No doubt, no worry, no years of purgatory working off your sins but immediately and permanently passed by judgment and gone from death to life. Are there any limitation on this? Well Jesus goes on to say in verse 25 that if you have done this and you die no problem death can’t void out the change. Why? Because verse 26 tells us that the New life the Father and Son offer is like Them, Life in themselves. And further more verse 27 Jesus not only has the ability to grant life from death He understands the complications man faces in this life having become man Himself.

Vs. 28 There is one other point to be made in Jesus words here and it is in the words, “*that you may marvel*”. So then God will operate:

* **In the sphere of the rest of His attributes**
* **His revelation will always be in the relationship of love**
* **Finally, it will always draw mankind to Himself**

That is what Jesus says here that the outcome will be that those that witness His power will always be a place of “*Marvel*” (to be at wonder or amazed to the place of worship). Such action of God operating in the world is designed to draw His creation to Him never to repel us. Remember in Luke 19:40 upon his triumphal entry as people were saying Hosanna and the religious leaders were wanting Jesus to make them stop He said, “*I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out*.” That is what God’s power displayed in His attributes, through love will do it will cause us to come to Him to worship. One ancient writer put it this way when he said, “***He that wonders shall rein, and he that reigns shall rest.***”

Jesus speaks of four different resurrections mentioned in verses 24-29 all of which proof Jesus equality in words.

1. Vs. 24-25 Where He described the resurrection of lost sinners into eternal life. And how are they raised from the dead? By hearing His Word and obeying His voice.
2. Vs. 26-27 The second resurrection is the resurrection of Jesus Himself. His life is original, “in Himself” as John already said in 1:4 saying that “In Him was life”. The grave could not hold Him because He is “the Prince of Life” (Acts 2:24, 3:15). Jesus laid down His life and then took it up again (John 10:17-18). Because of this what a person does with Jesus will be the sole basis of judgment.
3. Vs. 28-29a The third resurrection named is the future resurrection of life, when believers are raised from the dead. This truth is further explained in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15 and has reference to what Matthew described in 27:52-53 where he said that after His resurrection that, “*the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, the graves of many of the saints were opened and they were seen walking in the streets of Jerusalem.*”
4. Vs. 29b The fourth resurrection He mentioned is the resurrection of condemnation. This resurrection involves only the lost, and it will take place just before Jesus Christ ushers in the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 20:11-15).

Vs. 30 Apparently Jesus these statements must have caused these fellows to drop their jaws in amazement, so He tells them, “*That’s nothing for a time is coming when all who are dead and buried will hear My voice*.” Jesus is going to empty the cemeteries of the world and some of them are going to spend eternity with Him while others are going to spend eternity apart from all based upon what they have done with Him. The “*done good*” and “*done evil*” have to do with what Jesus said in verse 24. There will be no argument, no appeal process, no one to say, “This is just no fair”. As verse 30 tells us that Jesus isn’t judging based upon faulty information or some irrational bias but upon the authority and righteousness of God. Mankind will be a part of one of these two resurrection one to life the other to condemnation our choice we make our own reservations.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 5:1-47 New freedom**

**John 5:31-47**

**“Can I get a witness?”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 31-35 The witness of John**

**III. Vs. 36-38 Works of the Son**

**IV. Vs. 39-47 Words of the Father**

**I. Intro.**

In the fifth chapter of John's gospel Jesus made amazing claims about himself. He claimed to be the Son of God, the One sent by the Father, the Source of all life (physical and spiritual), and the Judge of the entire world the Raiser of the dead, the One who will empty all the cemeteries of the earth. The religious leaders were amazed by these claims. They must have thought, “*How do we know he is telling the truth? What evidence does he give*?” Knowing their minds and hearts, in this section Jesus will bring forth three witnesses who back up his claims and credentials. The reason for this is that this is what the Law of Moses said in Deut. 19:15, “*Out of the mouths of two or three witnesses let every word be established*”. Even our Laws today say that there must be witnesses, who will corroborate another's testimony.

Peter preached in Acts 2:22 saying, “*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know*” There were clear cut signs that Jesus was who He just said He was but there are some who just won’t hear it. Folks the Word of God reveals Jesus you can’t help but see Him. Several years ago I under took a personal challenge to read through the entire Bible with two aims:

* To write a brief outline of what every book was about
* To write how Jesus was visible in that book

It was one of the most rewarding things I have ever done, as every book has His DNA on every page.

**II. Vs. 31-35 The witness of John**

Vs. 31-32 The best witness to call up would have been Jesus himself but as He says in verse 31-32 “*If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.**There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true*.” When Jesus says his testimony is not true, he does not mean it is false; he means it was not true in their eyes, not a valid testimony. In Chapter 8, Jesus will say, “Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come”. But here He recognizes the fact that in order to be accepted by the general public his testimony must be backed by two or three others.

Vs. 33-34 Jesus declares that all that John said about him is true (verse 33)! Jesus then say’s “*You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved*.” John is saying, “*Jesus came for your sake not mine*”. “*It is for your sake I call to the stand John the Baptists testimony of Me that you might be saved*.” So what did John the Baptist have to say about Jesus?

1. ***John the Baptist*** proclaimed **four specific things about Jesus**:

1. ***First***, in 1:23 John announced him to be the long-waited Messiah, the One of whom the prophets wrote. He even quoted the word of Isaiah concerning himself, “*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord*” so John first declared Jesus to be the prophesied coming Lord.
2. ***Secondly***, John announced to his own disciples in 1:29 that Jesus was to be “*the Lamb of God.*” So John declares that Jesus is the innocent Substitute who will take our place and taking our sin upon himself and exchanging it with His riches.
3. ***Thirdly***, John announced in 1:33 that Jesus was the “Baptizer with the Holy Spirit” He is the One who will pour out rivers of living water which alone can satisfy the thirst of our hearts.
4. ***Fourthly***, John in 1:34 declared Jesus to be “the Son of God”. He is the Word made man, God himself, Lord of heaven and earth, become man.

Vs. 35 The use of the word “*was*” suggests that John’s ministry is over and that he is most likely by this time in prison. Jesus goes on to say a very beautiful thing about John: “*He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light*.” John was a lamp. He was not a light, he was a lamp, a lamp bears the light, but it is not the light itself. He was a witness who told people where they could see, hear and know the light. John was a lamp not the light and when the Son comes into the room you no longer need a candle.

Initially the religious leaders were excited about John’s ministry but when they saw his popularity soar they became sour and when he got arrested by Herod they did nothing to help. What caused this change in them? Well it was John’s message of repentance and his pointing to Another other than them that caused their anger. Jesus’ validation of the words He had just expressed concerning His deity should have been enough especially when combined with the words of the Father, the testimony of John the Baptist whom they questioned, the works wrought and even the law of Moses spoke on His behalf bit they weren’t wanting to believe. The Father had sent Him, had sent John before Him, had shown that He had sent Jesus by words and works He gave Him to do. There will always be a danger that lurks in Christians hearts concerning “validation” as it relates to God’s calling upon our lives. Most of what gets the applause is outward things: Bill’s and Brow’s! (Bill’s and brows? The dollar bill’s and people in the pews) but God doesn’t just look at those things He sees the inward change of hearts which can’t always be measured by the same indicators. Achievement based validation is a slippery slope that will lead to either pride or depression depending on the numbers. Why not just do what Paul said in 1 Cor. 4:5 “*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God*.”

 Hey saints if you would like to be a shining lamp let the Word of God fuel your heart until it begins to burn. Unfortunately people were attracted to this light for a while but then they grew tired of John. John had served his purpose shining light upon dark hearts and many were attracted to the flicker of his flame but it was no long before they became bored with him. They listened for a while and then they went on to other things jogging, dieting, video games, whatever and John became just a passing fad. That is far too common in many people today as Jesus becomes like the items you see at garage sales still new in its original box.

**III. Vs. 36-38 Works of the Son**

Vs. 36-38 Jesus comes to the witness whom he felt was the most important in verse 32, “*There is another who bears witness of me*.” In these words Jesus points out who the “great witness” truly is. The really powerful, corroborating word which backs up the claims of Jesus is **from the Father himself**. It is a witness which is invisible and universal.

That **witness is given in two ways**. It was true when our Lord spoke and it is still true today. This is the way the Father backs up the words of Jesus:

1. Vs. 36 ***First***, through the works Jesus does. Here Jesus is referring to the healing of the impotent man at the pool at Bethesda. The people listening to Jesus had seen this man rise out of weakness and paralysis into strength and functioning again. He was standing right before them so that they could not miss him. "That is a work of the Father in me," Jesus declares. “The works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me.”
2. Vs. 37 ***Second***, Jesus declares there is also another way the Father bears witness. What is this witness which uses no voice and is never seen? Jesus refers to an inner, invisible conviction of the Spirit; that inner witness of the Father that one is listening to truth even though his mind may be denying it. There is an argument that can get behind the mind; this is what Jesus speaks of. Such is the power of God to bear inner witness. When you are reading the Scriptures, listening to the voice of Jesus, you are not just playing games or dealing with some religious ideas. This is total reality; it is where the whole of life is explained and the answers are found. Now there are three ways in which the Father bares witness of Jesus.
	1. Vs. 36 There was an **indirect** witness through every work and word: These are the works are the works the Father has given Him to finish. As Jesus had already said He did what He currently saw the Father do. In John 10:37-38 Jesus said “*If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him*”. The Jews looked for a powerful Messiah, but they didn’t see Jesus as Messiah because He expressed His power through works of compassion, mercy and grace. Did you know that there are over 108 specific prophecies in the Old testament fulfilled by Jesus in the New testament (91 of those are found in the gospels: Matt. 39, Mark 6, Luke 20, and John 26)? In 2 Peter 1:16-19 Peter wrote “*we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed*.”
	2. Vs. 37 There was a **direct** witness at His baptism in Matthew 3:17 when “*suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*.” Jesus says, “*You have never ever heard His voice nor have you seen His form*”. Jesus had already said that what He was doing He was presently watching the Father do and here He says He has seen His form.
	3. Vs. 38 Finally there is an **invisible** witness of the Father spoken of in verses 37b -38 which is in the heart of the believer. In John 10:27 Jesus says, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*” God’s word had come to them through the prophets and they hadn’t been listening to God’s Word through the prophets just as they hadn’t been listening to Jesus Word. The problem wasn’t that there wasn’t anyone to testify of the truth’s but rather that they weren’t willing to listen.

Through out this gospel John will select seven of these “signs” as proof that Jesus is the Son of God. Though other men God used preformed miracles none of them ever claimed equality with God so the fact that Jesus made this claim, backed up by His mighty works and perfect life, is evidence that His claim is true. In the 17 chapter of John Jesus will say to the Father, “*I have finished the work which You gave me to do*” you see Jesus was on God’s time table following God’s agenda not mans.

**IV. Vs. 39-47 Words of the Father**

Vs. 38-49 ***Finally***, our Lord turns to the third way the Father witnesses to us, **the word of God.** The word “*search*” in verse 39 in the Greek means to track the scent like a hound dog. These men were “*bloodhounds*” of the Scripture, spending their whole lives counting the very words and memorizing great sections of it, committing themselves wholly to it, because they thought the knowledge of Scripture would give them life. There are many like that yet today, students and scholars who search the Bible but never find Jesus.

What an amazing claim this is, “*They bear witness to me.”* These people thought that knowledge is power, education is life, and if you get knowledge of what God does you will have life. They had studied the scriptures doctrinally but had missed it completely devotionally. Hey, saints that’s a good word for you and I as we can become so caught up dotting every “I” and crossing every “T” that in the end we miss what those “I’s” and “T’s” were in the sentence to begin with. Every servant of God has to block out the roar of the crowd to hear the whisper of God as it relates to their calling as we are not called to follow those who yell the loudest but the Love of God. Oh dear saints we shouldn’t be fishing for compliments nor shooting down complaints but with singular focus seeking only to honor God irregardless of what people think.

Jesus tells these fellows three reasons why they didn’t believe the third witness of the Word and each of them have to do with the heart not the head.

* 1. Vs. 39-40 **Blindness**: These religious leaders were in an active search of the Word of God but had fallen into the false thinking that the pursuit was where life was to be gained rather than who the WORD proclaimed. Someone can read the prescription on the bottle of pills but that is not the same as partaking of the pills. How many folks today read the Bible because it is inspirational instead of realizing that the words that they find inspiring are the very words that “testify” of Jesus. They “weren’t willing” which tells us that it was not for lack of evidence but rather they were inflected with self blindness. Verse 40 should be translated, “*You* ***choose*** *not to come to me that you may have life*”. He clearly indicates that if they had come they would have had life, but they chose not to do so. He goes on to tell us why in verse 41-47.
	2. Vs. 41-44 **Pride**: Here Jesus reveals to them the reason for their blindness as being pride, from their own pursuit not willing to drop their self effort. They wanted to be able to claim that they figured it out instead of just embracing the love God has for them. Ah but if the antichrist comes giving all something to claim in themselves that they would receive. They cared more for the honor that comes from man instead of the honor and glory of God. Here Jesus puts his finger on the true reason for stubborn unbelief. What man really wants is the praise of men, pride, is always the enemy of truth! They wanted fame, recognition, prestige.
	3. Vs. 45-47 **Ignorance**: They rejected Jesus because they rejected Moses witness of Him. Jesus says, “*Moses, wrote about Me*”, so where did he do so? Well there are the general references to the seven kinds of offerings all of which point to the “Lamb of God”. Then there is the passage that Jesus alluded to in 3:14 when He spoke with Nicodemus about the bronze serpent being lifted up in the wilderness which is out of 21:8-9. Then in Deut. 18:15 Moses said “*The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear*”. In 1 Cor. 10:4 Paul makes reference to Jesus being a typology of the rock that water came out of in the wilderness. We are told in Luke 24:27 that Jesus “*beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*.” With those two disciples who were on the road to Emmaus. The very one they said they were obeying; Moses will be the one that will accuse them because they were denying the words he spoke of concerning Jesus. Jesus said, “*If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?*”

They counted the very letters of the text, but they missed the spiritual truths that the text contained. Hey saint’s we can seek to know the Word of God or we can seek to have the Word of God penetrate into our lives. You have heard me say it often, “*Seek transformation not mere information*”! Amazing as this sounds, “*Their love for the word clouded the Word of God’s Love*”. Where does that leave us? We have the witness of the Father, the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of 2000 years of testimonies about the power of Jesus to deliver men and women, to free them from their chains, turn them around, heal them and make them whole people. Hundreds of thousands of voices bear witness to that fact. Where does that leave us, if we continue to pursue the empty voices of the world and seek a life apart from the will and the glory of God? The truth is people won’t believe the witness of these three when what they are looking for is their own glory, something they can brag about. These are searching words. Where are you going in life? What are you doing with it?

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**d. 6:1-71 New Sustenance**

 **1. 6:1-14, 22-71 New food (6:35 First of seven truths)**

**John 6:1-14**

**“Barely enough barley”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-4 The Multitude and the Messiah**

**III. Vs. 5-9 Three solutions**

**IV. Vs. 10-14 Three keys to multiplication**

**I. Intro.**

In the scope of Jesus ministry the central part of it started at John the Baptists imprisonment and ended at Peter confession at Caesarea Philippi lasting close to two years. It is in this period of ministry John gives the least amount of attention towards, in fact it is only spoken of in this chapter with two signs and then as was Jesus’ custom a teaching about those signs. The feeding of the 5,000 is the only sign in which all four gospel writers’ record. John simply says, “*after these things*” and we are **not** told what things he was referring too. It is only upon comparing the writers together that we get the setting to our story:

* This sign was done right after the disciples were sent out on their first mission
* Right after John the Baptist was beheaded
* At the time in which Herod desired to see Jesus

The time was when people were constantly following Jesus, pressing after Him pushing and shoving and it was at this time that Jesus stole away some time crossing from the northern part of Galilee to the eastern part only to be followed by the crowds larger because of the Passover season. In the other accounts we are told that Jesus spent all day teaching these multitudes (Mark 6:34) and Luke says specifically that His teaching was centered on the kingdom of God (Luke 9:11).

**II. Vs. 1-4 The Multitude and the Messiah**

Vs. 1-2 Between the healing of the paralytic in John 5 and the feeding of the 5,000 in the sixth chapter we have the events of Luke 6:1-9:10, Mark 3:1-6:30 mentioned above and what Matthew records in chapters 5-7, 13 namely “*the Sermon on the Mount*” found in chapters 5-7 and giving of parables in chapter 13.

It is interesting to note the diversity of Jesus in His ability to reach people. In the 5th chapter Jesus sought out and individual here we see him ministering to a multitude. In Mark 6:30-31 we are told that this multitude was so large that Jesus didn’t have time to eat, that is why Jesus said to His disciples come away with Me and rest a while. In that there is a good word for you and I as there is a saying that goes, “*If we don’t come away with our Lord for a while it won’t be long before we come apart*”. Just going down by the river or heading off to a retreat for a weekend with Jesus can make a difference between **coming away** and **coming apart**. The crowd followed Jesus and we are told “*because they saw His signs on those who were diseased*”. Now that tells us that the multitudes that sought Him were there for two reason neither of which was the right reason:

1. **Physician**: There were those there that had saw what He had done physically for others and wanted Him to do the same for them. They came to get something from Him that He had given to others. There are those today who want Him to do for them practically what He has done for others but they don’t want Him to be involved in their lives, to walk near them or spend time with them they just want a hand out.
2. **Magician**: Others had no need themselves but were curious and sought entertainment. This group is just out to see something thing, some new thing that they can get the T-shirt saying that they were at the event. “*I saw that trick, I heard that tune played, I was there* ”.

There are a some folks that are coming to church seeking Jesus just like these two groups. Hey saints, this is often the crowd mentality for those that seek out the church **someone to make them feel better and someone to entertain them to cause them to forget their condition in life**. It’s for this reason that the church shouldn’t get its direction from the crowds but from Jesus. Yet with that said Jesus knowing that this multitude was seeking Him for all the wrong reasons and would in verse 41 reject Him still nonetheless sought to meet their hunger, but only after teaching them about the kingdom of God all day. He didn’t dismiss them or put them down instead He sought to feed them spiritually and practically.

Vs. 3-4 Now according to the other accounts Jesus wanted to get alone with His disciples who had been ministering form town to town so He got into a boat with them and crossed from the northern end of the Sea to the eastern shore. But the crowds followed them and came to where they were. The fact that John tells us that this event took place near Passover reveals that it was around spring time and all would have been green and the flowers were blooming, signs of life were all about. So Jesus provided Passover meal for them seeing that they were there with them. And Jesus would use this opportunity to provide a mid term examine for His disciples, a sort of pop quiz.

The question by which Phillip was examined with was an interesting question in as much as they were **in the middle of nowhere with no human resources** available. Have you ever faced with a situation for which you can find no answer in the normal resources of human life that is what the quiz was on. Jesus was thinking in terms of ministry but these two were doing what the church has often done counting ***nickels*** and ***noses***. They estimated ministry in terms of resources available and they both came to the conclusion that there was no way in which ministry could take place with the amount of resources they had. Oh God forgive us Philips and Andrews who have left the multitudes unfed for a perceived lack of resources.

**III. Vs. 5-9 Three solutions**

Vs. 5 When we compare John’s account with that of the other three gospel writers we discover **that four proposals were brought forth** three by the disciples and one by Jesus to solve the problem of feeding the people but John is only going to focus on three of them:

1. Matt. 14: 15 “*Send the multitudes away*”: Simply put get rid of the problem by sending the people back home which Jesus did but only after feeding them not before as they had suggested. The disciples had good reason for this suggestion as they were in a deserted place and the hour was late. But what the disciples saw as the reasons to send people away was the very reasons Jesus saw “*to give them something to eat*”. Don’t miss that as our lack of action is Jesus’ reason for action.

2. John 6:7 “*Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little*.” Philips suggestion was centered around **money** and in this case the lack of it to meet the need of so many. You could say that Philip counted the cost, crunched the numbers and had come to the conclusion that even if they had 200 days wages it wouldn’t be enough to provide a snack for so many people.

3. John 6:9 “*There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many*?” Andrews’s solution was still counting but this time it was **noses instead of nickels** and there was a little lad with a little food, which Andrew who is always bringing people to Jesus dismisses as not being enough.

4. Matthew 14:16 “***You give*** *them something to eat*.” The final and correct solution came from Jesus. It is only when we put the accounts together that we see a clearer picture as according to Mark it was after Jesus told them that they were to give them something to eat that Andrew brought in the lad with the loaves and fishes and asks them how much they had.

Vs. 6-9 This is one of those statements by Jesus that we should memorize, “*But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.*” Far to often you and I think that it is Jesus that doesn’t know what to do when rather it is who have forgotten to trust Him who knows what He will do. What a encouraging thing it is to realize when there is an emergency and we are in desperation that the Lord knows what He Himself will do. I doubt that John felt that 75 years earlier when the event took place but years of watching the Lord work in his life has brought Him to realize that nothing is ever out of His control. Now let’s consider what these two disciples counted when we face a need:

1. **Money**: Philips suggestion sounds quite familiar doesn’t it, “*If I just had enough money all my problems would be solved*.” But a quick look into their bank account revealed that there wasn’t enough “*bread*” there to give them each a slice of bread. As we look at out society we can see as a country that we are suffering under the same mentality as Philip thinking that money is the answer. Two hundred days worth of pay wasn’t going to be enough. Six months of wages would not have been enough to supply a morsel for the over 10,000 folks (5,000 plus women and children). Philip had done some calculations, he had broke out his calculator and done some research but even with that effort it wasn’t going to be enough to get the job done. What’s the answer? Hey stop looking to the god of mammon and start trusting the Master! What was Philips error? Well he saw resources were limited do to money but he failed to account for the fact that our Lord owns some cattle on a 1,000 hills. Ministry before money not money before ministry! You see Philip had the vision impairment that many of us Christians suffer from “*to big a lack and too small a work*”!
2. **Man**: Philips answer to the problem was money Andrews answer to the problem was people. “*There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish*”, oh if Andrew would only stopped with those words instead of adding the words, “*but what are they among so many*?” Apparently near them was a boy with a sack lunch with “*barely*” enough “*barley*” cheap bread more for the animals then it was for human consumption and the two fish here in the Greek indicate kind of a fish spread. How often the “*buts*” creep into our lives don’t they? Andrew saw provisions but failed to see what the Master could do with so little when it was brought to Him. I can’t help but wonder how many times the Lord has brought us five barley loafs and two fishes and we failed to appropriate them because we didn’t see them as enough to meet our need. God brings us small things so that we will appropriate Him to meet our need not what He brings! The scriptures are fully of illustrations of this, a small stone to slay a giant, the ravens to bring bread for Elijah as **our Lord always uses a little to accomplish a lot**. Is it not great that the Lord never asks us to accumulate everything before we are start to minister, just start with what you have. “*The little fellow has a little lunch, I’ll take it*.”, said Jesus. The prophet Zechariah in 4:10 warns against “*despising the day of small things*?” small things are not useless in the hands of God. **Philip counted the nickels, Andrew counted noses and both came up to the same conclusion, “*what are they among so many*”**. Hey saints maybe what you are looking for to meet your need is something God has already provided but you have discarded it because you can’t see how it’s going to work. Your problem isn’t a lack of provisions it’s a the failure of placing in His hands.
3. **Messiah**: Now notice that Jesus didn’t say, “*You numbskulls get out of my way I’ll take care of this Myself*!” Instead He met them where they were at by saying, “*Make the people sit down*”. The lesson for us is simple when ever we have a need give Jesus our best and He will do the rest. As we begin with what we have we need to make sure we give it all in to His hands. Isn’t our Lord amazing as He uses these fellows as part of this miracle even though they could see how He could do so much with so little? The shepherd was about to feed the sheep so He did so orderly, systematically having them sit down according to Luke in groups of 50. Hey saints did you notice something here that as He is about to feed them that He has them sit down. Yeh so! Well the word means to “*recline*” to take a “*load off*” we might say. That tells me that this wasn’t going to be a drive thru meal, this wasn’t “*fast food*” it was a “*sit down meal*”. In other words “**sit down**” meant “**slow down**” as well and perhaps much of our hunger and need in our lives is because everything we do is “fast food” looking for something to satisfy our hunger without taking any time?

And we are told in John’s account those wonderful words that we often forget, “*He Himself knew what He would do*!” Philips and Andrews answers are human reason and calculation without a thought of the Lord’s ability but the Lord did not rebuke them or correct them instead **He showed what He can do with what man can not figure out if they will only bring it to Him**. The supply was inadequate, insufficient to meet the need but the inadequate becomes more than adequate the insufficient becomes much more than sufficient when placed in the Lords hands. Jesus didn’t have His disciples form a committee and do a visibility study, look at possible fund raising opportunities, set goals and tell Jesus doesn’t look like it’s going to happen. But Jesus says, “*What do you have I’ll start with that*”. Jesus didn’t have a telephone, television, or a telethon instead He had a tella-person ministry and multitudes were being reached. And what wasn’t enough for a snack becomes a meal that they couldn’t cram in another bite, oh what a lesson for you and I today.

**IV. Vs. 10-14 Three keys to multiplication**

Vs. 10 We are reminded of David the shepherd who wrote in psalm 23 that “*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.*” And here we see the fulfillment of David’s psalm.

Vs.11 Based upon the Greek the miracle took place not in the baskets not in the distribution but rather when Jesus took the bread and fish broke it and blessed it. What is Bread? Well it is grain, seed which had the power of multiplication prior but now has been crushed and baked. Folk’s you can’t grow corn from a tortilla but Jesus can bring life and fruitfulness from that which is **crushed and backed** in our lives if we will only give it to Him. Multiplication took place in the breaking and blessing when it was in Jesus Hands, remember that my dear friend and you will see plenty of miracles in your lives. **How was this meager meal multiplied for the multitudes**? Well let’s look at three things here in verse 11:

1. **GIVE IT TOO JESUS**: “*Jesus took the loaves!”* The first thing I note here is that Jesus took what was on hand. Hey saint’s the first step is always looking for that which He has already provided and giving it to Him. Again it is trusting Him with our little to accomplish a lot. What we do is hold out for more waiting for that which we can figure out that will meet our needs and the five loaves and two fish just sit there waiting for us to trust Him to do much with little.
2. **GIVE THANKS**: “*He had given thanks!”* The second thing of note is the thankful heart of Jesus for the “*little of the lad*”. Twice we are told in this chapter of the fact that Jesus gave thanks (verse 11, 23), as Jesus reminded the people that God is the source of all good and instead of complaining about what we do not have, we should give thanks to God for what we do have. Hey saint’s Jesus took the little and blessed it had a attitude of gratitude. When does a little become a lot? When we begin to realize that a little is a lot more than we deserve! We crunch the numbers start thinking that we deserve better instead of realizing that we have already been blessed by what He has given.
3. **GIVE IT AWAY**: “*He distributed them to the disciples and the disciples to those sitting down…as much as they wanted*”! The final thing I see here is action as Jesus gives the little away it became a lot. Here’s where I’m going with this, when we look at our meager provisions not being enough we tend to hold on to it, hoard it and not share it. Here then is the math, “*5 loaves and two fish X 12 disciple’s feeds 5000 men plus women and children.*” The principal is that multiplication only can happen when you take a little and multiply it by the willingness to distribute to others. Could it be that our lack is due in part because we have hung on to what we have instead of giving it away? And look at the words “*as much as they wanted*” this distribution was not rationed it was until they were all filled completely satisfied, (verse 12).

Vs. 12-14 Ah how Jesus is generous but never wasteful. In psalm 78:19 the psalmist warned of doubting God’s provision when he said, “*Can God prepare a table in the wilderness*?” What a powerful truth this must have been for those 12 as they took the little to Jesus and that act of obedience led to the multiplied blessing of the multitude. Of further interest to me personally is the word “*fragment*” doesn’t mean crumbs or scraps but pieces broken by Jesus but not consumed. He told them to gather up what hadn’t been consumed by others because they were full and they picked up 12 basket full of fragments. Hey saints these fellows were fed themselves from the same little as were the multitudes, as it was given to Jesus, thanks was given and then given away they were satisfied and full. There is a real truth to this in ministry as we get involved in being a blessing we become blessed ourselves. Far to much of our Christian experience is a lack simply because we are not a blessing, these fellows went from “*basket cases*” to “*basket full*” when they simply obeyed the Lord. Moses had given then Manna from heaven and Jesus had just done the same which prompted some of them to say that He was the one spoken of by Moses in Deut. 18:15.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**d. 6:1-71 New Sustenance**

**2. 6:15-21 New support**

**John 6:15-21**

**“Unsinkable Savior”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 15-17 Who’s the king**

**III. Vs. 18-21 Director and deliver of the storms**

**I. Intro.**

A little boy was asked what his favorite Bible verse was and he responded with, “*I like the one where everybody just loafs and fishes!*” The miracle before us isn’t about “*loaf’n and fishing*” but about walking. It was accomplished not so much out of need but out of necessity, a preemptive miracle instead of restoration miracle, as it kept something from happening instead of causing something to happen. It is recorded in two other gospel accounts but was just for the disciples not for the multitudes. There are no crippled legs gaining strength, no blind eyes seeing, no dead lifeless bodies or hearts springing to life and faith. I confess that reading this story reminds me of my childhood and the tune of Gilligan’s Island.

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale,
A tale of a fateful trip,
That started from this tropic port,
Aboard this tiny ship.

The mate was a mighty fisherman man,
The skipper brave and sure.
Twelve passengers set sail that day,
For a three hour tour, a three hour tour.

The weather started getting rough,
The tiny ship was tossed,
If not for the love of Mighty Lord,
The men would be lost, the men would be lost.

**II. Vs. 15-17 Who’s the king**

Vs. 15 In the 14th verse there were some who had come to an amazing discovery following Jesus miracle of multiplication saying, “*This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world*”. They were right this sign showed that He was the fulfillment of Deut. 18:15 but even though they reached the right answer their reaction was wrong. There are three prophetic offices that the Messiah would fulfill according to the scripture, **prophet, priest and king** and it seems that they were fine with either a prophet or a king but not a priest. Their reaction was not to place Him as King over their hearts, High Priest of their lives but rather to force Him to be king over their need, to use Him for their agenda. How can you force someone to be king? Hey, if you can force them to be king then you are the king.

 According to the other accounts Jesus put them in the boat as He perceived that “*they*” were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king. Mark tells us in 6:45 that Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and the Greek use of the word “*made*” means to compel or force, so these fellows didn’t want to go. I can see those 12 fellows who have heard the murmur of the crowd wanting to take Jesus and make Him king so Jesus tells them to go to Capernaum and they are reluctant and He raises His voice and says, “*I said get in the boat, now*!” Jesus was saving His disciples from a far greater danger than what the storm could produce as there was a storm brewing in their hearts instigated by the crowd. Oh how many folks have tried to take Jesus by force and make Him King with out every enthroning Him as King over their hearts? Why did they do so? Well they thought He was there to give them fish instead of giving them His flesh, they were interested in eating bread instead of partaking of the “*Bread of Life*”.

Vs. 16 How did Jesus respond to this? Well He does two rather remarkable things:

1. He separates Himself from crowd: If Jesus needed to pray how much more you and me?
2. He separates Himself from His disciples by sending them to Capernaum by boat: There is a common miss conception that says, “If we following the Lord’s commands things should be (*pardon the pun*) smooth sailing”. But that is not always the case is it? Hey folks, sometimes submitting to the will of God brings up the wind and waves of life doesn’t it? But note this, just because the wind has kicked up and waves are crashing upon you doesn’t mean you are outside the will of God and it doesn’t mean He has abandoned you, why He knows just where you are. Isaiah 43:2 says, “*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you*.” Hey did you notice that it doesn’t say that you won’t pass through waters and fire only that God will be with us and that they won’t over flow us or scorch us.

Vs. 17 Geographically they should have easily been able to sale across the Eastern shore to Capernaum long before night fall as they would have just sailed parallel to the shore a short distance. John alludes to this fact when he says, “*it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them*”, you see John is saying that they were near enough to the shore that they could have seen Jesus walking along that shore towards Capernaum but He had not come yet. As I said this story is recorded for us in two other places, Matt. 14:22-33 and Mark 6:45-52. And both of them record something that John does not namely that “*Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away*.” John records for us that Jesus was the ***deliver*** in the storm as we shall see but Matthew and Mark reveal for us that Jesus was also the ***director*** of the storm. It is clear here that prior to being their deliver Jesus “*made His disciples get into the boat*” directing them into a storm. The question is why did He do so? Well it appears that these disciples were getting sucked into the mentality of the multitudes so Jesus directed them into a storm to correct their thinking about Him.

It was dark and Jesus had not come to them, have you ever felt like that as a believer. These disciples have already taken the coarse called **storm 101** where Jesus was in the boat asleep and they had to wake up and say, “*Don’t you care we are going to die*”. In Mark 6:48 it tells us that Jesus saw them straining at rowing, hands blistered legs tired and he is watching we don’t want Him to watch us we want them to save us. Now this is the second semester coarse **storm 102** where He isn’t in the boat at all. Hey saints sometimes it is just as necessary to be **directed into a storm as it is delivered from a storm**. The multitude didn’t want to follow the Messiah they wanted the Messiah to follow them as a meal ticket forming Him into their schedule. I’m afraid that we are an awful lot like the multitudes at times as we want to force Jesus into our program or agenda instead of being transformed by His presence. Jesus knew their hearts, He knew that they were being affected by the multitude wanting to “captain their own boat” as it were so He said, “*Go ahead fellows*”. Jesus would say in Luke 6:46 “*Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?*” We can either try to get Him to see things our way or receive Him into our lives willingly. “*I’ll take it from here, let my steer my ship*”, is far too often the reason our lives are being tossed two and fro.

 Oh how good it is for us to realize that our Lord is unsinkable and if we but receive into our boat we will immediately reach the other side. As director of the storm He sends us into storms for four reasons:

1. **To change direction**: When we are in pride thinking we are the captain of our own ship He will send us out steering our own coarse until the storm toss’ our self confidence over board.
2. **To give correction**: This is what Jonah found isn’t it? Jonah found a ship going the opposite direction from where God wanted Jonah to go. It never ceases to amaze me that I can always find the USS Rebellion a first class cruise ship at port heading the exact opposite from where God has called me.
3. **To provide protection**: Now that seems to be a contradiction doesn’t it to be sent in a storm for protection but if the storm kept you from a worse fate then is serves as protection. My son took off to Nebraska for work a few weeks back and an hour from Billings at 9:30 at night the old Dodge Van through a rod and blew up the engine. All I can think of is that the Lord sent Him a storm of protection as who knows what might have happened of the old van kept going.
4. **To ensure perfection**: Our Captain doesn’t just direct us in the storm and deliver us through the storm He knows all the storms of our lives and I can see how each of those storms has further perfected me for eternity as they have stripped away more of me while providing more of Him.

**III. Vs. 18-21 Director and deliver of the storms**

Vs. 18 The problem came when the sky grew dark and they no longer could see the shore and the wind picked up into a gale from the north as they were now rowing directly into the wind. To their credit after Jesus had forced them into the boat they weren’t about to head back so they kept on rowing and as Mark 6:48 informs us, Jesus saw them “*straining at rowing*” the Greek word used here is the same used for **torture**. These fellows must have been frustrated and tired at the lack of progress four of them were commercial fishermen and had rowed this lake many times but this time their pride was wounded. Someone has well noted that, “*Jesus wouldn’t turn a stone into bread to satisfy His own hunger, but he would multiply loaves and fishes to feed a hungry multitude. Jesus wouldn’t cast Himself off the pinnacle of the temple to glorify Himself, but he would walk on the water to bring comfort to His disciples*.”

Vs. 19 We are told that they had rowed 3 to 4 miles over 10 to 12 hours period of time as other gospel accounts tells us that it was around the 4th watch in the night which goes from 3am to daylight. Simply put all their effort was losing ground as they were further from their destination then when they started. The wind had apparently had blown them south west placing them in the middle of the lake when they saw Jesus walking towards them.

Hey saints have you ever felt like that? You argued with the Lord over an area of your life and He has told you to get in the boat instead of what you wanted and now you find you are further from where you wanted to be when He made you get into the boat in the first place? Oh I can’t tell you how many times I have reluctantly got into the boat and began rowing only to find myself going backward instead of where I wanted to be, rowing out of obedience but not out of joy. That’s what happens when we try to force Jesus into our “*boat*” nothing but struggle and strain which leads to fear until we see Him above our turmoil unaffected by that which toss us in a tizzy.

Mark tells us that these brave fishermen screamed and John says that they became afraid at His sight in the middle of the lake. I think this would have scared the day lights out of me as well but Jesus reassures them by telling them that what scares the daylights out of them is Him. Oh mark the truth out of this won’t you as we all like to be in control, we all won’t our king to do what we want Him to do and when He doesn’t it scares the be-Jesus out of us doesn’t it? **Oh the wind and sea are under His feet and that which causes us agony carries Him towards us dear ones!** “*I’m making you king and you will do things my way king*”, we say. And lovingly but firmly Jesus says, “*Get into the boat NOW*!” “*I can not be King and Lord if you are in control, if you are calling the shots*”. He directs us into the storms of life my friend to show us that He is above the storms and not dependant upon doing things our way!

Vs. 20 What Jesus says, in the words “*It is I*” is the Greek phrase “**I AM**, *do not be afraid*”. Based upon the other accounts there are several miracles recorded:

1. There is Jesus’ walking on water or as those in California like to say His **surfing without a board**. There is this Florida State University Professor of Oceanography Doron Nof who claims that this was a rare atmospheric condition that caused a thin strip of ice to form just under the water and that Jesus just happened to walk out on it and catch a wave. Must have been quite a wave as He was about to pass by the boat by when Peter asked to do the same. But when questioned about His theory and how common a condition this was Professor Nof said it probably only a handful of times in the last 12,000 years. Nof is the same fellow who in 1992 explained the parting of the Red Sea. I personally think his theory is a well “*all wet*” and that he has slipped of the proverbial ice patch and got a knot of his Nof.
2. We are also told in Matthew 14:28-29 that at Jesus invitation Peter walked on water as well as Peter asked “*Lord if it is You*”. Now that’s an interesting question to ask, I mean does Peter have encounters with lots of folks walking on water passing him by on a regular basis? Peter started out on that water too but began to sink when he got his eyes off of Jesus, that’s always our problem when we fail to isn’t it? Ah but look at Peter’s prayer when he began to be consumed by the waves, “*Lord, save me*” and Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him.
3. The third miracle is to be found that once Jesus was in the boat the storm ceased and the Boat was on the shore where it was distend to be.

Vs. 21 John adds in verse 21 “*then they willingly received Him into the boat*”. They weren’t willing to get into the boat but they were glad to have Jesus with them when the storm came up. Notice that it says “*immediately the boat was at the land where they were going*”. This four mile 10 to 12 hour journey was over the moment they “*willingly received Him*”. Oh dear friend those words are just as true now in your situation as it was for theirs. Jesus comes to us through the circumstance outside of our agenda over the water of human reason He is not hindered by the fact that we are going backwards and is able to get us safely to the shore of His destination if we will but “*willingly receive Him*”. Friends you will not find yourself safely at your destination by toil and planning nor by avoidance only by “*receiving Him willingly*”! **You can spend 10 to 12 hours of torture and fear agonizing over the journey you didn’t want to be on in the first place or you can but receive Him willing and arrive without effort quickly it’s your choice**. I have had many occasions where I have found the winds of life contrary to where I wished to be, I have felt the tossing of the waves of my circumstances making my head swirl and my footing uneasy. Many a time I have felt that my ship was nearing disaster instead of port.

Jesus directed the storm and delivered them from the storm and what changed in their hearts why “*they willingly received Him*” look again,it took the storm to do that. Yes He placed in that boat of correction but He never lost sight of them and came to them. ”. So here then is the exhortation, “stay the coarse” it is Jesus directing and delivering do not be afraid the boat will land at the right destination. And we are told in Matthew that they said, “*Truly You are the Son of God*”.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**d. 6:1-71 New Sustenance**

**3. 6:22-71 New food**

**John 6:22-40**

**“Never hunger or thirst”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 22-25 Looking for wonder bread**

**III. Vs. 26-29 Why do you care?**

**IV. Vs. 30-40 I am the bread of life**

**I. Intro.**

The multitude had been unaware of the events of the evening and night, as Mark recorded for us in 6:45 that Jesus sent them away but apparently they had “*weathered the storm*” to try to get some more bread.. Neither Matthew nor Mark record what happen the next day instead they skip a day telling us only that they sailed to Gennesaret (called Genezar today where there is a Kibbutz called Nof Genezar) which is only two to three miles south of Capernaum. So on the next day the multitudes came back to the area of miraculous feeding looking not for Jesus but rather to get something from Jesus.

At this years “*Christian Booksellers Association convention*” which just concluded a week back. Priscilla Shirer, (daughter of Pastor Tony Evans) warned those there of being agents of commerce rather than servants of Christ. She made this observation: In the first century church, Christianity was a **community of believers**.

* When Christianity moved to Greece it became a philosophy.
* When it moved to Rome it became an institution.
* When it moved to Europe it became a culture.
* When it moved to America it became a business.

We need to get back to being a healthy, vibrant community of true followers of Jesus. This is a good reminder for you and me isn’t it? We Christians in America are prone to this commercial mentality and the moment Jesus or His Church isn’t making us happy we take flight to find someone or something that does. In the 68th verse of this chapter Jesus will question the remaining disciples after many leave to which Peter will respond, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*” Hey saints the prophet Isaiah warned in 55:2 “*Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy*?”

**II. Vs. 22-25 Looking for wonder bread**

Vs. 22-24 In this section Jesus responds to three questions and one statement put forth by the multitudes:

1. Vs. 25 “*Rabbi, when did You come here*?”
2. Vs. 28 “*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God*?”
3. Vs. 30 “*What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do*?”
4. Vs. 34 “*Lord, give us this bread always*.”

Theses folks were after a little more “*wonder bread*”, they were motivated out of empty bellies instead of a full hearts. Now bread biblically is a symbol of that which maintains and sustains life and here in this section Jesus proclaims that He alone is that which maintains and sustains life. I’ve stood on the sight where this discourse took place in Capernaum and there is an old synagogue which you can still see the marble pillars sticking up it’s the same location but the pillars are those built a 100 or so years after Jesus spoke these words. My point? Only that His words never fail but what man builds does.

The fact that only a day later these folks were seeking food for the body indicates how foolish it is to have the physical need above the spiritual. Friends if you are trying to get filled up on anything of this world it will never satisfy there is no substance to it and in the end it we will just be empty. Ah, but if you want to be “fulfilled” then take what the Son has to offer you which will last forever.

Vs. 25 They asked Jesus when He had come and His response was to ask them “*why they had come*”. Jesus’ implication is that after seeing the sign of the multiplied bread they furthered showed that they had the wrong reaction by only being interested in another free lunch. I find it very interesting that Jesus didn’t see His mission as merely placating the panders. He wanted to do far more then fill bellies He wanted satisfy the hunger of their heart. Hey friend may I just say that if you are wanting Jesus just to fill your belly instead of satisfying the hunger of your heart you are settling for far to little. Jesus longs to do for you far more then multiply a few barley loafs; He is the bread that has come down from heaven to fill you forever.

**III. Vs. 26-29 Why do you care?**

Vs. 26-27 Instead of answering the “*when and how*” questions of the multitude Jesus tells them “*Don’t merely work for bread, don’t make your life just about the consumption of things, make it about things that never parish*.” Have you turned Jesus words in Matthew 26:41 “*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*”, into “*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is ready for the weekend*”? Are you putting anything into your “*eternal retirement*”? That’s what Jesus is question the multitude about. “***When and how, doesn’t matter if you don’t have the Who and what settled in your life***”. One of the great ironies in American life is that we work 40 plus hours every week so that we can pay for a home that we spend more time away from then we do in it. The world view is to work hard enough to get ahead so that you can have a comfortable life but the richest folks seem to be the most unpleasant people to be around so they don’t seem all that comfortable to me.

**These folks thought Jesus to be another prophet but in reality they were looking to make Him king in order to make a profit**. I rather think that the multitudes still want to force Jesus to be king so they can make a profit but He will have none of that. These people understood that Jesus was speaking in terms of a spiritual dimension so they said, “*Ok what can we do to work God, to get what we want*”. “*What religious activity do I have to do to get what I want, how much?*” I’m afraid that far too many preachers have been guilty of that as they proclaim a formula to manipulating God to get personal wealth.

Jesus uses a word for “*labor*” that can be rendered “*barter*” so He says, “*Hey fellows don’t barter your life away for food that leaves you empty*”. It is interesting that in Jesus’ time a baker would put a seal on the bread they would bake and Jesus uses this terminology to say that the Father has set His seal on Jesus. Apparently the multitudes fixed upon the word “*labor*” in verse 27 as they ask in verse 28, “*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God*?” They are asking what they can do continually as a habit and Jesus answered, “*Works? No fellow’s only one work and that is you believe in Me and that you keep doing so.*” Interesting paradox in the 27th verse “*Do not labor for food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you*.” Labor for food which endures which Jesus will give you, so why are we to labor for that which will be given us? Well the labor is not to obtain it as it is a gift the labor is that would stop looking for something else to fill us. Friends the only work of God that we can do is chose to trust in whom God has sent, Jesus.

Vs. 28-29 Notice the words of these multitudes in verse 28 when they say, “*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*” Interesting way they put it “*What shall we do, that we may work*”, they knew the law but they also knew that they weren’t measuring up to the law to they wanted to know if there was some jump start, some first step. In Deut. 11:13 God said, “*it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*” Micha 6:8 tells them, “*He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God*?” Jesus answer, “*the work of God is that you believe in Him whom He sent*”.

Oh how complicated we make things don’t we? On the 10th of July the Pope issued a decree stating that other communities “*cannot be called churches in the proper sense because they do not have apostolic succession and there for do not have the means of salvation*.” In other words according to the Pope the true church of Jesus is only made up of Catholics. The statement goes on to say that the Catholic Church wants to continue to have open dialog with non-catholic Christian communities as long as they agree with the Pope. Apparently the Pope believes that his words are greater than Jesus’ where the work of God is that you believe in Him whom He sent!

**IV. Vs. 30-40 I am the bread of life**

Vs. 30-34 “*You gave us bread and fish, things from the earth Moses gave us angel food from heaven*.” “*Yes you gave us bread miraculously but that was one day what about today, after all Moses did so for 40 years*?” Apparently they had forgotten what their forefathers thought of manna as they named it “*what is it*” and complained about the lack of variety. Keith Green sang about this saying, “*Manna again, manna - cotti, manna bread*”, they were sick of it. Oh my heart aches when I read these words as I see far too much of myself in these folks. Paul would say in Romans 14:17 “*for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*.”

Hey folks, You can go anywhere on earth today and find people hungry for something more than a full belly and a comfortable home. There is restlessness about humanity that cries out for more. Amazingly a day earlier they had witnessed a sign of around 10,000 to 12,000 being fed until they were full and now they ask for another sign worthy of belief. Signs never led to lasting faith instead they led to sensationalism which is flaky. I can’t help but wonder how many times we have be willing to settle for a little white seed once a day that rotted if not eaten instead of the true bread which comes down from heaven? The multitudes were willing to settle for the physical and temporal at the price of the spiritual and eternal and quite often we are as well. Their plea in verse 31 was that “*He gave them bread from heaven*” so what are you going to do for us Jesus? But in Deut. 8:3 Moses wrote to the Jews, “*So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord*.” Notice in verse 32 Jesus says, that wasn’t Moses that “*gave*” past tense but the Father that “*continually gives*” so Jesus corrects them three misconceptions:

1. Vs. 32 The origin of the gift, from Moses to God the Father
2. Vs. 32 The quality of the gift, from ceasing to continual, from that which was past to the present.
3. Vs. 33 The identity of the gift, Manna meant “*what is it*” and Jesus now tells them that the true bread from heaven which Manna was only a type isn’t a question of what is it but rather **Who is it**.

“*Moses*”, they said, “*Fed more for a longer period of time with things from heaven not with things from earth*”. Moses was who they looked to and Jesus says, “*Hey Mo came to a burning bush and wanted to know my name and I told I am, so now I’m telling you I am the bread of life*.” That is what Jesus is telling them not to live by bread alone but by the Word that comes from the mouth of God. “*It wasn’t Moses that gave you bread it was Me and it wasn’t the true bread which is Myself which I give you*”, says, Jesus. Manna gives nourishment, sustenance but not life; it could only sustain life for a time. Ah but Jesus “*The bread of Life*” will satisfy the hunger of the heart and quench the thirst of the soul once and for all.

Vs. 35 This is the first of seven “I am” statements unless you count the one in verse 19. Jesus recognizes the universal hunger for bread beyond physical bread. They said to him, “*Lord, give us this bread always*.” Next Jesus tells how to eat and partake of the bread of life. He uses two simple things everyone understands:

1. **Hunger**: “*He who comes to me shall never hunger”.* What do you do when you are hungry? You eat, and if you keep on eating regularly you will never hunger. Now notice that Jesus equates “*coming*” to **eating**, so then when you come to Jesus you are seeing Him as the only true source of that which sustains and maintains our life.
2. **Thirst**: “*and he who believes in me shall never thirst.*” What do you do when you are thirsty? You **drink**, and if you keep on drinking you will never thirst. Jesus equates “*drinking*” with believing, so you will never thirst as long as you keep listening to His word and obey it in your life.

How simple Jesus makes this doesn’t He, just “Come and believe” and keep doing so and you will never hunger or thirst again.

Jesus goes on to **say four amazing things**:

Vs. 36 **First**, not all who see will come: It is possible to see Jesus to comprehend His personhood and yet not come. What this suggests is that the problem of those who are continually hungry and thirsty spiritually is **not a problem of intellectual it’s a heart problem.**

Vs. 37a **Secondly**, all who are chosen will come: The Spirit leads them, the Father draws them, and all who are chosen will come. So, our reaction we reveal if you are chosen, a person doesn’t need to get all worked up over this just come and you will discover that you are chosen.

Vs. 37b **Thirdly**, all who come are welcomed: No matter what your record is or what you have done when you come you will be welcomed, you will not be cast out there is no sin Jesus cannot forgive. So you have no excuse not to come, no fear of rejection. What a glorious promise in verse 37, to know that God won’t one day say, “*Opps, sorry don’t see your name written here must have been a mistake you can’t come in*.” Neither will there be a hidden cost, some price we didn’t anticipate, “*Oh I’m sorry Mr. Lewis we forgot to add in the fact that you are really a mess so we are going to have to tack on good works and a few 1,000 years in purgatory*”.

Vs. 38-40 **Fourthly**, all who come are forever safe: You will never be lost; you will never lose what Jesus gives and He gives four reasons for this:

1. Vs. 38 First, because it’s His own work: Jesus says, “*I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent Me*.” God the Father set in motion a plan that God the Son executed perfectly to ensure that we will never be lost.
2. Vs. 39a Secondly, because it’s the Father's will: The father can never lose anything or anyone so He won’t lose you either.
3. Vs. 39b Thirdly, because it involves even the resurrection of the body: Twice Jesus, “I will raise him up at the last day” so then even death with its decay and its corruption will not defeat His purposes.
4. Vs. 40 Finally, it involves the gift of eternal life right now: Eternal life begins the moment you and I trust Jesus so we have already positionaly entered into eternity and are just waiting for our bodies to graduate.

Jesus had told the woman at the well “*Whoever drinks of the water I shall give him will never thirst*” now He says “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger*”. Those are amazing declarations aren’t they? There is no denying what He is claming here as Jesus is saying, “*I alone can quench the thirst of the, I alone will satisfy the hunger of the heart.*” I can only say that I have found that to be true personally for over 26 years since I first tasted and saw that He was good there has never been one moment in those 26 years that once I took a sip of Him partook of His goodness that I was completely satisfied.

Jesus is back again to that day when He multiplied the bread and they picked up twelve basket full of fragments so that nothing was lost (verses 12-13) and He is making a promise to the multitudes that if they simply trust Him He won’t cast them aside or give up on them. Hey saint’s you might be here today feeling well a little “*fragmented*” kind of “*crumby*” spiritually speaking but Jesus has made a promise to you in verse 37 “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*.”

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**d. 6:1-71 New Sustenance**

**3. 6:22-71 New food**

**John 6:41-59**

**“You are what you eat”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 41-51 Food for thought**

**III. Vs. 52-59 Jesus is the main course**

**I. Intro.**

There are three occurrences in this section of chapter 6 that reveal the heart of people who listened to the words of Jesus:

Vs. 41 The Jews then complained

Vs. 52 The Jews therefore quarreled

Vs. 61 His disciples complained about this

Everything in this section deals with Jesus claim of being the bread that has come down from heaven and the crowd’s misconception of it. Look with me for a moment at verse 59 where we are told that all of these words were spoken by Jesus while He was in the synagogue in Capernaum. Is there any wonder that Jesus disciples in verse 60 said, “*This is a hard saying; who can understand it*?”

Now what is interesting to observe is how Jesus responds to their complaining and quarreling as He corrects their lack of understanding by further declaring who He is and what He has come to do. There complaint had to do with in once sense their knowledge of Him and in another sense their lack of knowledge of Him. That is to say they knew too much of His earthly existence and too little of His heavenly origins. That my dear friend’s is always the case with our misconceptions with regards to Jesus, too familiar with Jesus from our human standpoint that we fail to appropriate His heavenly power.

**II. Vs. 41-51 Food for thought**

Vs.41-42 Jesus’ words in verse 38 bothered the crowd as He proclaimed His deity by saying, “*I have come down from heaven*” which prompted their complaint “*Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know*?” (verse 42) Four times Jesus tells them that He came down from heaven (three of them in this passage alone), “*Where did I come from?*”, Jesus answered “*I came down from heaven*”. Interesting when manna was given in the wilderness in Ex. 17:3 the people murmured now that Jesus proclaims that He alone is that which sustains and satisfies people murmur. I rather think that people are murmur’s because we don’t like God doing things against our plans and agenda’s. “*Who does this guy think He is God? We know his father and mother*”, they said. But they were wrong they knew his mother but they didn’t know his father.

The analogy of Jesus being the “*Bread of Life*” is really quite amazing when we consider it. First from a human perspective bread is truly cross cultural as everybody eats bread of some type so clearly Jesus is accessible to all. As this analogy relates to Jesus specifically we can see the parallels. As a seed was planted in the ground Jesus was planted in the womb of Mary, and when He came forth and grew into maturity He was cut down ground up and placed upon a cross where the fire of God’s wrath because of our sin baked Him where we have the opportunity receive Him and partake of Him where He becomes that which alone satisfies the hunger of our lives.

Here’s what I see, these people were a lot like people today in as much as they think they knew who Jesus was. There are a lot of people like that aren’t there? People who will tell you they know Jesus but when you talk to them or observe how they are living it’s clear they don’t know Jesus. They said they knew Jesus but they didn’t know where He was from, as they thought He was from Nazareth instead of Bethlehem. They thought that His father was Joseph but His Father was God, so they didn’t really know Him personally, intimately.

Vs. 43-45 They didn’t receive His testimony as to where He was from and the reason for this is to be found in His words found in 43-44 where Jesus quotes Isa. 54:13. Cleary as verse 41 states in their complaint they understood Jesus’ self proclamation by quoting Him as saying, “*I am the bread which came down from heaven*”.

Why is this important you ask? Well it removes the possibility that some how Jesus was just misunderstood by the multitudes that what He meant to say was twisted by the crowds. Simply put the words of the multitude clarify that Jesus message was clearly understood and that the rejection of Him was not based upon lack of understanding but upon the opposite of this upon understanding. This is further brought in their words in verse 42 “*Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, I have come down from heaven*?” Now this verse reveals that their rejection of His proclamation lay in their knowledge of His earthly identity being the son of Joseph whom they knew. This crowd rejected Jesus because they understood His claims but couldn’t reconcile those claims with what they already knew about Him being the son of Joseph. In saying this we have removed the largest crutch people use to not trust Jesus as Lord and that being that He never claimed to be God. The truth is He did and it only leaves with three other possibilities:

1. He is a liar: Something that was not was not bore out by the rest of His life or words.
2. He is a lunatic: There was no delusion as He was broken and contrite not boastful and self involved.
3. He is Lord: Just as He claimed to be!

Allow me right now to press this issue home as there must be surrender to one of these views concerning Jesus and quite frankly the only logical conclusion anyone can make is He is Lord. Their familiarity with His family blinded their ability to believe what He had said and done in their midst’s. There were those there that had tasted of the bread and fish only a day earlier and had come for more bread yet complained about His proclamation. Oh for sure he had done and extraordinary thing in feeding ten to twelve thousand on five loaves and two fish but they still saw Him as ordinary, “*We know your family you grew up over the hill from us the carpenters son*”. They came to force Him to be king because of the extraordinary work He had done and yet when He proclaimed to them that what He wanted to give them was far greater that what they were willing to settle for because He was extraordinary they could only complain.

Hey folks there are those today with the same reaction towards Jesus, “*He is just a man, a teacher*”, they say and reject His proclamation. On a side note this statement by the crowds concerning Jesus reveals to us that He did nothing to draw attention towards Himself as a boy, he didn’t raised to life any dogs or cats, didn’t walk on any creeks, He grew in wisdom and stature.

Vs. 46-49 Jesus gave the reason for their rejection of His proclamation as not being open to the drawing by the Father to Him as the Father was teaching them but they weren’t hearing and learning, (verse 45). You may wonder, “*What if the Father doesn’t draw me*?” Well I believe that the Bible teaches that He draws all mankind but some resist the drawing of the Father to the Son because of the hardness of their hearts. That’s what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:9 when he wrote “*God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*”. That’s what verse 45 states as Jesus quoted Isa. “*they shall* ***all*** *be taught by God*” it doesn’t say **some** will be taught by God but **all** will be taught by God.

They complained about Jesus words and they should have searched their own hearts instead. People can be eyewitness and investigate all the evidence and still be blind to truth, take the evolutionary theory as an example as everything points to intelligent design over random chance yet many scientists still choose to buy into the evolutionary lie they have been told because the only alternative is that there is a God. Some people are “*taught by God*” quickly and others this teaching by God takes time but the truth is all of life is God’s classroom. Friends it is not enough to go to class and hear what is heard it must be obeyed if we are to learn. It never ceases to amaze me how I can hear a truth but it doesn’t become learned until I go through some experience that brings to remembrance the truth I thought I knew I didn’t. In Luke 24:45 we read that Jesus, “*opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*” Oh how that ought to be our constant prayer in this life, open my understanding that I might comprehend the scriptures.

Hey have you ever stopped to realize that God demonstrated His love towards us not only in sending His Son for us but then amazingly drawing us towards His Son? Now How will you know if you are being drawn by the Father? Well verse 46 tells us that you will recognize the uniqueness of the Son. Not only were these Jews hindered by what they knew personally they were blinded by what they believed doctrinally as Jesus says, “*Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead*.” They started with a presupposition and used that to dull what God was trying to teach them concerning the “Bread of life”. I have come to understand some truths about the human condition by looking at myself: **The two most difficult things to maintain in life is a broken spirit and a teachable heart and these two things hold the key to joy and spiritual growth and maturity**.

Vs. 50-51 Jesus says that whoever partakes and assimilates Him into their life will not die as compared with the manna that Moses gave them. Death has two biblical definitions.

1. One, the separation of the consciousness from the body that is when your brain no longer functions, you’re dead.
2. The other definition is the separation of your consciousness from God. If you are living without a consciousness of God, without an awareness of God, with no thought of God, you are dead spiritually.

Jesus is referring to the 2nd definition when He says in verse 50 that “*the bread which comes down from heaven, that bone may eat of it and not die.*” With all our medical and technological advances the death rate among humans has remained unchanged at 100% oh we have lengthened our life span but have not made a dent in the death rate and here Jesus proclaims that He alone can change that death rate as He will cause our dead spirit to become alive. In calling Himself “Living Bread” in verse 51 Jesus is saying that He is greater than manna in five specific ways:

1. The manna only sustained life for the Jews, but Jesus gives life to the whole world.
2. The Jews ate the daily manna and eventually died; but when you receive Jesus Christ within, you live forever.
3. When God gave the manna, He gave only a gift; but when Jesus came, He gave Himself.
4. There was no cost to God in sending the manna each day, but He gave His Son at great cost.
5. The Jews had to eat the manna every day, but the sinner who trusts Christ once is given eternal life.

To the Jews who witnessed manna firsthand it was a mystery that is why they called it “What is it” and so too was Jesus a mystery to those who witnessed Him as they asked “Who is He”? Both came from heaven into darkness humbly, in purity. And like manna there was a responsibility for those who partook of it they had to gather it up and eat it. Jesus will mention His flesh six times in this passage declaring His sacrifice on behalf of mankind.

**III. Vs. 52-59 Jesus is the main course**

Vs. 52-59 With Jesus’ words of verse 51 “*The bread that I shall give is My flesh*” the crowd moves from complaining to quarreling with each other over this statement. This statement was particularly offence to Jews as they had been told through centuries that God did not want flesh in which there remained any blood. In fact that is what the word “*kosher*” refers to as it means to cleanse from blood. As we read this literally it appears to be speaking of cannibalism. “*How can this Man give us His flesh to eat***”,** they asked and the answer was ***by dying***. The shedding of blood meant sacrifice to these Jews so Jesus is saying to them unless you enter in through My death and sacrifice for you, you will not have life! They asked the right question but couldn’t come to the right answer. Jesus says, “*If you don’t personally recognize My sacrifice on your behalf and partake of it assimilate its life giving power for your life you aren’t alive your dead*.” The difficult words of verse 54 for are explained by Jesus words of 55-56 where clearly He is speaking of appropriating His sacrifice on our behalf personally which brings about an abiding relationship.

Now think of this a moment had bad do our sins have to be that the only antidote for us is to be found in the death of the Son of God? When ever we hear people proclaim that they are a good person I’m sure they are compared to me but they are still hopelessly lost. That is what Jesus focus’ in on in verses 53-58 the personal need for all sinner to partake of His sacrifice for our sins. It will do a person no good if their parents or spouse partook of Jesus’ sacrifice, neither does it any good if we know of the sacrifice we must feed on Him if we are to live. Have you ever noticed that **you can’t eat for someone else**? That’s what this analogy is all about. It is absolutely essential if we are to have the life offered by Jesus we must personally partake of His life which was offered for all.

Now note the words of verse 57 as Jesus gives us the secret to His life and they can be the secret of our lives as well. Are you ready? “*I live because of the Father*”! Again using the analogy of food as you and I eat we gain those nutrients essential to maintain life at the expense of the life we are now partaking of. Now how does that work as Christian’s? Well has being a follower of Christ lessoned your need for food? Well no, then why is it at times as Christians we tend to think that we can skip a meal or two and not feel the effects? In fact Jesus says as much as when HE refers to eating of His flesh is verse 56 it is in the continuous action in the Greek meaning never stopping. Far too many folks like myself have poor eating habits, skipping meals and eating things that are not good for us. I’m afraid that spiritually people are the same way as they don’t maintain feeding themselves spiritually and wonder why their lives come apart. You can think of a Church like a restaurant serving a great meal but most of us don’t just eat one meal a day you still need to get some food in you through out the day.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**d. 6:1-71 New Sustenance**

**3. 6:22-71 New food**

**John 6:60-71**

**“Ruined for this life”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 60-66 The flesh profits nothing**

**III. Vs. 67-71 Do you also want to go?**

**I. Intro.**

As I sat down this week looking at this passage of scripture placing myself in the day’s events that these followers of Jesus had just witnessed and then contemplating their startling departure in verse 66 I came up with two questions:

* 1. Is it possible to be drawn to Jesus for the wrong reasons?
	2. Does it matter as long as we come?

The answer to these questions is given in this passage of scripture by Jesus. It appears to me that Jesus is constantly causing us to examine our hearts as to why we are following and serving Him. And there will be two responses:

1. Verse 66 “*From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more*”. At some point the reality of Him being Lord and master will out way the immediate benefits.
2. Verse 68 Where (paraphrasing now) Peter says, “*Jesus*, *You do so much more than fill our stomachs, You fill our lives with life, where else can we go to find anything and anyone that can give us what You give us*”.

Friends walk with Jesus long enough and eventually you will come to this fork in the road where He is going and leading is not where you want to go. You will not be forced to walk on with Him, no you can so chose as many did in this passage to “*go back and walk with Him no more*”. Maybe that is because walking where He is walking would mean that your lifestyle would have to change that special person who does not want Jesus would have to go. Perhaps walking where He is walking would mean a change in your occupation. Hey saints listen up, **following Jesus is the hardest way to live our lives except when compared with all other alternatives, and at some point you will hear Jesus ask you, “Do you also want to go away**?”

**II. Vs. 60-66 The flesh profits nothing**

Vs. 60 The phrase “*This is a hard saying*” comes for the Greek to “*dry hard*”, and was used to describe bread that had sat out to long in the heat. It is interesting that these followers of Jesus used that phrase after He had described himself as the “*Bread of Life*”.

And as they used this phrase it did not refer to difficulty in understanding but rather difficulty in acceptance on the part of these followers. You see it wasn’t the part that they didn’t understand that bothered them it was the part they understood. And what they understood was that that Jesus was telling them two things:

1. He is giving all of Himself to them
2. He expected them to give all of themselves to Him

So Jesus spoke of mankind’s need to assimilate His death and sacrifice into their life and some of the followers of Jesus said that this was to dry to swallow for them. Now I’m certain that it was the 2nd part of this that they were struggling with the most. You know the putting everything and everyone behind our relationship with Jesus. Maybe you remember that song that goes something like this, “*Take part of me, Lord take most of me, under 50%*”? Any healthy relationship will take each person giving 100% of themselves to the other person anything less then that then we have commitment issues.

Hey saints there will be times when things in the word are “*a bit to dry*” for our liking and we will be tempted like these followers of Jesus to not accept His teaching into our lives and turn back to the world. But may I challenge you to simply ask yourself why it is that you are choking on His truths, could it be that what His word has said is speaking directly into an area that needs His touch. Folks I find in my own life it is not the taste of the word of truth that I reject as Ps 34:8 says, “*Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who trusts in Him*”. No my problem is to be found in that I have something in my life that has caused me not to be able to taste His goodness.

Vs. 61-63 “*Does this offend you*”, questioned Jesus, “*Oh I’m sorry I take it back let me say things that don’t challenge to*”. No, instead He says, “*Hey fellows if you found that unpalatable, how are you going to be able to handle when you see me go back to My Father*”. Notice that the word “***what***” in verse 62 is italicized which means that in the original Greek it is not there but was placed there to make a complete sentence. So then literally Jesus said, “*Does this offend you? Then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before, it is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing*.” You see the translators made it a question by putting in the word “what”. You see Jesus is carrying on the thought about His death resurrection and ascension and telling them **if you don’t like Me being in control on earth you won’t like Me being in control in heaven**. In other words what are you going to do when you see Me in My glory as your judge? This verse reveals the problem that these followers were having concerning Jesus’ words had to with His reference to His preexistence. Simply put what bothered them wasn’t the partaking of Him but that the partaking of Him implied His deity. This is further brought out in verse 63 as they were hung up on the flesh and because of this couldn’t receive the life offered in the words of Jesus. Friends this is a great reminder to us, “*It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing*!” Oh how we cling to the things that “*profit nothing*” at the expense of the “*Spirit that gives life*”. **Jesus in 8 words given the world the key to joy in this life as well as explain the battle** as Paul would further explain to the Gal in 5:17 saying, “*the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish*”.

Hey friends there is nothing more pathetic in my book then a pastor or teacher who won’t teach the word for fear of rejection, they are like a doctor who won’t treat a patient for fear of the reaction at the momentary displeasure of the treatment. I hate swallowing pills, I gag on them and have to get my mind off of taking them but I still do because I need too, so too at times with the word of God folks. In verse 63 Jesus tells them why they are offended concerning His words and it is that they are to earthly and flesh driven instead of Spirit led.

Vs. 64-65 In verse 65 Jesus deals with the fact that it is possible to follow Him for the wrong reason, we can get into following Jesus because it suits our agenda our plans and purposes. **Following Him because what He does instead of following Him because of who He is**. When the Father draws a person He does so based upon who He is not upon a promise of what He will do. The sad truth is that when many of Jesus followers heard that it wasn’t going to be about them it was going to be about Jesus they walked away instead of walking with Him. Saints no fleshly motive or reason will do in serving Jesus and if that is why we have decided to follow Jesus it will one day have to be placed upon the alter. Many church doctrines use flesh centered motives to get people to come and stay in church, promises of health and prosperity.

Hey notice here in verses 64-66 that Jesus didn’t plead for those that heard His words concerning Himself and chocked on them to come back. He didn’t change what He had just said so that they would stay on with Him. There was none of that “*Hey, I don’t want you to not like me, tell what you want and I’ll make it happen*” attitude that permeates much of consumer Christianity. Instead Jesus said, “*There are some of you who do not believe*”. Wanabe’s were in Jesus’ time just like there are in our time and you don’t poll the crowds to see why they aren’t happy and what you can do to bring them back instead you keep teaching the truth and loving folks. Jesus knew all along the difference between true trust and mere lip service.

Vs. 66 Remember what John had said of Jesus in the first chapter when he said, “*the Word became flesh*”, so when we trust in His words then we are partaking of Him. After having said this most of Jesus followers went back to their old life and religion. Jesus is “*the way*” but they didn’t want to go His way so they went their way which is always back never ahead. The words “*went back*” in verse 66 is the same word used in John 18:6 where on the night they came to arrest Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; Jesus said “***I am He***” we are told that those that came to arrest Him “*went backward and fell to the ground*”. Many then at this time went backward and fell away not walking with Jesus any more. Only a day earlier they were going to take Him by force and make Him King and now they went back and walked with Him no more. Most likely the departure of these followers happened over a period of time not all at once, which concluded at Peter’s second confession at Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Mt. Hermon some months later. Jesus you will recall met with almost instant popularity now at the mid mark of His earthly ministry numbers seem to be thinning and He further tests His follower’s motives in following Him.

Hey saints, Jesus didn’t seem to bothered by the numbers but He was troubled by hearts. You see **He wanted quality over quantity** something the Church would do well to practice. Often like in the case of Gideon God can’t work with too many so He has to bring the number down in size so that all will know that it is He that has done a great thing and not the instruments He uses. God often sends folks home, back if they aren’t around for the right reasons, to change a mind can happen quickly but to change a heart can take a life time. The first ones to drop out of the race did when they couldn’t handle the truth and there are a great many folks who will drop away from church when the teaching of the word of God by the Spirit of God comes against some way of life or attitude, oh they will blame something else but in reality it will the teaching of the word was coming a little to close to home. Friends there will be times when you and I will be brought to such a fork in the road of faith and need to decide who it is we will follow. Jesus said in Matt. 7:13-14 “*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.**Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*.”

These followers saw the numbers and popularity but Jesus begin to whittle down the numbers going form quality over quantity.

Hey folks one of the most dangerous things a pastor has to deal with is ambition and ambition can only be gauged in numbers, so when these followers saw the numbers leave they had to die to their ambitions of being someone important, someone powerful. So Jesus says, “*the Spirit gives life the flesh profits nothing*” it only feeds the ego. So these followers went as far as they were to go with Jesus as now they were going to have to die to their ambitions and dreams of being important.

**III. Vs. 67-71 Do you also want to go?**

Vs. 67-69 Notice that Jesus asks if they too would go away and it is clear that He would have let them as the decision must be a choice not forced or manipulated. Now this is not the same confession of Peter’s as recorded in the synoptic gospels as that confession happened on Mt. Hermon near Caesarea Philippi where this one happened at a synagogue in Capernaum a few months earlier. In Peter’s confession we have the clearest sign of a true follower of Jesus, that they can’t quit no matter what happens to them personally, no matter how difficult the truths Jesus is conveying there is no turning back. Peter says two wonderful things:

1. Vs. 68 “***Lord to whom shall we go***”: Peter went on to say, “*You have the words of eternal life*.” Peter and the boys weren’t there for entertainment and hype they were there because of the Word. Paul wrote in Romans 10:16 “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*.” Peter said, “*Jesus we have checked out the alternatives and to be quite honest You scare us at times and hanging out with You causes us rejection and we don’t always understand all that You are about. You say and do things that blow our minds and you make very powerful people mad enough to kill you and us. But we have never found anyone like You.*” **Jesus holds two things that keep me cling to Him, His words and His deeds and these I can’t not deny even though at times hanging on to Him strips me of all I think is important**! I have found no one and nothing that loves me like He does. There is a song by Jars of Clay that repeats a phrase over and over, “*No one loves me like You do, no one love me the way You do*”, where can I go indeed!
2. Vs. 69 “***Also we have come to believe and know***”: Notice how Peter puts this, “*We have come to believe and are sure*” that *You are the Son of the living God*. Now most folks would say, “*I’ll believe when I’m sure*” but the way of faith is that we trust Him first then we become sure. In the Greek it is “*We have come to know and still know*”. This involves a process of investigation that shows that this was not some emotionally driven declaration but rather one that took months of careful examination. “*We have watched you, and we have come to see that there is nothing wrong in you. You fit the prophecies; you fulfill the predictions, You are the incomparable Christ and as such there is no others and no place to go beside You*.” Someone once said that, “*In Christ we have a love that can never be fathomed; a life that can never die; a righteousness that can never be tarnished; a peace that can never be understood; a rest that can never be disturbed; a joy that can never be diminished; a hope that can never be disappointed; a glory that can never be clouded; a light that can never be darkened; a happiness that can never be interrupted; a strength that can never be weekend; a purity that can never be defiled; a beauty that can never be marred; a wisdom that can never be baffled; and resources that can never be exhausted*.” Who else can measure up to Him?

Folks, there are always **two groups in every Church**: ***Those who can not stay and those who can’t go***! I chose to be in the later. Friends there have been times in my Christian life where the Holy Spirit brought Jesus words to my mind and in the stillness of that moment I reasoned as Peter did here and Ps. 42:5, 11 came to mind as twice in 11 verses David brought his heart towards God instead of falling backwards as he wrote, “*Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.*” I’m afraid there are far too many folks today who may say these words while on the way to what the world has to offer. When I’m wiped out to the point of wanting to quit I start thinking, “*Now where am I going to go if I quit being a Christian, back to the things of the world? If they were so great why did I leave them to find love and comfort in the arms of Jesus*?” Hey folks ***have you not discovered that once you have met Jesus He has ruined you for this life***. Webster’s dictionary defines “ruined” as to “*damage irreparably*”. Oh how gloriously true that I have forever been damaged irreparable for my former life!

Vs. 70-71 Peter apparently became the spokes person for the remaining disciples when he said, “*Lord, to whom shall we go*?...*we have come to believe*” and made the assumption that after all left but the 12 that because they hadn’t physically walked away their hearts were in the right place but that’s not always the case. Now notice Jesus corrects their misconception and says that one of those that remained has become an adversary. Judas wasn’t so when he was chosen but become one over time and at that moment as Jesus said these words Judas was right there and yet not convicted by his own heart. Hey folks notice that it was the teaching of the word of God by the Spirit of God that sifted hearts some towards Jesus and some walking away. We are told three things about Judas:

1. **First,** we are told that Jesus chose him as he did the others. The sixth chapter of Luke records the story of Jesus praying all night long before he chose his disciples. Out of the hundreds who were following him he prayed to select those whom he would give himself to, to train and develop for the work which would reach around the world and through the ages. Jesus knew of the weaknesses in Judas' life, his character failings, etc., and he prayed over him and yet chose him. It was the will of the Father that one among the apostolic band should betray him.
2. **Secondly**, Jesus gave power to Judas. On the occasion just prior to this He sent the twelve out before him into the cities of Galilee and gave them power to cast out devils, to heal the sick, and power even to raise the dead. The twelve came back (Judas was one of them), reporting that they had done all these things. Do not ever forget that: Jesus gave power to do miracles to one who He knew would betray Him. Our Lord also gave Judas the trusted position of treasurer within the apostolic band. Yet Jesus knew all along that Judas was a “devil” one that would be always resistant, oppose to Him, out for himself. Just because someone has been used of God entrusted with a position doesn’t mean they are one of His followers.
3. **Thirdly**, John tells us Judas was a traitor outwardly a disciple, outwardly a lover of Jesus yet inwardly a traitor, an enemy, a devil opposed to all that God wants. There was a progression of resistance in Judas and if I had to guess as those followers walked away at that moment at Jesus words Judas walked away in his heart.

I wonder what kind of alter call God would have for His church? Perhaps it would be like this one in the passage before us, those who can’t stay are free to leave but do so knowing you break His heart and those who can’t go come forward now and walk with Him!

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 7:1-24**

**“Wonder next to our wanderings”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-10 Bothered brothers**

**III. Vs. 11-24** **Mixed up multitude**

**I. Intro.**

The personal recognition of our Lord is what we see is the main theme in this section. One of the great wonders of the Bible is the fact that Jesus own brothers didn’t recognize His deity, the educated religious leaders who studied the Word of God refused to submitted their hearts to Him and most he nation stood willing outside His out stretched loving arms. What this brings into focus comes against our standard understanding of learning:

* Vs. 1-10 **Brothers**: We tend to think that familiarity to a subject brings *acceptance* but it this case familiarity brought about **contempt.**
* Vs. 11-12 **Jews**: We tend to believe that education and learning brings about *understanding* but in this case it brought about willing **ignorance**.
* Vs. 13-14, 20 **Nation**: We tend to think that continual contact with that which is good and beneficial causes personal *application* but in this case it brought about **rejection**.

In each of these three groups of people what we would have thought would have brought about **acceptance**, **understanding** and **application** did in fact bring about the exact opposite response. And as such is the case we can see that the reason these negative responses lies with in the heart of the student.

**II. Vs. 1-10 Bothered brothers**

Vs. 1-2 This word “*walked*” is the same as recorded in 6:66 where we were told concerning the followers of Jesus that they “*went back and walked with Him no more*”. In other words there were those who found His words too hard to accept and chose not to walk with Him but He continued to walk after them. It was during this six month season that Jesus went up to Caesarea Philippi near Mount Hermon where we have recorded in (Matt. 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30 and Luke 9:18-21) Peter’s 2nd confession “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” and now He has returned to Galilee.

 Hey friends I find it quite reassuring that though I may come to a place where following Him seems to difficult for me so much so that for a time I turn back and choose to not walk with Him. But note this my hurting friend, Jesus hangs around the area waiting for our hearts to change towards Him. ***There are times we may give up on Jesus for a season but He has not given up on us.*** Hey but notice as well that we are told in verse 2 that Jesus stayed away from the followers in Judea for over a year and a half as they sought to kill Him. A continued hard heart towards Him will keep His love away form you, but what a tragedy.

The timing of these events are of further interest as we are told that it took place around the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles, which is in October and in chapter 6:4 we were told that at the start of that chapter that it was around April so around 6 months has passed. The “*Feast of Tabernacles*” looked back to Israel’s wonderings in the wilderness and at the same time forward to the time when the Messiah would come and “*dwell among*” them as John spoke of in 1:14. Jerusalem was filled with large lit candlesticks at night to remind them that God guided them with fire at night. Then during the day there would be a procession led by the priests from the Pool of Siloam where they would then pour it out reminding them of the provision of the water from the rock. A time when the nation gathered in Jerusalem to commemorate God’s presence in provision and protection during their 40 year wondering in the wilderness. They camped out in lean-tos’ and celebrated the fact that for 40 years God camped out “tabernacled among” them and there in their midst was the very One in whom John spoke of in 1:14 who was doing what they were celebrating. Hey friends could it be that right now during your wanderings that our Lord has His tent right next to yours protecting you, providing for you even though you have wondered from Him? Won’t you open the flap of your heart and per out into the haze of your life and see Him at the door of your heart?

Vs. 3-10 There are many references in scripture of Mary and Joseph bearing children after Jesus (Matt. 13:55-56, Mark 6:1-6) which would makes these brothers ½ brothers who despite His living among them during childhood and early adult years never came to see His uniqueness. Further based upon verse 3 and 4 they had clearly heard and seen His miraculous works, yet they hadn’t trusted Him yet as Lord until after the crucifixion and resurrection. In Matthew 13:55 we are given the four brothers names where we are told, “*Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?*” So after two rejections in Capernaum now we have His own brothers not believing that He is the Messiah. They came up to Him and challenged Him to go up to Jerusalem and make Him self known. “*You got words and works brother why not make them known so people can see if you are who you say you are*?” Sometimes we are under the opinion that what causes folks to believe our testimony concerning Jesus is our perfection but that’s not the case, in fact it is not even His perfection that does. Consider this Jesus had grown up among His younger brothers and at no time did He ever pick on them or make fun of them. They could never think of a time a time big brother Jesus was anything but loving and truthful towards them, there was nothing in their memory that would come against His statements concerning Himself now. Yet here we are told that “*even His brothers did not believe in Him*” now later on we know that both James and Jude do become believers but not until His death and resurrection for them. So what does this suggest to us? Well that our trust in Jesus comes from a personal understanding of His substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf which has two parts that we must own ourselves:

1. Our personal need: No one will come to Jesus, no matter how true His words and how good His works if we don’t see our need. I suggest to you that this was what was behind Jesus’ brother not believing they didn’t as yet know of their need.
2. His goodness: Second we must be convinced of His goodness after we recognize our need and this could only be truly seen after His death and resurrection on their behalf.

Allow me one other comment on verse 5 and that is that if Jesus being their brother didn’t grant them any special privileges, some golden V.I.P. tickets neither will our relationship with those who have loved and trusted Jesus. No, friend you will have to make Him your Lord and Savior just as James and Jude did.

Based upon this passage Jesus four brothers had four pieces of advice for their older brother concerning His ministry:

1. Vs. 3a “*Depart from here and go to Judea*”: You need a **bigger audience**, why are you staying in the sticks brother?
2. Vs. 3b “*Your disciples also may see the works You are doing*”: You got followers in the city that need to see what those in hick town are seeing, these **abandoned followers need you as well**.
3. Vs. 4a “*For now one does anything in secret while He Himself seeks to be known openly*”: You need to **change your strategy for reaching people** as your public relations department isn’t doing a good job.
4. Vs. 4b “*If You do these things, show Yourself to the world*”: Since You are doing these things **don’t waste Your gifts** and time on the unnoticed and unimportant.

These reasoning sounds like many church growth seminars today, get a bigger audience, don’t leave your support team, change your strategy to meet the felt needs of people and don’t waste your resources on those that don’t matter. Accept when you read John’s commentary concerning this worldly council to reach the world as John says in verse 5 “*For even His brothers did not believe in Him*”.

Simply put this strategy was based upon unbelief instead of faith. How these poor brothers of Jesus who had played with Him laughed and cried with Him slept in the same bedroom as He had could not see beyond their limitations. He was there ½ brother, He was one of them surely had He been someone as God the Son they would have recognized it. To these four brothers their experiential comprehension blocked their biblical understanding. And Jesus tells them the reason why they don’t believe because unlike Him they refused to trust and obey in spite of lack of understanding. They wanted Him to prove His claim of being the Messiah the Lamb of God but this was the wrong feast for that. Oh how their contempt must of broke His heart for them as there is nothing more painful than to see those that you live with suffer in unbelief. So when He went up it was not as they had advised in a Messianic declaration which He would 6 months from then at the Passover but He would go into the temple and teach. There is no contradiction between Jesus words and action with regards to His brother’s request to go up to Jerusalem for the feast as they asked Him to do so publicly to which He declined and instead went privately. Timing is everything for those who are submitted to the will of God, far too often we here the voice of God on a matter and don’t wait for His timing.

**III. Vs. 11-24** **Mixed up multitude**

Vs. 11-14 When Jesus did come up to Jerusalem He found in turmoil as to His character and teaching, His presence polarized the nation and everybody had an opinion about Him, my how things haven’t changed. The Jews had already determined that if anyone spoke openly of Jesus being the Messiah they would not be allowed in the temple. Things haven’t changed much as today of your Jewish yet believe in Jesus as your Messiah you can’t become a citizen of Israel. There is no neutrality concerning Jesus He is always causing folks to decide upon who He is. There were three groups of people that entered into the debate concerning Jesus:

a. Vs. 11 The Jews: These were the religious leaders who disagreed theologically from each other but did agree in their opposition of Jesus.

b. Vs. 12 The People: These were the multitudes that had come up to the feast in Jerusalem and were not up to date of the latest things with Jesus.

c. Vs. 25 Those from Jerusalem: This group was citizens from the city and were aware of the religious leaders desire to kill Jesus.

The first debate (verses 11-13) between the Jews and the people seemed to be centered on His character. But the second debate (verses 14-19) they had centered around His teaching. Though His presence wasn’t known it was discussed and His identity debated caused division. It never ceases to amaze me that societies continue to debate and divide over the identity of Jesus. You don’t see documentaries on the History channel debating the historic Joseph Smith, or the truth concerning Mohamed or Buddha, not in this country or any where else in the world. Why is that? Well I believe it is because deep down folks realize the others regardless of their claims aren’t true. This is the 2nd time Jesus goes into the temple and when He did we were told in 2:13 that He cleansed the temple but here He comes in and teach in the temple. He is a “Good Man” said some no doubt revering to His healings and others said “*Well have you heard that He goes against the religious teaching*?” So to most His words weren’t in sink with His deeds!

Folk’s that seems to me how the Word of God works in my heart He always comes in and cleanses it before He comes in and teaches me. The things of the world need to be **driven out** before He can come in and speak to me, so perhaps before we break open the Word we need to first ask the Lord to come and break open the door of our heart and see if we have some **tables** from the world lodged their that need to be over turned, something’s from the world running loose then need to be driven out.

Vs. 15-24 The first thing that seems to confound folks about His teaching had to do with authority as He had no graduate degree from the recognized Rabbinical schools yet He knew the scriptures so well and never quoted other authorities or commentaries just quoted the Word. The ancient historians tells us that there were over 30 Rabbinical schools around Jerusalem at this time the two most famous were Hillel, Shammai and Jesus hadn’t spent a day in any of there classrooms. Yet when He spoke they marveled at the wisdom and truth of His words. Later on in Acts chapter 4:13 when Peter and John spoke to the Sanhedrin the truths concerning Jesus they toke note that they were “*uneducated and untrained men…and they realized that they had been with Jesus.*” Hey folks, it’s not what you know it’s who you know that makes a difference. So if you and I have been hanging out with the master He is bound to rub off on us and from us to others. The greatness of our Lord is clearly seen not in our education but in his ability to use those whom others would call “*uneducated and untrained*”!

Jesus says in verse 17, “*If you practice what I say by turning from your sin, trusting in Me, receiving My forgiveness and demonstrate this by a changed life you will know that My words come from My Father*.” You see Jesus ties together comprehension with application, the problem with most of us isn’t that we don’t understand it is that we don’t apply what we do, obedience is the door by which comprehension enters.

Hey folks we learn by doing there is a sense by which all of Christianity is an apprenticeship program by which we are on the job training. This truth stands, “*Those who put into practice the truth they hear begin to grow immediately*.” It is obedience to the Word heard that causes growth and it is the lack of this that causes people who have heard the truth but not applied it to stay the same. In the 18th verse we have a mark of an authentic teacher and it has to do with who gets the glory. If I stand up here week after week and speak of how great I am and how blessed you are to have me and continue to speak of my greatness I would be a false teacher regardless of the content. Friends, any teaching or doctrine that makes God great and strengthens our dependence and surrender to Him while lessoning man kind’s goodness and self effort is most likely on the money.

 Jesus makes a good argument concerning circumcision as we are told in Gen. 17 that it was to occur 8 days after birth. So weren’t concerned if something was cut away on the Sabbath but they were concerned of someone was made whole on the Sabbath. That is what religion is concerned with those things that cut away at the flesh where holiness is measured by how miserable we are instead of how happy we are. Go to Matthew 5: 3-11 and ready Jesus words when He says “*Blessed are*” or oh how happy are the poor in spirit, those that mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, etc. Jesus isn’t declaring some sort of masochistic ritual by which we take pleasure in displeasure. No He is declaring that our healing can only take place when we die to our old fleshly nature. “*Jesus died that we might live, we die to our self’s that He would live through us*”. You see they were all caught up in the death and in so doing they lost what the death was to bring life and healing!

Here were these religious leaders who were educated and intelligent who claimed to obey God’s Word yet they were secretly planning to kill Him. Hey folks, and educated mind is no guarantee of a pure heart, it is a submitted will and a broken and contrite heart that does that. Satan offered Adam and Eve knowledge but it was knowledge that was obtained through disobedience instead of obedience. The first debate was with the religious leaders in which the people entered into it. The Jews broke the Sabbath law to have their sons circumcised on the 8th day as they felt that the law of circumcision supersedes the law of the Sabbath. So Jesus said the law of doing good to others supersedes the law of the Sabbath as well. His argument if cut off something and causes pain and death is ok how much more that which restores and brings life? The reason they didn’t see this argument was that they judged on the appearance and not on what is right.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 7:25-53**

**“The Well of Salvation”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 25-39 Rivers of living water**

**III. Vs. 40-53** **Another prophet from Galilee**

**I. Intro.**

Chronologically we are just outside of Peter’s 2nd confession at Caesarea Philippi which was immediately followed by Jesus continual pronouncement that He was heading to the cross to be killed but would be raised the third day (Matt. 16:21) which was only 6 months away. Before we look at this passage in its entirety look with me to a phrase John repeats twice with regards to Jesus as He spoke:

* 1. First in verse 28 we are told, “*Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple*”. The crowds were all about John and the rest of the disciples gathered next to Him hearing the murmuring of the crowd as to His identity and John records that Jesus cried out as He taught. Those words speak to the passion in which He spoke not merely the volume and they suggest to me a heart that grieves for the confusion with regard to His identity, oh not for His sake but for theirs. In Eph. 4:30 Paul says don not grieve the Holy Spirit in whom we were sealed. Friends I ponder the depth of that as I believe at that moment out Lord was being grieved by the confusion. In Matthew 23:37 Jesus said, “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*”
	2. The 2nd time In John we read this is in verse 37 where again we read, “Jesus stood and cried out”. The picture is rather emotional to me the sense of longing and passion for those who regardless of what they may have thought of Him He was about to offer them ALL Himself knowing full well that only a scant few would drink of Him.

What ever we may see in this section can only be interpreted through His loving passion for those who at that same moment were confused or rejection Him.

**II. Vs. 25-39 Rivers of living water**

Vs. 25-29 Those in and around Jerusalem knew of the religious leaders desire to kill Jesus (5:18) and what caused them wonder had to do with the fact that Jesus was teaching openly. Their conclusion was perhaps the Religious leaders had accepted Him as their Messiah. These folks couldn’t see the truth as they were blinded by what they thought knew. It was taught by the Rabbis out of Isaiah 53 that no one would know where the Messiah would come from, so since they knew that He grew up in Nazareth and based upon verse 42 didn’t know that He was born in Bethlehem they ruled Jesus out. But clearly they didn’t realize that He wasn’t from Nazareth or from Bethlehem as He had declared in 6:42 “*I have come down from heaven*”. In Malachi 3:1 the prophet wrote “*Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come into His temple.*” So the Jews thought that the emphasis upon “*suddenly*” meant that know one would know where He came from instead of that it would come at an unexpected or anticipated time. So Jesus turns this around on them and says, “*Do you really know me and where I’m from*?” “*You think you know where I come from but you don’t*.” Then He continued to tell them why they didn’t know where He was from because they didn’t know God. Jesus told them that He wasn’t merely born into this world He was sent into this world by the Father (verse 28-29) and in saying this Jesus is again asserting His deity that is why we are told of their reaction in verse 30.

Vs. 30-36 We have two very different responses concerning His declaration in verses 28-29.

* 1. First in verse 31 we have an unexpected response as we are told that “*many believed in Him*” as their pride didn’t hinder the truth from piercing their hearts.
	2. Then in verse 32-36 we are told that the religious leaders sent officers to take Him. Jesus answers them by declaring that indeed they do know Him and they also knew where He was from a clear declaration of His deity as seen by their attempt to lay hands upon Him to kill Him. Jesus isn’t concerned about the folks coming to arrest Him in fact in verse 33-34 He goes on to give them His itinerary. I love to read Jesus response to people especially with those who are angry at Him, as He always spoke the truth in love. He didn’t live in fear of men; He wasn’t worried about reputation or gaining a following as He had His sight on the prize. It is obvious that Jesus’ words concerning His ascension brought confusion, “*What is He talking about going that we can not come*?” Look with me at verses 32-36, 45-47. In verses 34-36 Jesus speaks in verb tenses that indicated that even though He was only ten feet away as if He was not there, (*where I am you cannot come*). No wonder why they said no man ever spoke like this man. The chief priests wanted to know in verse 45 why the officers hadn’t brought Jesus to them and their only answer was to say that even though He was right in front of them He told them “*You will seek Me and not find Me, where I am you can not come*”. “*Where is Jesus*?” they responded to the religious leaders, “*Well He told us that we couldn’t come where He was so we didn’t*”. “*What do you mean, are you out of your mind He was less then 10 feet in front of you. Yeh but no one ever spoke like Him before*.”

Vs. 37-39 That wanted to know how Jesus was going to be able to fulfill what He said, was He going away to where the gentile lands? His answer is to be found in verses 37-38. Now remember that John is writing this gospel 70 years after the events and that means this is **post Pentecost** and what Jesus said here was fulfilled as the Church was empowered to be His witness, making Him visible in the world.

Hey folks, people thirst for many things don’t they:

* They search for a meaning to life
* A purpose or calling
* Significance, something that sets them apart from others

And what Jesus proclaims to them that regardless the reason why they thirst if they but come to Him they will not only be filled with what they long for it will flow from their lives to others. Notice though how this thirst is to be satisfied, “*Let Him come to Me and drink*” Jesus gives them four things they must do:

1. **If anyone thirsts**: First a person must recognize their need that is always the first step and in so doing they would need to recognize that what they are trying to quench there thirst with isn’t working.
2. **Let Him**: Second, it must be personal, someone else can’t go for you, can’t have your friend or spouse stand in for you. That’s a humbling thing isn’t it? Maybe you have spent your life in this quest for meaning, purpose, significance and have invested everything towards this goal, you have to be willing to abandon all pursuits.
3. **Come to Me**: Third, you can’t go some where else, you must come to Jesus if you are going to find that what you heart longs for met. This further suggests to me that you can’t just add Jesus to this to cover all your bases it is Him in exclusion to everything and everyone else.
4. **And drink**: Finally, knowing that you need to drink won’t help you must drink and in the Greek the verb tenses reveal that is continue to come and continue to drink as it is not just a one time deal and you can go back the way you were.

The result is that you will not only be fulfilled personally you will be a blessing a fountain yourself. On each of the seven preceding days water was drawn from a golden pitcher from the pool of Siloam and carried in procession to the temple and offered by the priests as the people sang form Isaiah 12:3 “*Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation*.” But on the final day of the feast the priests who had gone to the pool each day stood with empty pitchers and held them up before the people and quoted out of Isaiah 44:3 saying “*For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring*”, which was speaking of what God would do once they entered the promised land, you see the feast was not only in remembrance of the past it was in anticipation of the future.

 Now what’s cool is that the name of the pool in which they got the water was Siloam and in Hebrew the name means the “***Sent One***” it is also called in Neh. 2:14 the ***Kings pool***. And many commentators believe that it was at this very moment as they raised the pitcher’s that Jesus the “***Sent One***” cried out saying, “*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of the heart will flow rivers of living water.*” There is a very interesting prophecy in Zech. 14:8 as the prophet spoke of this time saying, “*In that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem..*” and on this day as the pitchers were empty Jesus says, “*I am the well of salvation, come and drink and you will never need to go anywhere else again*.” Now John adds his commentary of Jesus words saying, “*But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” The long awaited “*Sent One*” had come and invited all who have a thirst to drink of Him and having done so they wouldn’t need to seek water to fulfill them from the outside as Jesus says, “*out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*”.

Hey folks, **there is a difference in the Holy Spirit being *in* you and the Holy Spirit flowing *from* you**. The Bible speaks of three works of the Holy Spirit distinguished by three different verb tenses, ***alongside***, ***in*** and ***upon***. Now the Holy Spirit had been alongside people drawing them into a relationship with Jesus. Then in John 20:22 we will read that “*when He (Jesus) had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit*”, that is when the Holy Spirit came to indwell them. That only leaves one other encounter with the Holy Spirit and that is found in Acts chapter 1:5-8 fulfilled in Acts chapter 2 when Jesus told them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father. Now follow me on this folks according to John 20:22 if they already received the Holy Spirit at that time what was it they needed to wait for, what is this Promise of the Father, is it just to be indwelt? In Luke 24:49 Jesus told them, “*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are* ***endued with power*** *from on high.*” Then again in Acts 1:8 Jesus tells them, “*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come* ***UPON*** *you*.” Power for what? Well Jesus said, “*You shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*.” I believe that Jesus is speaking here of the ***UPON*** experience of the book of Acts and not the indwelling work of John 20:22 as the Holy Spirit is described by His words as **flowing from their lives not merely indwelling them**. You see the question is not whether or not a believer has the Holy Spirit because we know that we do, no **the question is does the Holy Spirit have us**? In the 47th chapter of Ezekiel there is a curious vision the prophet is given by which he is taken to the back door of the temple and he sees that water is flowing from under the threshold of the temple. Ezekiel is given a measuring rod as he leaves the gate and the first measurement is the water is ankle deep the next time he measures it is up to his knees, the third it is up to his waste and final time he takes a measurement it is over his head so deep that a person would have to swim “***a river so deep that it could not be crossed***” we are told. Ezekiel is told in verse 9 “*It shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live…. everything will live wherever the river goes*.” Then in verse 12 he is told “*Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine*.” Friends what a great description of infilling of the Holy Spirit in a persons life, a life where there is ***variety***, where **the leaves of our faith do not wither**, and **the fruit of the Spirit does not fail**. Hey saints, what a great illustration of the work of the Holy Spirit, you are led into the temple where your feet are wet in the Spirit, then He takes you ankle deep as you stand in the promises of God. Ah but **finally He takes you to the place where you plunge in over your head where the river sweeps you off your feet and takes you to where “*everything will live wherever the river goes*”.** Hey, remember that old Maranatha song “*I’ve got a river of life flowing out of me, makes the lamb to walk and the blind to see, opens prison doors and sets the captives free, I’ve got a river of life flowing out of me.*”

**III. Vs. 40-53** **Another prophet from Galilee**

Vs. 40-53 There was a division a “split” among the people concerning Jesus as we are told in verse 43 and it stemmed from what their perception of Him was He, a prophet, or the Messiah? All they had to do was listen to what He said about Himself as the guards who had come to take Him captive were themselves captivated saying, “*No man ever spoke like this Man*”. Hey folks, some “*split*” when they come face to face with Jesus others who come to take Him captive end up “*captivated*” when they come into contact with Jesus. I suppose right now there are those that are thinking about splitting and others that remain because He is captivating. Nicodemus had come ready to split hairs but ended up being captivated and you can see the progression of this as here as he is moving towards being a captive of Jesus love as we shall see in 19:39 he comes to the tomb of Jesus out of devotion. What caused this change? Well it was the cross, you see at the cross the debate is over all the arguments disappear.

They accuse Nicodemus, the teacher of all Israel, of being stupid and told him to go back and study the scriptures saying that he would never find a prophet from the area of Galilee. Now actually according to 2 Kings 14:25 there was a prophet from *Gath-hepher* which was about 2 miles from Nazareth in the region of Galilee the prophet’s name? His name we are told was Jonah, the same Jonah whose book bares his name. Apparently in 2 Kings 14 he spoke of the restoration of the land to its ancient boundaries and in the book that bares his name preached reluctantly to a gentile nation causing their conversion. Now Jesus said of Jonah in Matthew 12:39-41, “*An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here*.” Is that not amazing that the religious leaders didn’t remember that Jonah was from Galilee and Jesus used his story as the illustration of His death burial and resurrection? Finally we are told that the feast was over and they rolled up their tents and went back into there houses, so how about it we have just camped out with Jesus are you wanting to pack it in and go home or ready to spend some time hanging around the Lord?

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 8:1-11**

**“Written in blood upon dirt”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-6a Neither pardon nor prosecution**

**III. Vs. 6b-11** **The dust of death**

**I. Intro.**

There has been a debate as to whether or not this story should be where it is or even included in the Bible at all as this section is not found bound up with the rest of the old manuscripts but rather found by its self. A simple look at the context of the story would cause it to fit right here. The controversy over this section of scripture being placed where it is has to do with manuscripts and the oldest ones not including it here. The problem with that view is that the oldest manuscripts were not in use as much as the others primarily because they weren’t as well received. The fact is the reason for leaving it out has more to do with that way it seems to portray Jesus as being week towards sexually immoral behavior but nothing could be further from the text.

In John 1:14 we are told that Jesus is full of grace and truth and here we have an illustration of what it looks like to be full of grace and truth. **Friends grace is never at the expense of truth and truth is never devoid of grace. Grace is never ignorant or blinded by truth it clearly knows the facts but freely operates because what truth has demanded grace has supplied**. Jesus said that He didn’t come to condemn the world but to save it. “*The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). So here was one that He was going to die for, one that He came to save.

**II. Vs. 1-6a Neither pardon nor prosecution**

Vs. 1-2 The last verse in chapter 7 should have probably been the first verse of this chapter as Jesus had spent the night out in the cathedral of His creation, in the temple of His Fathers presence and the next day, no doubt better refreshed than those that went to their own houses, He came to the temple to teach. There are several things that aid in our understanding of this story as we take a look at Jesus the balance of grace and truth. The first of which can be found in the contrast between verse 53 and 8:1 read together with out division it reads, “*Everyone went to his house but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives*.” While the world went to their houses Jesus went to the mount of Olives as our Lord had no place to lay His head, Matt. 8:20 (apparently even His disciples had places to stay). Our Lord was always about the interests of others be it His Father or man kind, never has there been anyone as selfless as He, as this story shall further illustrate.

Vs. 3-5 The population was normally around 300,000 in Jerusalem but on the appointed feasts the population would swell to 2-3 million. He not only taught but He did so in the temple and according to verse 20 in the area of the court of the women where the temple treasury was at knowing that the Scribes and Pharisees would be near the money. In that day the teacher would find a pillar in the temple and sit down as people would gather to listen to the scriptures expounded, when in the midst of the quite of our Lord’s classroom came the ruckus of the religious leaders dragging in a ½ naked woman who no doubt was doing all she could to hide her nakedness and shame. Oh mark the contrast as **Jesus came that day to *expose* the mysteries of the kingdom of God and religion came to *expose* the failures of a woman.** Jesus has no time for those who efforts are into confessing others sins before Him but are into covering their own. Proverbs 25:2 says “*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter*”; hey saints it is not our job to go around publicly exposing each others sin notice how Jesus wrote down something in brokenness and compassion instead of throwing the guilty out in public. It is satan that is the accuser of the brethren and it is Jesus that will speak the truth in love. **These religious leaders were willing to sacrifice this woman for their cause while Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself for her sin**, nothing my friends can clarify the difference between religion and what Jesus offers that this.

Several things stand out in the action of the Scribes and the Pharisees that indicate that their main interest was in trapping Jesus not justice.

1. **First** the fact that we see that they brought the women before Jesus openly while He was teaching in the court of the women. This was an illegal act as they were suppose to bring such charges to court not the court of public opinion.
2. **Second**, we are told the very words these religious leaders used when they tossed her down during Jesus’ Bible study, “*Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.*” They made her case an open and shut one as they said she was guilty because they had caught her in the very act. The problem with their judgment is where was the man who she was caught in the act with? Being that this was done in the court of the women perhaps they thought it left Jesus between a rock and a hard place (the law and the court of women).

One other point of interest to me is that the religious leaders tell Jesus what the sentencing in this case is, stoning, and under the regulations of the law it tells us that the woman was a betrothed virgin (*that is to say she was legally married but had not consummated the relationship*). Had they said that she was guilty and was to be strangled then it would have meant that she was married and the union consummated. The fact that the male is not brought to be stoned as well suggests that he may have been a relative of a religious leader. Both Lev. 20 and Deut. 22 declared adultery to be a capital offense but there were safeguards to protect the accused:

* There could be no doubt about the details
* There had to be a number of eye witnesses who caught the person in the act of immorality
* Their stories had to be in complete agreement

The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that the crime of adultery was punished only once in every seven years or so, in other words it wasn’t often that the person guilty of it could be charged. The religious leaders thought they had Jesus on this one as He had the reputation of being a friend to sinners and yet He himself said that He had come to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17) and His words of verse 7 do so.

Vs. 6a We are told in Romans 3:23 “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*”. The man was not dragged before the crowd in shame, he didn’t stand up and take the responsibility, most of mankind never does, do they? The commandment doesn’t say that just the woman should be put to do but that both of them are equally guilty. Now notice that Jesus nether ***pardons*** her nor ***prosecutes*** her instead He came against self-righteous judgment as he bent down and said nothing but appeared to be writing upon the dirt. I am personally thankful that my Lord writes upon the dirt as what is written against me needs not to be permanent.

**III. Vs. 6b-11** **The dust of death**

Vs. 6b-7 Instead of either agreeing with their judgment Jesus judges the judges. Notice that they continued to press Him into making a judgment based upon verse 9 it would suggest because they were guilty of the same at least in their hearts. Hey folks freedom from getting caught does not mean that a person can escape the guilt of what we have done wrong there is only one way to escape that and it at the feet of Jesus. “*Let him who is sinless*” is what Jesus said and it is the only time He ever used this word in the Bible. Jesus says, “*Yes she is to be stoned let me appoint the executioners the one who has not fallen in the same area*”. Someone has well said, “*If the inner thoughts of a man were written on his forehead, he would never take his hat off*!”

This is the only mentioning of Jesus the “*Word of God*” writing anything down and yet more has been written of Him them any other figure in human history. The word “*stooped*” down only appears two other places in the N.T. and it describes an act of humility and as it relates to this incident suggests Jesus compassion and heartache over her sin. As to what He wrote much has been speculated:

* The names and sins of those who condemned her
* The ten commandments as they were written by the finger of God and as such the same finger that wrote “*Your shall not commit adultery*” was writing here
* Some suggest that He wrote Jeremiah 17:13 in the dirt “*Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the Lord, The fountain of living waters.*”
* Perhaps Jesus wrote the same four words He had in Daniel’s day “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN”, “*You are weighed in the balance and found wanting*”. (Daniel 5:25-29).

Two scriptures shed some light upon Jesus writing in the dirt:

1. Genesis 2:7 where we are told that “*The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*.” That is to say that in man kinds creation God knew what we were made of as Psalm 103:14 reminds us “*For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.*”
2. In Ex. 31:18 we are told that it was the finger of God that wrote “*You shall not commit adultery*”. So on stone tablets the law was written but at this moment Jesus revealed that one greater than the law etched in stone was here as Paul wrote in Col. 2:14 that Jesus has “*wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*”

**So in defense of this woman the Rock stood up against the rocks of religion** that were about to be throne in an attitude of self righteousness as they were at least guilty of the same sin in their hearts. Seeing that this is the only mention of Jesus’ writing and it occurs when those are trying to trap Him in the debate between the requirements of the law and grace notice that:

* He wrote with His finger on the hand that would shortly be pierced for this and every other sin.
* That what was written was on dust to remind us that this is all we are and it is where we shall return, sinners sin and there is none righteous no not one.
* Jesus’ writing in the dirt revealed what He thought of dirt on this gal, simply put that it needn’t be permanent; He didn’t etch it on a stone tablet.

In Deut. 17:7 we are told that “*The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people*.” So Jesus says to the religious leaders “*He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first*”. In the Greek this can be rendered “*He who is without the same kind of sin*” Jesus wasn’t asking them to be sinless as He would have been the only one that could judge only that they weren’t guilty of committing that sin in their own heart as she had done in her body.

Vs. 8-9 This is the 2nd time Jesus wrote on the ground and those that came as judge were judged by their own conscience but not broken of their pride enough to receive Jesus as Lord. The older they were the more they had to reflect upon and the greater their own failure and realization of their own sin. Isn’t that amazing how our sin always looks worse on someone else? Finally all that remained was Jesus and the woman now standing before her only true judge. Jesus asked, “*Where are they that are without the same struggle as you*?” “*Could no man execute your judgment that wasn’t himself guilty of the same?*” And she stood before the one man who could take up the stone but instead of putting her to death for her sin He rather choose to put Himself to death for her sin. There are those who chose to say that Jesus is week on sin but they fail to realize what Paul declared in 2 Cor. 5:21 “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*.” How week is Jesus towards sin if He died to set us free from it’s hold? Oh my friend forgiveness if free but not cheep as Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:18-19 “*knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*”

Vs. 10-11 Notice that Jesus didn’t call this woman by her failure, “*Sinner, floozy*” no He calls here be the same title He gave His mother “*woman*”. And she responded by calling Him Lord, not teacher as the religious leaders had. According to the law it took two to stand up and condemn a person of adultery and having just dismissed those who were her accusers Jesus relinquished His ability to condemn her under the law. Notice that Jesus didn’t say, “*I’ll let you off the hook this time but if you ever blow it again your history*!” “*Go, free to sin no more*”, He said, “*You are forgiven and liberated from the penalty as well as the power of sin in your life.*” Go and sin no more as a life style, is what Jesus told her and her tears would come years latter as she would watch her children play, celebrate a wedding anniversary, this day would come back to her and what He gave her that day.

Hey friends **there must always be conviction before there can be conversion**, notice in her response she makes no excuse, offers no denial as she only answers “*No one, Lord*” and it appears recognizes His right to be so over her life. Jesus had said to Nicodemus in John 3:17 “*God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*.” But **forgiveness is never an excuse to continue to sin but rather a gateway to change**. In the 5th chapter Jesus said a similar thing when He told the man by the pool of Bethesda, “*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you*.” Jesus could have never said “*Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more*”, had she not repented and had called Him Lord. Ah but He never tells anyone to do something that he does not first enable them to do. **Hey folks, that is what forgiveness, is always designed to do set us free when Jesus forgave this woman He set her free to be a different kind of person than she ever was before and that is still what He wants to do for us**.

In Genesis 3:19 when God pronounced His judgment upon man kinds sin He said, “*you will return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return*.” The mere writing upon the dust of the ground should have served as a reminder of the curse of death not just the woman’s but those who through her in His midst as well. In the glorious 22nd Psalm which speaks of Jesus sacrifice we hear His words for all of humanity in verse 5 “*You have brought Me to the dust of death*” then in the 29th verse of that same Psalm “*All those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, even he who cannot keep himself alive*.” “***I shall go down to the “dust of death” not just for the sins of this woman but for the sins of those who dragged her before me this day***”, said Jesus. And **in that moment the tears of her failure were mingled with the blood of His sacrifice and she was cleansed set free from the penalty of sin and the power of it that brought her to Him in the first place**. I have heard Him countless times say these same words to me, haven’t you? “*Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?*” **No man, LORD** is always my response! And if that be your response then you will hear His second stanza “*Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more*”. Have you been tossed at the feet of Jesus this day because of your sin and failure? Are you in the dust of death, then let His blood wash you with the hope that you need not stay that way.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 8:12-30**

**“SON rise”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 12-20 Light of life**

**III. Vs. 21-30** **Who are You?**

**I. Intro.**

I’m always in awe of how our Lord entered into the very symbols that surround Israel’s history and on this day he do so again as there were two giant Menorahs right by where He was teaching. So as the sun was rising and these 12 branched six foot candle sticks let the entrance to the holy place Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world*”. Oh mark that my friend He didn’t claim to be merely the light unto the Jews or the light for His time but for **the world**. Jesus proclaimed, “*Anybody, anywhere, anytime if they will but follow me they will no longer walk in darkness but have the light of life*”. This not some campaign slogan it has bore truth from the time He first spoke those words. So as the day dawned upon the night and the night gave up its domain, Jesus declared that He was the Light of the world and darkness no longer had a hold upon the sole of those who could now see because of His glory.

**II. Vs. 12-20 Light of life**

Vs. 12-20 Notice the words “*Jesus spoke again to them*”. There is always a tendency in our fallen nature to attack those who attack us. When the religious folks tossed the guilty ½ naked women at His feet in order to trap Him He turned it into an opportunity to set her free, amazing! Ah but in this chapter Jesus attempts to set free those who had attempted to trap Him, WOW! Our Lord, friends, is **always interested in setting folks free even those whose whole existence was bent on imprisoning Him**. I must confess that this would have been the last thing to cross my mind at that moment. Jesus had come to seek and save that which was lost and the religious leaders were just as lost as that young woman they had just tossed at her feet so they qualified.

 John uses the word “*Cosmos*” for the word “World” 77 times in this gospel compared to only 17 times in the other gospel accounts and in so doing he pictures Jesus as the global savior not just the local Jewish savior. Back in chapter 6:35 we had the first of seven “***I Am***” statements of Jesus where He declared that He was the “*Bread of life*”, now we are given the 2nd of these in verse 12 as Jesus declares “*I Am the Light of the world*”. In the 2nd verse we are told that when Jesus arrived in the temple it was early in the morning so perhaps as He utters these words the sun was rising on His cue. To the Jew’s the physical sun was a picture of God as just as there was only one sun for our universe and it is the only source of light and life so too with God and here Jesus is claiming to be that God by declaring Himself to be the center and source of life. You may recall back in 1:4 John had declared that in Jesus was life and the life was the light of men. In the temple right next to Jesus when He said these words were the two six foot golden lamp stands that were placed there to remind the nation that at one time the glory of the Lord filled the temple. In Ex. 40:34 during the nation’s wonderings through the wilderness God lit up their nights with His glory and here Jesus says that it was Him. That is what John had said concerning Jesus in 1:14 when he declared “*we beheld His glory*”. To trust Jesus reaps the immediate benefits of “light” and “life” and as such we will no longer continue to walk in darkness. Then in John 3:19-21 to Nicodemus Jesus said, “*this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God*.” So at this moment Jesus the glory of the Lord the shekinah glory that dispels all darkness came back to the temple and Jesus said, “*You don’t need the candles or the sun as the SON is here.*” In Exodus 13:21 we are told that “*the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.*”

Hey folks that is what Jesus wants to give you “**covering from the things that will *scorch us* and light for the things that can *stumble us***.” His glory will provide just that for us as He protects us and guides us through the maze of life. For thousands of years the nation had been bumping into things and stumbling around and finally the “*Light of the World*” had come and all they could say is, “*Could ya turn that thing down we can’t bask in the glow of our own self importance*”. Have you ever watched a little child who isn’t use to being the center of their universe? They start making noise and continue to turn up the volume until finally they will miss behave in order to get the attention they want. That is what the religious leaders were doing trying to discredit Jesus so that they could get people’s attention back on them. Consider the words of Jesus said about Himself so far:

* 1. When Jesus was in Samaria by Jacob’s well He declared that He was “***Living water***”
	2. When in Capernaum after feeding over 10,000 He declared He was the “***Bread of Life***”
	3. Now here in front of the golden lamp stands as the sun was rising He proclaimed that He was the “***Light of the World***”.

Think of these three things a moment as Jesus gives us a clue for us to live by. You see when He is “***Water, Bread and Light***” to us then we will be able to “**live life in the world**” and when He isn’t that then we will neither know Him nor know the Father.

In verse 13 they accuse Jesus of bearing witness of Him self but what choice did He have when those who are blind are unable to see the Light? Light always bear witness of its self doesn’t it? Six times in six verses the word “*witness*” appears and Jesus refutes their witness of Him as unreliable because they judge according to the flesh (verse 15). Hey folks pay attention as **these religious leaders sought to know the Word of God but in so doing they missed completely the God of the Word who at that very moment was speaking to them**. The picture of light also had reference to Psalm 119:105 where the psalmist said “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*” of special interest as John has already identified Jesus as the Word of God and now He proclaims to all that He is the Light of the world. Jesus has just described Himself as the “*light of the world*” and they can’t see this. Now if a person can’t see light that would make them….***BLIND***! A seeing person doesn’t need proof of the light the fact that they see light is the proof. In the normal way of looking at things what a person testified of themselves would not be enough to establish the truth of what they said as there would be the need to collaborate the truth but what Jesus said about Himself was visible accept for those that were blind. Jesus says that He is qualified to testify of Himself for three reasons:

1. Vs. 14 “*I know where I came from and where I am going*”: “I’m eternal I’ve always been and always will be”, Jesus says. Nothing can change what I say I am no other variable concerning me exists.
2. Vs. 15 “*You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one*”: “They judged by the standards of the flesh and Jesus weighed the thoughts and intents of the heart”.
3. Vs. 16-18 “*And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me*.”: There are two who bear witness My Father and I whom I with at this moment. You simply can’t separate the testimony of Jesus from the testimony of the Father.

It seems that in verse 19 was aimed at the virgin birth as they will again say this in verse 41 “*We are not born of fornication*…” thus hinting that had heard of the miraculous conception but chose rather to say that it was an immoral one. But instead of getting angry at them He just said you don’t know Me or My Father because if you weren’t blind you would know both of us. So the Pharisees asked three questions that they really didn’t want the answers too:

1. Vs. 19 Where is Your Father?
2. Vs. 22 Will He kill Himself, because He says, Where I go you cannot come?
3. Vs. 25 Who are You?

The first question was in response to Jesus are clear pronunciation of His deity as they shot back “*Where is Your Father*” to which Jesus replied “*If you had known Me, You would have known My Father also*”. What blinded these Pharisees? Ignorance and pride! They are still the same two things that keep people in darkness today aren’t they. **So in verse 14-19 Jesus address their ignorance and in verse 21-30 He address their pride**. Remember that Jesus was saying this right in front of the temple treasure and during the feast the golden treasure chests were illuminated by the 6 foot golden lamp stands all of which was in the court of the women so they didn’t want to cause a commotion as it might interrupt the flow of cash so that might have led to their decision to lay hands on Him.

**III. Vs. 21-30** **Who are You?**

Vs. 21-22 All three of the Pharisees replies to Jesus were quite sarcastic as they had no real intent in seeking the truth. Pride possessed their hearts and lives as they didn’t see themselves in need of someone dying on their behave, “*If you die for us you will just be committing suicide as we are good people who have no need for a savior*” (verse 22), they thought. Jesus tells them that they are at a fork in the road and if they don’t receive Him they will plunge into the wrong side of eternity. Friends **those who have no interest in following Jesus on earth will never be able to follow Him to heaven**! I realize that rubs folks the wrong way but its Jesus’ words and His warning. Not content with slandering Jesus birth they now say that He was speaking of suicide which in Jewish theology sent a person to the lowest parts of Hades, thus dammed. Jesus words are not an attack but rather a warning that they are born apart from God and prove as much by a life style and are already dammed as such He has come to lead them out of their darkness. Again John 3:18 sheds light on this as Jesus told Nicodemus “*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but* ***he who does not believe is condemned already****, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*.”

Vs. 23-24 Jesus immediately corrects their thinking by telling them that they are from the earth that is to say born in sin and are sinners by choice as well and as such qualify as folks in need of a savior (verses 23-24). The word “*HE*” in verse 24 is italicized which means that it was added by the translators in an attempt to make a complete sentence but what it really says is, “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins*.” That makes it very clear doesn’t it? Jesus removes the option of Him being just another good guy, great teacher, prophet or what ever else the world wants to stamp on Him. He declares that He is God and if we don’t believe that He is then we will die in our sins.

In Gen. 22 Isaac asks Abraham where is the Lamb for the sacrifice to which Abraham replies in verse 8 “*My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering*.” In the Hebrew this reads “***God will see the lamb for Himself***” or as others interpret this “*God will Himself be the Lamb*” that is what Jesus has just told the religious leaders. People have a hang up on that don’t they, “*Are you so narrow minded that you think that Jesus is the only way*?” What would happen if you went to claim the 10 million dollar lottery price and when you got there they asked do you have the winning number? “Well no but I do happen to have a receipt fro Supper One”. Sorry sir but you have to have the winning ticket. Well here is the right number I wrote it down on a 3x5 card won’t that do? Its awful narrow minded of you not to let me collect the money even though I don’t have your ticket.

Vs. 25-26 “*Who are you*” they asked and Jesus continued what I’ve been telling you and all I’ve had to say comes from God the Father. They then respond with another sarcastic question, “*Who are You*?” Jesus replied by saying, “*Your only hope*!” Oh amazing to me that our Lord would still offer these mockers salvation even though they were seeing Him as a joke. I can just imagine the look in His eyes that said, “*I want you, I want to save you from an eternity devoid of all that is beautiful and full of joy. I want you to be at peace, where you will never suffer heartache or regret again*”. With great love and compassion Jesus tells these self righteous Pharisees, “*You are going to die but it needn’t be permanent as I am willing to die for you*.” Friends do you know that He still makes the same offer to all, regardless of what you have done and how many times you have mocked Him?

Vs. 27-30 John adds his own sad commentary as too their response that no doubt reflected back 70 years through the cross not six months away saying, “*They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father*”. But that is not the end of Jesus words as He says, “*When you lift up the Son of man, then you will know that I am.*” (The word HE is not in the Greek). The word “*lifted up*” had two implications **His death on the cross as well as His resurrection and ascension**. As such Jesus glory is placed intertwined with His suffering something that we humans constantly struggle with don’t we? The old line is true as you can often tell how a person lived by how they died. Not only was He sent by the Father the Father was always with Him. The ignorance of the situation will be removed then all that stands in the way will be pride. How good we be if Jesus needed to die in order to save us? So in one sentence Jesus removes the two obstacles of ignorance and pride that stood in the way for Him to save those who mocked Him. But as John records many believed in Him and I’m not certain that they all believed when He said the wards as they did 6 months latter when He fulfilled them. At the cross of Christ we have a greatest vista over all He said and did! Paul wrote of this vista in Romans 8:32 when he said, “*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” Nothing Jesus ever said or did wasn’t pleasing to the Father and it ought to be our desire as well to do those things that please the Father.

“*Life after death*?” Many people have pondered that question and Jesus answers it for us in this section. There will be life after death the question is where will we be spending it? I know a lot of people today who grade on a curve instead of the cross and they can look at a person like me and say that they got a better score on the goodness standard then I did and based upon this they don’t think they need a savior. I asked a person a few weeks back if they knew of the love that Jesus had for them and their response was to tell me that they were quite spiritual. One day as Philip. 2:10 says, “*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth*” so the only question that remains is what you will be doing when your knee is bowed at the name of Jesus.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 8:31-47**

**“Free from me”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 31-36 House of sin and house of the Son**

**III. Vs. 37-47 Who’s your daddy**

**I. Intro.**

It is important and go back to what had transpired already. It was the day after the feast of the Tabernacles and Jesus had come early that morning into the temple when the religious leaders came dragging a half naked woman caught in the very act of adultery and He set her free from the **penalty and power** of sin while indicting the religious leaders. Then He spoke to them telling them He was the light of the world and would do the same for them as He had done for her if they would only be willing. They weren’t but others were and now He has come to address those who responded by belief.

 People often add to a meaning of a word and still call it by the same name adding to the confusion of the definition. Take the word “***freedom***” for instance the true meaning of the word means to be free from that which restrains and implies a condition by which we are now unhindered. Now over the years people added to that meaning to include ***license*** which means to be able to do what ever you want whenever you want. The trouble with that is that often what a person has license to do becomes that which robs him of the freedom he sought, take Jesus parable of the prodigal son who became enslaved by his understanding of freedom. Someone has well said that the true definition of freedom as it relates to us is “*being able to be all that you were meant to be*”.

**II. Vs. 31-36 House of sin and house of the Son**

Vs. 31-32 These verses are important as they serve to reveal the heart of Jesus which was not to merely win a debate but to save a soul and transform a life. Friends anything short of that becomes just an endless debate and produces nothing lasting. Look carefully at what Jesus saying here: “*If you make your permanent home in His word not only are you one of His followers, you know the truth and are constantly being made FREE*.” The author of Hebrews sheds some light on this when in Hebrews 12:1 he says “*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,* ***let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us***”. Jesus gives us **three steps to be free from anything that keeps us from being all we are meant to be.** Why did He say these words? To make certain that they moved beyond an emotional response of admiration to one that was abiding. Webster’s dictionary defines **abiding** as:

* *To endure without yielding*
* *To accept without objection*
* *To remain stable*
* *To continue in a place*

Mere emotional admiration alone won’t produce that. The results of abiding Jesus declared to these followers was “*You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*”, that is to say that they would be in **a continual state of freedom**.

1. Vs. 30-31 **Believe**: Now there is a slight difference between the *many* that believed in verse 30 and those who *believed* Him in verse 31. In the Greek those in verse 30 “*believed* ***IN*** *Him*” which to say **they were into Jesus** and those in verse 31 just “*believed Him*” that is **they intellectually agreed** but were not yet INTO Him. It is to this second group that Jesus utters His words in verses 31-32. What Jesus is saying is that **following Him begins with being into Him**, believing in Him not just intellectually agreeing with His words. Over and over again people have rejected Jesus without ever taking His free offer to investigate Him, so take Him up on His offer and investigate Him, not just what others say about Him but what He said about Himself.
2. Vs. 31 **Abide**: The test of truth is not whether or not you enjoy it or it makes you feel good, no the test is whether or not it is true. Once we have found that the Word is true than we need to simple continue in it and in so doing you will continue to follow Him which will continue to set you free. There are those that join an organization, conform to the outward standards but never join inwardly, “*Oh I’m a member of \_\_\_\_\_\_ but I don’t go all that often*.” Hey friends **I’m not a member of Christianity I’m a follower of Jesus and as such I can’t quit His into me and I’m into Him**! It is this “*abiding*” that marks the difference between the two.
3. Vs. 32 **Know**: Notice the progression believing to abiding to knowing which seems a bit backward doesn’t it? So as we abide we will know the truth that belief did by faith and abiding did by consistency. Jesus is giving these who intellectually understood but had not yet committed the way by which to move beyond where they were. There is a growth process that Jesus is giving us here.

Vs. 32 The outcome of this is that He will “**Make you free”** the out come of belief, abiding and knowing is freedom, “*being able to be all that you were meant to be*”. You will be delivered from those things in your life that entangle us and ensnare us, or if you will we will be free from the self centered life. So now if you are having an inability to move on beyond yourself some event that hold you back you have the three step process to be set free.

Friends it’s no accident that the word “*disciplined*” comes from the root word “disciple” as Jesus admonishes those who responded to His words in verse 30 to continue to be “*disciplined*” in His word. The world is interested in how little it can do to maintain but if we are truly following Jesus we will be the exact opposite wanting to be gluttons of His word never being satisfied. Hey did you notice that Jesus said that they were to abide in **HIS WORD**? Now if I were to say such a thing with these promises it would be the height of arrogance but no so when Jesus says as doing so allows us to shed those things that weigh us down and ensnare us. So to be a follower of the “*Word made flesh*” we must make our home in His word! Jesus isn’t just speaking of an academic pursuit here, no He is speaking of living in His word and applying its truths to our lives.

Vs. 33-34 Jesus tells them what knowing the truth sets them free from, SIN. They were equating their freedom only on the bases of ancestral association and Jesus was telling them that it was based upon relational association, “*Were Abe’s kid’s we aren’t in bondage*” they said and Jesus says, “*If you were Abe’s kids, you wouldn’t make sin your habit*”. The religious leaders who were there serve as a case in point as they were still stuck in their self-sufficiency and thought they were just fine the way they were. “*Hey buddy I’m free already no body tells me how and who I can worship*”, they said. For four hundred years they had been enslaved to the Egyptians, then according to the book of Judges they were held captive by seven different nations. Then there were the years the Assyrians invaded the land and took the people captive, not to mention the Babylonians who carted them off for 70 years, and at the very moment they spoke to Jesus they were under the yoke of the Romans. It was not a question of freedom verses captivity with regards to Israel rather it was a question of who enslaved them NOW.

Jesus cuts through all of that when He tells them that if they practice sin they are a slave to it. The word “*commits*” speaks of a **habitual** action and as such a person enslaved to the very thing that they sought freedom in. They said, “*We are free*” but Jesus says no you’re a slave. Folks we are either “***free from***” or “***free too***” but never both at the same time. They thought that free too meant they were free from but Jesus says “*If you practice sin then it’s your master*”. That why He tells them “*If the Son has made you free then you are free in deed*”. You will never fully realize how enslaved you are to something until you try to leave it or quit. Try to stop smoking or over eating and you will find out just how that little cigarette has become your master. I heard a fellow one time telling his buddy who was trying to quit smoking how is it was when he said, “*Hey it’s easy to quit smoking I’ve done it 100’s of times*”.

You see they were revisionists concerning their national history but they were equally ignorant of the fact they were under the most tyrannical ruler man has ever come in contact with. This ruler is so oppressive that he has divided families, destroyed marriages, slain innocent lives and there isn’t a person whom this creature has not held in captivity. Who is this person? Well Jesus tells us it is the one we saw in the mirror this very morning. You see **the person who continually gives into sin will quickly become its servant** but sin is really tricky isn’t he? Sin doesn’t come in the form of things we hate, (*I’m addicted to Brussel sprouts*) things that aren’t fun and pleasurable, no sin comes in the form of things that we are drawn too already and he gets us to say, “*Just this once, what’s the harm*?” Moses faced this, the author of Hebrews said, while He was a prince in Egypt as Moses “*choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin*” (Hebrews 11:25). Did you notice how the author puts that “*the passing pleasures of sin*”? He didn’t say, “***the endless torment of a ruined life***”. No sin is fun, it’s pleasurable that is its bait, its lure to our flesh and once we have said, “*just this once*” a few more times then we should of then **we become a slave to that which we said we were free to enjoy**. Paul said this to the compromised Corinthian church, “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but* ***I will not be brought under the power of any.***” (1 Cor. 6:12)

Vs. 35-36 Politically they were a slave to Roman but the worst kind of slavery is when we are a slave to our own passions and vices because we are now unable to be set free apart from One stronger than even our flesh, Jesus. He presented Himself as the only One who had never come under the bondage of sin and as such abiding in the Fathers house forever. In Hebrews 4:15 we are told concerning Jesus that “*we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*.” Every appeal to the flesh that we face, every weakness and distress yet without sin! I rather think that qualifies Him to speak to us with regards to abiding don’t you? Now wonder He can say in verse 36 “*If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed*.”

As true as this is personally there is an even greater truth Jesus speaks of here. At first it is comfortable to hangout in the household of sin; you come over indulge your flesh it’s a great party, so you keep coming back until one day those in the house throw you out in the street. There is that old 1976 song by the Eagles called “*Hotel* *California*” where the singer says, “***you can check out any time you’d like but you can never leave***”, that is the difference between the “*House of sin and the House of the Son*” the house of sin will let you check out but won’t let you leave and in the house of the Son you will never want to check out but you can always leave.

**III. Vs. 37-47 Who’s your daddy**

Vs. 37-41a Notice that Jesus uses two different words to describe the relationship that these religious Jews had with Abraham. In verse 37 He uses the word “*descendants*” and in verse 39 He uses the word “*children*”. Jesus says, “*I know you are Abe’s offspring but you aren’t his kid’s*”. Paul wrote of this to the Galatians in 3:6-7 saying “*just as Abraham* "*believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*” What proved that they didn’t have Abraham as their father is that we are told in Romans 4:3 and Gen. 15:6 “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*” and Jesus said that His word had no place in them. Jesus’ point is that spiritual character determines ancestry not ancestry determining spiritual character. Jesus argument is simple your characteristics prove parentage and in a spiritual sense this is true as well their character was revealing that their father was the adversary not the person in whom Abraham believed and it was accounted as righteousness. Their proclamation should have been visibly seen by being “*partakers of the divine nature*” (2 Peter 1:4).

Further more spiritual character determines our destiny it is for this reason Jesus told Nicodemus, “*You must be born again*”. They were Jews ***religiously*** and ***racially*** but they weren’t Jews ***relationally*** as Paul wrote to the Romans in 4:13 “*For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith*.” I’m afraid at times there are those in the Church the same way they are Christians “religiously” that is to say that practice the religion called Christianity all be it by wrote. Then there are those who are Christian’s racially as their parents went to church and their parents before them but that is not the same as being a Christian relationally as I’m in active fellowship with Jesus Him as the hymn goes “*I walk with Him and talk with Him.*” At Jesus words these religious folks who are religiously illegitimate accuse Jesus of being born physically illegitimate. Jesus tells them that there were there three telling signs that they were children of the adversary:

1. Vs. 40 Sought to kill the truth
2. Vs. 42 Refused to love Jesus
3. Vs. 43 Unwillingness to hear and understand

The only crime Jesus was guilty of was hearing from the Father. The failure to love Jesus is the proof that a person does not know God according to Jesus claim here.

Vs. 41b-42 In their anger they attempt to malign His earthly parentage saying that He was illegitimate which wasn’t true as God was His Father but they were spiritually illegitimate.

Vs. 43-47 Jesus concludes by asking these religious leaders three questions:

1. Vs. 43-45 ***Why do you not understand My speech***: There must have been a pause with no response has Jesus goes on to say, you can’t hear and reason you can’t hear is because you choose to rather listen to a liar (verse 44-45). You can always tell which child belongs to which parent simply by who they listen too can’t you? Go into the nursery and watch as the little ones respond to the voice of their parents. That’s what Jesus is telling them you can tell who your daddy is because you don’t listen to the Father in heaven but you do listen to the father of lies. The only thing satan is the originator of is the lie and murder every thing else he can only twist for his own means. That being true the deceiver is so affected by his deception that it has worked upon himself. Someone has well said, “*The worst kind of lie is the one we believe ourselves to be true*”.
2. Vs. 46a ***Which of you convicts me of sin***: This is one of the most amazing challenges ever uttered isn’t it. Now if I said these words to you it wouldn’t take you very long to raise your hand but no one could come up with anything against Jesus. And again I think He waited for an answer and no one spoke up. “*Find any in consistencies, in shading of truth in my life fellows, any of those do as I say not as I do’s*?” And there wasn’t a one of them that said anything 33 years of life and there wasn’t one person who could stand up and say anything. At His trial not 6 months away they will have to make up false acquisitions in order to convict Him. I don’t think I’d be able to say these words after 33 minutes let alone 33 years.
3. Vs. 46b ***And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me***: Their failure to come up with one inconsistency in 33 years led to His final question to them. “*If there isn’t one inconsistency in my life over 33 years, what’s keeping you from trusting in Me*?” Let me just pose that same question to anyone here this morning who has not given their hearts to Him.

Their in ability to answer led to His final statement in verse 47, “*You don’t respond because you don’t hear and you don’t hear because you are not of God*”. And again they were quite until what we will see next week in verse 48 when they say He has a demon. There are a lot of people who would be tweaked by Jesus’ words here in verse 42 as they say, “*Hey I love God, I read my bible and go to church I just don’t love Jesus*” but Jesus Himself says that you can’t separate love for God from love for the Son.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 8:48-59**

**“Name above all names”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 48-51 Good Samaritan**

**III. Vs. 52-59 Before Abraham**

**I. Intro.**

The eighth chapter has been described as a lightening flash on a dark night, brief but extremely full of impact. Three times in this chapter He has used the same words about himself as was used in the story of the voice in the burning bush who told Moses that He was the “*I Am*” (*ego emi*). In the 12th verse Jesus declared Himself to be the light of the world, He offered freedom from sin and declared Himself to be sinless and He follows that up in this section of making yet another clear declaration of He being God. There are only two things that a person can do with such a chapter and they both involve bending:

* You will fall down to worship Him
* You will bend down to pick up stones to chuck at Him.

Thousands of years have passed and nothing has changed as these are still the same two reactions people have concerning Jesus aren’t they?

 A. W. Towzer once drew a comparison between the way Christians treat Jesus and the way the British treat their monarchy saying: “The kings and queens of Britain are called the rulers of the nation. But they do not rule, they only reign. They do not have any power; they are mere figureheads before whom people bow and address as "*Your Majesty.*" But they do not allow these monarchs to have any practical power in their lives. I am afraid this is the way we often think of Jesus and treat him in our lives. But he does not appear in that form in Scripture. He is to be our Master, Lord of all our life, our business life, our sexual life, our recreational life, and our family life all of it is to come under his Lordship. When we acknowledge him King of our life, he is not to be a mere figurehead, but is One who has the right to rule, the right to control all of our affairs.”

**II. Vs. 48-51 Good Samaritan**

Vs. 48-50 In the 47th verse Jesus told the religious leaders that the reason they didn’t believe Him was that they didn’t know God pretty amazing when one considers that they were dedicated to that very pursuit. After Jesus’ logic the only recourse for the religious leaders is name calling. Do you remember the grade school reply, “*I know you are but what am I*”? That’s what the religious leaders did here as they couldn’t challenge the validity of Jesus’ words so they attacked His reputation. By calling Jesus a Samaritan they were charging Him with being a religious traitor to the Jewish faith and further more they said you’re demented. Had Jesus said He was not a Samaritan He would have given merit to the racist rant of the religious leaders so He simply didn’t reply back to it all but it is interesting in the parable of the “*Good Samaritan*” Jesus pictured Himself as a Samaritan one hated by the Jews but a source of blessing to one in need. Jesus didn’t defend Himself in their hate speech He used gentle words to dismiss it by saying “*I do not have a demon*”.

Satan my friends is very crafty isn’t he? As he is behind these words of hate and He is using these religious leaders to get them to say things that would cause Jesus to act outside of His nature and character but Jesus won’t be governed by His emotions and feelings. Again we have a clear vision of Jesus' heart towards the religious leaders as He again warns them not to remain in a state of unbelief. How did Jesus handle such a attack? He defended only His relationship with the Father and didn’t bother with what man thought of Him. Jesus doesn’t resort to name calling or angry responses instead He continues to reach out to them in love. Peter spoke of this heart of Jesus when he said in 1 Peter 2:23 “*When He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously*”. What a great example Jesus is to us as He gives us **three keys of handling a personal attack**:

1. ***I honor My Father***: That ought to be our primary concern to make sure that what ever we do or say even when others come after us honors our Father. Jesus can take care of the person who is attacking us our responsibility is to make sure that we don’t dishonor our Lord.
2. ***I do not seek My own glory***: It is not our responsibility to defend our reputations friends. Ron has said it this way, “*I’ve heard far worse from far better*”. The truth is there is not anything in me worth defending I have no glory, I am nothing more than a container of His glory as Paul described it this way in 2 Cor. 4:7 “*We have this treasure(the glory of God)* ***in earthen vessels****, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*”
3. ***There is One who seeks and judges***: Finally it will be the Lord that defends and corrects all injustice not me and therefore I’m only interested in what He has to say about me not what someone else thinks about me, because to tell the truth I’m a far greater dirt bag then they think I am. So the next time someone is saying all sorts of things about you just respond to them and say, “*Oh my that person is way to kind I’m far worse then what they are saying, why if it wasn’t for My Lord I’d be in hell for eternity*!”

When ever anyone refuses Jesus own testimony about Himself they dishonor Him, anytime somebody refuses to acknowledge His revelation of Himself they are engaged in slander of our Lord. Jesus answered their slander by asking them who most resembled God the Father He or them? Hey folks that is always a great way to find out if you are in the flesh or in the Spirit simply look at your actions and attitudes and see if they are a reflection of the Lord or a reflection of satan who Jesus said lies and hates continually.

Vs. 51 Next Jesus turns the conversation away from the **personal attack** to **their personal need** when He says, “*Most assuredly*” or pay attention. What follows that is not “*pay attention I’m going to fry you.*” Instead, “*Pay attention, I’m going to tell you how you can live forever!*” In verse 21 Jesus warned them that they would die in their sins and here He tells them that if they “*keeps His word*” they will never die giving them the opportunity to be set free from sin. Who can conquer death? No leader has ever been able to do so, and yet Jesus promised those that keep His word will have victory over death. But what is death? Well it is the “*permanent cessation of life*” and Jesus told them that it need not be permanent condition. People who trust in His word Jesus said, are beyond the permanent destructive influence of death they will instead be in an eternal state of life. Jesus wasn’t speaking of physical death but spiritual death in verse 52 but the religious leaders couldn’t understand the things of God. This body is warring out, falling apart and losing its ability to regenerate but one day this body of corruption will put on incorruption that is what Jesus is speaking about. So the promise here is that we will never be separated from God if we keep His word, abide with Him we will continue to do so even when we are not longer trapped in our leather tents. We will be as 2 Corinthians 5:8 says “*absent from this body is to be present then with the Lord*”.

Notice that Jesus says they will not “**SEE**” death, instead what they will see is Jesus awaiting us. In John 14:2 Jesus said, “*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you*.” That is what we will “SEE” upon our death and those who don’t keep His word will see nothing but “***outer darkness***” upon their death. Paul spoke to Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:7 saying, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*.” That is what death will be for believers it will be like a great victory celebration after a long hard fought contest. Someone has well said that when we get to heaven it won’t be a “***Wow***” as much as it will be a “***Whew***”. You see the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be “*absent from the body and at home with the Lord*”. Now I ask you when you get home after a hard days work you say, “*Whew, I’m home, not Wow I’m home!*” don’t you?

**III. Vs. 52-59 Before Abraham**

Vs. 52-55 They were blown away by His comment about never dieing saying, “*There have been a lot of great folks that have died, who do you think you are*?” That’s interesting to me as in our society we think that the “*Good die young*” Billy Joel even wrote a song with those very words in it “*only the good die young*” but the Jews had a very different thought and it was that “*only the good live long*” and it’s the bad that die young. Jesus’ response in verse 54 was simple, “*Why don’t you ask God who I am, you say you know Him why not ask Him?*” Imagine hearing these words of Jesus as He stood there in the flesh and said, “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad*.” That was 2500 years ago, so either Jesus is crazy or He is God. “*Who do you make your self out to be*”, they asked and Jesus replied, “*I’m not making myself out to be anything, it’s My Father who you say you know that glorifies me.*” Jesus then speaks to them a word of revelation as He proclaims that He is eternal as Abraham rejoiced to see His day and saw it and was glad. The religious leaders didn’t misquote Jesus they misunderstood Him, the problem was not in what they heard by the way in which they heard, a hard heart. Folks that is an important distinction to make as we think that most misunderstandings lie in poor communication but oft times the hindrance is not the way something is said as much as the ears that and hearts that hear it.

Vs. 56-57 When did Jesus see Abraham? Some see this in the story told us in Gen. 14 when Abraham gave a tenth of his spoils to a king named Melchizedek “***King of Righteousness***” whose kingdom was Salem or ***peace*** and in Hebrews 7:3 we are told he had no father or mother and no beginning or end. Let me see now **He was the King of Righteousness from the Kingdom of peace has no earthly linage and appears to be eternal, yep sounds like Jesus**. Abraham was called the friend of God the father of the faithful and they could not imagine one greater than Abraham. God had told Abraham, “*In your seed all the nation shall be blessed*” and Abraham believed he saw the day.

Now we know that Jesus was in His early thirties yet the reply of these religious Jews was that He was not yet 50. Some believe that this was do to the stress of carrying the sin of the world upon His shoulders.

Vs. 58-59 This is the third time Jesus uses the phrase “*I Am*” which is a direct reference to His deity. In the Greek it is “*ego emi*” which is the same way it is translated in Jesus’ day to describe the Voice from the burning bush and clearly this is how the religious Jewish leaders interpreted His words as well. In the past tense “Before Abraham was” and then in the present tense “I Am”. They had asked “*Who do you make yourself out to be*” and His simple reply was, “*I don’t make Myself out to be anyone but I am God*!” The 59th verse reveals two ways that He was God:

* 1. First in the reaction of the religious Jews taking up stones to kill Him they clearly understood that He was proclaiming that He was God.
	2. Second that He walked right through the crowd unharmed as it was not His time to die showing that He controlled His own destiny and no angry mob could change that.

Jesus has said, “*I am the bread of life*” then He said, “*I am the light of the world*” so Jesus has proclaimed essential characteristics of the Godhead by saying that He is the “*sustenance of life*” He is that which alone can sustain life all one needs to do to live is continue to partake of Him. Then He declared that He is the source of all that is bright the One that enables all to walk with out stumbling, Whose very presences warms us as it comforts our fears. Now He declares something very specific to the Jews that “*Before Abraham was born, I am*” the significance of that statement goes beyond His declaration of being God as He uses the reference of Abraham. You see Abraham was the father of the faith, the founder of the covenant and Jesus proclaims before the founder Abraham I am God. Oh how these Jews had come to worship their religion how they loved their patriarchs none more than Abraham and Jesus said, “*Hey, he was just an entrance way to Me.*” My how we Christians can get into the same attitude can’t we? To some the building becomes the god, to others the denomination becomes the god, to others a specific doctrine becomes the god, and others make the leader the god. Pay attention friends before all that we hold onto as objects of our worship there is Jesus, He is the One essential necessity to our faith. In Matthew 21:42 Jesus said, “*Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'*?” As they quarried the stone for the temple the most important stone was the foundational stone which all other were to be built upon when it arrived at the building sight it was laid aside as more stones were brought for years the chief corner stone laid there rejected by the architects finally one of the workers noticed the perfectly cut stone cast aside and placed it where it belonged and the building went together as it was designed. Saint’s this is far too easy to do as we are tempted to worship the structure called Christianity in stead of the person of Christ. Jesus had started the day with a declaration of being the light of the world and ended the day with one that proclaiming Himself to be the source of worship.

Jesus made this declaration about His deity which was clearly understood by the reaction of the religious leaders as they picked stones to kill Him. On the very day in which Jesus cried out that the shekinah glory of God reappeared in the temple after a thousand year absence the religious leaders pick up stones to extinguish the “Light of the World” and the glory of God departed from the temple and as we shall see He goes to a blind man from birth and restores his sight. **Mark that my friend you may be able to chase the “*Light of the glory of God*” from your life but He will find some other heart to shine hope upon**. “*Before Abraham came into existence, I existed*.” That is what Jesus said to them. In all probability these were most likely the very stones they had gathered to chuck at the woman they dragged in front of Him to be judged and Jesus was willing to take her judgment upon Himself. Earlier in the same day they had cast an immoral girl at His feet and picked up stones to kill her and one by one those stones hit the ground. Now hours latter they pick up those same stones to kill an immortal Lord. I am reminded of Jesus words in Luke 19:40 “*that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.*” Oh what a song of worship these stones would sing that day!

**John 9:1-12**

**“Here’s mud in your eye”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-5 Words for the heart**

**III. Vs. 6-12 Anointed mud**

**I. Intro.**

This is the seventh of the sings if you include the ship arriving immediately on Capernaum, (the last of His signs will be the raising of Lazarus). They are as follows:

* 2:1-12 Water to wine
* 4:46-54 Nobleman’s son healed
* 5:1-15 Man with infirmity 38 years
* 6:1-14 Feeding of 5000
* 6:15-20 Jesus walks on water
* 6:21 Boats immediate arrival
* 9:12 Man born blind

Jesus did these and many more miracles for three specific reasons:

1. **To meet human need**: That is to say that the primary reason Jesus worked miracles was in response to human needs, be that physical or in the case of Him walking on water and the boat arriving immediately at its destination in response to emotional and spiritual needs.
2. **To convey spiritual truth**: Despite the fact Jesus performed His miracles in response to human need they always carried a spiritual truth both to those whom they touched as well as those who watched or in our case read of them. Simple put His miracles were a concert not a solo as they were almost always followed by a teaching that clarified the miracles spiritual significance.
3. **To reveal His nature**: Finally beyond there practical impact and there educational benefits Jesus’ miracles have a relational impact as they convey His nature in action. There is no place in scripture where we are given a better glimpse into what mercy, grace, holiness and truth looked like than in his miracles.

Here we are introduced to a man bind from birth (verse 1) not a man who had seen the beauty of Jesus creation, the faces of his loved ones but a man who had grown up without what we take for granted. But as great as this miracle is physically it pails compared to what it is spiritually as not only are his eyes opened but his heart as well and what he sees is the beauty of his creator and out the price of religion.

**II. Vs. 1-5 Words for the heart**

Vs. 1 The commentary by John in verse 1 “*Now as Jesus passed by*” does not give us any clue as to the timing of this event, it could have happened as He passed by going through the midst of the religious leaders in 8:59 or after some time. If this happened, as some think, right after Jesus walked through the crowd of religious leaders with rocks in their hands then this man was only a “*stones throw*” away from Jesus and of further interest to me is that Jesus had most likely walked by him many times with no action but this day would be different. The healing of the blind man and the events directly related to this will continue on until 10:21. It is important to get the setting of this miracle:

1. This man was born blind and as such he was a beggar according to verse 8 based upon the comments of the community in verse 9 he was well known to his fellow citizens as well as the religious community.
2. The timing of this healing again took place on the Sabbath; I mention this as it seems that this was a favorite time for Jesus to heal as He challenged the religious leader’s notion of the Sabbath.

There are several question asked in this section:

* The disciples ask **WHY**
* The neighbors and Pharisees ask **HOW**
* Only the blind man responses with **WHO**.

Vs. 2 The disciples wanted an answer to WHY this man was born blind; their conclusion was that it had to do with sin. The question they asked was whose sin was responsible for his blindness the man our his parents seeing that he was born blind and if it was the man’s sin then WHEN did it occur? There were two schools of thought in the Talmud on this and neither of them is correct:

1. Some of the Rabbis taught a person could sin inside the womb and that is how they explained birth defects. They used the story of Jacob and Esau in the womb as proof of their theory.
2. Some taught that sin could be genetic and passed on from the parents or grandparents. To this they quoted Ex. 20:5 as a proof text “*For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.*” But what this verse is saying is that if we turn our backs on our Lord there is a good chance that the next generation will reject Him as well and God won’t have a different set of books for them, sin doesn’t change despite how society may now view it. This is universally true as Adam sin was passed down to us but not specifically or personally true as there is not always a direct cause and effect in every situation.

Now back in John 5:1-15 with the fellow that had an infirmity 38 years there was a direct cause and effect to his lameness but that is not always the case in suffering it is not always directly traceable to personal sin. Jesus’ answer in verse 3 is that neither this man nor his parents are personally responsible for his condition.

His focus was not on the ***cause*** friends it is on the ***cure*** of which His earthly ministry was coming to a close. Don’t you just love that? I mean here we have the disciples trying to figure out the reason for the blindness and in so doing they are blind to the cure which is the very person they are speaking too. We can sit around discussing the cause of a condition of human suffering, look to pint a finger of blame or we can give them a hand to Jesus who can transform that which is blind to the beauty of His creation. Friends it is not all that uncommon that our spiritual eyes are opened after some thing that disables us physically or emotionally. Far to often we can fall into the “***Why***” this has happened or blaming God trap instead of asking God to use it to draw you deeper towards Him. It is interesting that so often when it relates to the problem of human suffering we want the answer to the question of why, we want to find fault with something or someone. But doing so will never bring healing, we won’t always be able to reconcile the cause with the effect further more it won’t alter the situation so Jesus tells them the main thing isn’t finding out why but it is to seek the One who will dispense mercy and compassion. The Lord is in the business of manifesting His power against the consequences of sin in a person’s life not declaring the reason for it. There is a great truth here as it relates to Jesus as well notice that it was not the man who called out to Jesus it was the Lord that went to him; “*Man’s misery always brings about God’s mercy*”.

Vs. 3-5 Their question had to do with **responsibility** for the man’s disability and Jesus’ answer was that neither the man nor his parents were responsible and most remarkable in verse 4 Jesus says “*I must work the works*”. “*I’m taking responsibility not for the cause but for the cure.*” We can be over interested in the responsibility as it relates to the reason for something but Jesus places the interest of responsibility on the cure not the cause.

 The Talmud said that certain sins resulted in certain disabilities so all his life he heard what the religious people had said that it was either his parents or himself that was the reason he was born blind. Friends I suggest to you the first miracle this blind man had happen that day was not his eyes opened but what his ears heard in response to who was responsible for his condition, “*Neither this man nor his parents*”, never had he heard such gracious words. Jesus tells His disciples that He being the “*Light of the world*” is not merely theoretical or academic it is ***practical***, He is the “Light of the world” and there before them was a man born blind in darkness and He must do what light does dispel darkness. Jesus said He need to “*work the works…while it is day*”, in other words if we try to sort the why you will lose the opportunity now.

**III. Vs. 6-12 Anointed mud**

Vs. 6-7 Notice that Jesus took the initiative He came to the blind man but the blind man still needed to respond in obedience to Jesus’ instructions. There is a prophetic significance to this miracle as well as we are told in Psalm 146:8 that “*The Lord opens the eyes of the blind*”. Further more in Isaiah 35:5 we are told that when the Messiah comes “*the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped*.” No wonder these two miracles are attributed to Jesus more often than any other recorded miracles. This miracle happened on the Sabbath day according to verse 14 and it was part of the interpretation of keeping the Sabbath that it was against the law to spit on the ground on the Sabbath as it would constitute labor seeing that you made clay. So Jesus violated the tradition of the law. Further more it was written that you could save a life but you could do nothing to cure a life thus Jesus was breaking the Sabbath in that way as well.

Now we move to the healing its self and when compared with the two other times He healed a blind man we notice not the similarities but rather the differences. In Matt. 9:27-31 Jesus healed the two blind men by touching their eyes and in Mark 8:22-26 Jesus spit and put His hands on a blind man now here in this passage He spits on the ground and makes mud and places that on his eyes and then tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. The diversity in the method would seem indicate that Jesus wanted the focus to be on the message and not the manner of healing. Truth be told we are far to happy to reduce our relationship to a method of getting what want instead of simply spending time with Jesus and I’m thankful He won’t allow that to happen. I’m fascinated with the common ingredients that Jesus used to heal this man “**dirt and spit**”. In Jeremiah 8:22

We read, “*Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people*?” Oh what strange balm this is! Two ingredients’ that we would avoid putting in our eyes is dirt and spit, isn’t it? Both are irritants, so a man born blind Jesus made a combination of things that cause irritation and then told him to go to the pool of Siloam which means “Sent”. It seems a bit odd to use the word “*anointed*” with clay made with dirt and spit doesn’t it.

 Friends don’t miss this spiritual truth as the greatest cure to spiritual blindness is irritants that cause us to have to obey the words of God to find relief from the refreshment of the Sent One. Jesus’ cure made him twice as blind, once from birth and once from mud in his eyes. Have you ever wondered about the origins of phrases like “***Here’s mud in your eye***?” According to “*Morton’s origins of toasts*” this one comes form this passage of scripture and is a saying related to what a person is about to consume may it heal you and give you clarity in life, (*interesting that the drink is usually that which will do the very opposite*). But why did Jesus use this method?

* 1. Well some have suggested that based upon the knowledge of the day that doctors believed that human saliva had healing properties though that is true Jesus being God the Son didn’t need to do so and there is no medical evidence that saliva can cure blindness.
	2. Other’s focus on the clay mentioning that this was a creative miracle not at restoring miracle and since Adam was formed out of clay that Jesus needed to start from scratch with this man’s eyes. But Jesus used multiple methods in healing blind folks so clearly the diversity would suggest that He is the cure not the method He employed.

Now go with me a minute from the perspective of the man born blind and ask yourself what you would be thinking if someone you didn’t know and couldn’t see stood before you and said, “*I am the light of the world*” then spit on the ground and put the mud in your eyes? I’ll tell you what I’d be thinking, “*Thanks a lot buddy now I’m not only blind but you’ve put mud in my eyes, you’ve’ made things worse not better*.” “*Go to the pool of Siloam? Uh may be you didn’t notice but I’m* ***B L I N D****!*” It would seem for my perspective that this would have been seen as cruelty not mercy but that is what Jesus did. Here’s where I’m going with this there have been times in my life where the Lord’s work seems to make matters worse before they get better, He puts “*Mud in our eyes*”. “*Lord I’ve been praying, crying out to you but things aren’t getting better they are getting worse*!” The Pharisees only wanted to point their fingers and say, “*Hey, there’s mud in your eyes*” and Jesus wanted to put mud in the eyes! But do you know what mud in your eyes would cause you to do without hesitation? Well it would cause you to seek out the pool of the “Sent one” right away. You wouldn’t say, “*You know your right I do need to get the mud out of my eyes but I’m young I have plenty of time and all my friends have mud in their eyes and I don’t want to be apart from my loved ones who have mud in their eyes, so I think I’ll wait!*” No, you would have stumbled your way and begged folks to take you to that pool so you could wash out the mud. So here’s the bottom line some times the Lord allows mud in your eyes so that it will be irritating you enough to want to wash out your eyes and in so doing your blindness towards the Lord will be removed as well. So why not take that which is irritating you to the water of the word and you will see Him.

Vs. 8-12 I rather think two things motivated this man to go and wash:

* The gracious words of Jesus
* The irritant in his eyes

Interestingly enough the words of grace didn’t appear to match His touch. Of further interest is that the pool of Siloam was a further distance than the pool of Bethesda where the man who had an infirmity 38 years was healed. Jesus put mud in the eyes of the blind man in order to make him see but he was also putting mud in the eyes of the Pharisees who were blind spiritually. Notice the simplicity of this Jesus came to him and then he obeyed and traveled to the pool and he received sight. And having done so every thing he saw he did so for the first time. So he went to the pool to wash out that which irritating and He came back seeing. Think of this, Jesus was “***sent***” into the world to be the light of the world and He “***sent***” this fellow who “***blindly***” had to obey and go to the pool of the sent one to receive his sight. What a lesson for the disciples with regard to human need as they were wrapped up in the “cause” of this man’s blindness instead of being concerned with the “cure” for his blindness. ***Hey Christian, may we learn this lesson that the cause is not to be our concern only the cure***! These followers needed to, (*pardon the pun*) get their eyes of themselves and onto the Lord just as much as the blind man did.

Ah but **his illumination led to a problem of identification** as four times people ask him how he was made to see. In verse 10 it is his neighbors, in verse 15 it is the Pharisees who ask him, in verse 19 the Pharisees ask his parents then in verse 26 they give him one more time to answer the how question. In the Greek it is worded he kept on saying, “*I am he*” **the guy can finally see his neighbors and now none of them recognizes him, aint that life**? Have you ever noticed that if you change the letters around in the word “***HOW***” you will spell “***WHO***”? I suggest to you that we are often misspelling the wrong question wanting to know the HOW instead of the WHO. And yet this man only answers in the WHO as he says “*a man called Jesus*.” Remember he had not seen the Lord he had only heard His voice and had no idea where He had gone.

They say, “*Where is He*?” Now he probably gave them one of those confused looks that said, “*How should I know I was blind remember*?” Hey friends there is one final observation in this section and that is to be found in verse 12 where the they ask the man, “*Where is He*” and he responds, “*I don not know*.” You see he had been given the gift of sight but had not yet seen the Giver now we shall see next week that he will have his eyes opened to this but I’m afraid that that this is a fairly common condition, may the Lord grant us the gift of not losing sight of the Giver. Over and again man kind is referred to in terms of being clay, Jeremiah says that the Lord is the potter we are the clay, play tells us that we are clay pots. Clay is common ordinary week and fragile by nature it’s one great characteristic is that it is pliable and can be shaped into anything and with that become quite useful. It is interesting that this mans sight was a process that involve a prolonged and difficult journey to the pool which was filled with obstacles. This speaks to me of the man’s determination to remove the irritation of mud that was in his eyes.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 9:13-34**

**“The Theology of transformation”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 13-23 Voices with faces**

**III. Vs. 24-34 Seeing and hearing**

**I. Intro.**

This man woke up that day like he had every other day went down to the temple to beg as he had so many days of his life. He hears the words of the disciples “*Who sinned this man or his parents*” and thinks man I’m tired of these questions. Then he hears someone spiting and then the excruciating pain of mud being placed into his eyes and the words go wash your eyes a ¼ of a mile away. Bumbling and stumbling he makes way down to the water and as he wash the mud from his eyes there is someone looking back at him and he realizes it’ his own reflection. His heard his neighbors but never saw them now he is putting voices with faces and there is a discussion if he is the same man who was blind.

Folks all of this was the same day, all of this ***commotion and confusion*** happening with in minutes of each other and remember he has just received his sight and now he is processing everything through a sense that he never had before. Then the inquiry by the Pharisees and they are blind to the miracle, **they miss the Majesty for the sake of the method**. **Unable to apprehend the work of God because it was outside the confines of their religion**, they had placed God in a box and how dare He work outside that box. I Had a fellow come once to a meeting where they did ministry out of a box and I was just filling in and didn’t know that so I planned a study out of the Word. Well one fellow got quite agitated because I wasn’t using the “BOX” after a few minuets of his distraction I calmly told him the “BOOK” beats the “BOX” apparently he didn’t agree as he walked out. So many times we are unable to function because we are blind to Jesus and have place him in a box.

**II. Vs. 13-23 Voices with faces**

Vs. 13-16 Jesus could have healed this man on any day but He chooses the Sabbath as well as the method for a particular reason and that was to challenge the theology of the Pharisees over the teaching of the Word. In Matthew 23:24 Jesus said to these religious leaders, “*Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel*!” In John 5:39

after Jesus healed the man by the pool of Bethesda He said, “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me*.” There reply was “*You can’t have been healed because it wasn’t done according to our traditions*”. Having started out with that presupposition they gave this man and his parents several options:

1. You aren’t the same man who was born blind
2. You weren’t as bad off as people thought
3. There is another explanation to your now seeing

It is only when we simple state the facts of this story that the absurdity of the Pharisees becomes clear. Here before them was a man they knew, had seen begging in front of the temple, born blind and miraculously he has been given his sight such a wondrous thing hadn’t been seen in Israel and instead of rejoicing an celebrating the grace of God they **take issue with the timing and the method of the healing**. In their way of thinking Jesus violated the word of God but in reality what He violated was not the Torah but rather the Talmud (*the authoritative body of Jewish tradition comprising the Mishnah and Gemara*).

Friends we must be careful not to take our traditions and interpretations over the Word of God as in so doing we may like the Pharisees miss the very One the scriptures speak about. **The greatest evidence of the gospel is transformed lives as there is no argument that anyone can raise but that**. The other day someone shot me a link that played on Islamic TV and there was this Arab woman who was from LA arguing with an Islamic cleric she was an agnostic not a Christian and her words were powerful as she told the cleric that the fruit of transformed lives of Christians was a more powerful argument for the validity of their religion than the terror and hatred of Islam.

Vs. 17-23 Previously all this man knew was Jesus’ name now a little time has elapsed and even though he hasn’t yet met Jesus he deduces that He must be a prophet, an instrument of God. Jesus becomes the center of controversy with some recognizing the miracle and the Pharisees trying to discredit it because Jesus didn’t do it according to their formula and this man who is seeing for the first time is being dragged into the controversy. “*So who do you say Jesus is*”, was the question. “*Well, he must be a prophet because God is using Him to cause blind eyes to see*.” The man wasn’t into the formula, the method; he was **into the cure** not the way it was accomplished. So to counter this they had to discredit the man or his affliction as there was no other way they could counteract his conclusions.

 Notice the growth in this man as in verse 11 he simply identified Jesus as **a man** now here when pressed by the religious authorities **he is a prophet**, then in verse 33 He is **from God** and finally in verse 38 **He is Lord**. These Pharisees are continually hung up on the method to the exclusion of the result aren’t they? “*How did you come see; Oh my don’t tell me He made clay on the Sabbath.*” Take a moment and realize this man had never seen his parents until that day and the religious authority are using this to attempt to drive them to deny Jesus. And with great conviction of heart and great risk he refuses to say Jesus is a sinner and if he doesn’t do what they ask of him and deny Jesus then they will kick him out of the synagogue (verse 22) which means he will be dead to his parents whom he has just seen for the first time. So he and his parents will be forced to choose a relationship with each other or one with Jesus. As being out of the synagogue meant that they were not allowed to pray, hear the teaching of the Word, fellowship with the people of God. Socially you would be treated as though you were dead by family, friends and business relations, so this was a very real threat.

He had never seen his parents **imagine the tears and hugs**, how could they deny that this man was born blind when they watched this man with his parents. I can only wonder how long this scene must have lasted. And then the questions, “*Is this your son, was he born blind, how has he been made to see*?” These religious folks wanted the parents to be blind because they simply chose not to see. Having heard what this man said about Jesus they again go back to the miracle to see if they could discredit it and bring the parent sin to interrogate them with **three questions**:

* 1. **Is this your son**? Perhaps this was the old “*bate and switch*” ploy done by Jesus to fake a healing and Jesus used a stunt double, a man who was merely impersonating the true blind man.
	2. **Who *you say* was born blind**? This question deals with sensationalizing the blind man, “*Was he truly born blind or was this just temporary blindness*?” The point here seems to suggest that perhaps his condition was not as grave as it was made out to be and that his healing was mere coincidence.
	3. **How does he now see**? The final question was an attempt to discredit the above two answers if both were in the affirmative.

In verse 22 John adds some insight to the questions when we are told that, “*His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.*” The parents answer the first two questions, ***yes*** it was their son not an imposter and ***yes*** he was born blind. To the third they pass the buck back to their son seeing he was of age to answer for him self. These parents were afraid to lose fellowship and all that met and religion was driving a wedge between these parents and their son. The parents say to the Pharisees, “*Hey fellows he can speak, he has no problem with his hearing it was his eyes that couldn’t see*.” So they told the parents right off that they had better watch what they said or they were going to be tossed. “*Well he is our boy and he was born blind, but as to how he was given sight you have to ask him*.”

There will always be folks with regard to Jesus that are on a continual quest to find reasons not to believe. Many of the questions they offer up are familiar excuses spoken with out any investigation such as “*what about the pigmy’s in Africa*”. That is what the Pharisees are doing with the miracle of the man born blind as they start with a presupposition and then try to build things around to support their view and are not above threats to do so. All that this led to was division verse 16 “*some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs*?”

**III. Vs. 24-34 Seeing and hearing**

Vs. 24-34 “*Let me remind you that you are still under oath to tell the truth*”, they say to the man. The phrase “*Give God the glory*” was like our statement “swear to God” or “*Do you swear to tell the truth the whole and nothing but the truth so help you God*” as it was a way of putting a man under oath. Then they let him know what they want him to say by saying “***We know that this Man is a sinner***” reminding him of their preconceived ideas of how they want him to answer.

When I was in Russia we were bringing in a bunch of Bibles and material to teach the inductive method of Bible study and we had all of the material on carts and each of us had been told that if anyone asked us what was in the boxes that we were to say **books** otherwise they would confiscate them. Well I was the last one to go through security and each of the 10 team members told the young men with AK7’s that the boxes were full of books. So when it was my turn to go through security I had my answer ready to say when the soldier in broken English “*What’s in the boxes and don’t say books*!” That is what these Pharisees have just done to this blind man.

I love what this man does in verse 25, “*Hey I don’t know all about your theology but I do know that this Jesus transformed my life*.” There questions in verse 26 are now on “***What*** *did He do*” and “***How*** *did He do it*” but he has already answered the most important question, the **WHO**. **Every person is the greatest authority on what the Lord has done for you** and that is what this man has testified of. This fellow has grown tired of the cross examination and says “*I’m not going to change my mind fellows are you*?” which is what is behind the sarcastic reply of verse 27 and it gets these theologians to admit in verse 29 that they don’t know something about Jesus. Friends that is what practical theology is the Lord has met us in a specific way but notice that this man is “growing in grace and knowledge” of Jesus Christ. They made their stand on their doctrine he made his stand upon ***the revelation of transformation***. “*Do you also want to become His disciple*?” “*You fellows may be able to debate all of this stuff but practical debate this, I was once blind now I see*.” And then with a tint of sarcasm, “*Why do you want me to tell the story again do you also want to follow Him*?” “*Were followers of Moses we don’t know what this Jesus is all about*”, they said. Really? Isaiah spoke three times that when the Messiah would come He would open blind eyes (29:18, 35:5, 42:7). Take a look at 29:18 where we are told, “*In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.*” I believe that this passage of scripture was fulfilled right here with this blind man who only a few minutes earlier received his sight and now is explaining scripture to the theologians. “*Your unbelief and ignorance in the face of the evidence is more of a miracle than my cure*”, the man told them in verse 30. This fellow couldn’t imagine that they didn’t know of Jesus how many people were there running around in Israel opening eyes of people born blind? These religious leaders wanted a theological debate and what they got was a lesson on practical theology. They were calling Jesus a sinner and yet He opens the eyes of a man born blind and never had that been done before and God doesn’t hear sinner’s only worshippers and those that do God’s will therefore he deduced He must not be a sinner and He must be right with God. How ironic to this man in light of the fact that his whole life all people seemed to care about was who was responsible for his blindness now all people cared about was who was responsible for his sight. For the first time he could see the angry faces staring at him asking him over and over who was responsible for his sight.

They claimed that Jesus was a sinner and yet this man quoted to them that clearly God heard Jesus therefore He must not be a sinner is turning their logic back around on them. “*God does not co-labor with a man who practices sin*”, the man says. No matter what Jesus would do for hurting, suffering souls He was nothing but a Sabbath breaker to the Pharisees. Never mind the laws that they were breaking by the hatred in their hearts towards them. There are no doubt many here this day that could stand up as this man and speak of transformation by the hands of Jesus. Paul would write to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 2:2 Saying, “*I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*.” I’m not resting upon someone’s opinion I’ve personally encounter the Lord who transformed my life. “*If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing*”, thus he put an end to the discussion.

How could they debate the logic? Only by going back to name calling as they had closed their hearts to the truth and then they excommunicated him and cut him off from social and religious life making him an outcast. With this they “*put him down*” and then “*put him out*” but being down and out of religion was a great thing as it led him to into Jesus. To a man who was born blind but now he sees they kick him out of ever seeing the temple again, ever seeing his parents and friends again. This won’t be the last of it when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, brings him out of the tomb after 4 days the Pharisees can’t stand for this it’s bad theology so they plan on killing the man who was dead but is now alive. Ah but at verse 35 and John’s words as it says that “*When Jesus heard that they cast him out; He…found him”,* friends that is always what we will see Jesus doing gathering the outcasts.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**c. 7:1-9:41 New light (Second truth 8:12)**

**John 9:35-41**

**“The Eyes’ of the Word”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 35-38 Losing religion**

**III. Vs. 39-41 A home without a fence**

**I. Intro.**

There stood this man cast out of religion abandoned because he dared to speak the truth concerning his healing. This man who had been given his sight was now being driven from seeing, oh the morbid irony of this. Then walks up to him a face that he didn’t recognize but a voice that he had heard say the most wonderful words, “*Neither this man nor his parents have sinned*”. He knew he was a controversial Rabbi, but also knew that when all others debated the responsibility of the cause of his blindness only this voice took responsibility for the cure, that is what he defended passionately at all costs before the Pharisees. These Pharisees cast this man out but in so doing they were casting him right into the arms of Jesus. Friends we have nothing to fear from being cast out of religion, put out of the fellowship of the world for in so doing they place right into the arms of the man from Galilee!

**II. Vs. 35-38 Losing religion**

Vs. 35-36 We conclude the story of the healing of the man born blind with his 2nd encounter with Jesus and then next week Jesus will teach on shepherding. First thing we notice is that Jesus waited until He had heard that the man had been cast out until He found him. I remark on this on two points:

1. **The timing**: I find it interesting that Jesus after having put the clay in his eyes left him to find his own way to the pool of Siloam but once his eyes were open found him. I suggest that the Lord allows irritants in our lives to drive us to obedience without hesitation but once there is obedience He immediately finds us and invites us into a relationship. Also of note is that this occurred after he had been let go of religion. I suppose that most people would call themselves “*religious*” and by that they mean to say that they have some degree of spiritual consciousness albeit not always practiced. **But all of religion boiled down to the basics is just man’s thoughts of his own goodness and self importance in an attempt to appease the uncertainty of what lies beyond this life**. Now again back to the timing of this as it wasn’t until this man was cast out of religion that Jesus came to him, cast out of his own goodness and self importance. Friends, there was a song by R.E.M. that repeated the phrase “*Losing my religion*” and in this case it was absolutely imperative that he did so before he was found by Jesus.
2. **The pursuit**: The second thought I have has to do with the four word commentary by John that says, “*When He found him*”. Notice that the “***He***” is capitalized not the “*him*” which tells us that it was Jesus who found the man not the other way around. It is clear that the man wanted Jesus as he had already asked sarcastically if the Pharisees “**ALSO**” wanted to become one of His followers, which is a clear indication of his intent to follow the Person who had set him free from his blindness. One of the fascinating parts of this story is that this man refused to walk away from the confession of Jesus whom he had not seen even if it cost him his family. **The cost of his confession was everything he had just acquired by the blessing of the miracle**. Clearly he valued the person of Christ more then the work of Christ else he may have thought the cost to great. As true as it is that this man was willing to follow Jesus it still pails when compared to the pursuit of Jesus for this man. When someone has done something for you, without expectation of anything in return there is at very least an attitude of appreciation but this man had done nothing for Jesus and yet Jesus pursued him, sought him out. The fact is I can never out love our Lord, try as I might to be devoted to Him is will always be more devoted to me.

There was a clear teaching in (Isa. 9:6) at that time in the deity of the Messiah which is what Jesus is asking this man in verse 35. Jesus’ inquiry asked the man, “*Do you believe in the Son of God*?” There are versions that say “Son of Man” but both are Messianic claims and Jesus is asking him if he has put his trust in and upon the Messiah. So the man says, “*Who is He, Lord that I may believe in Him*?” Again we note the progressive revelation of this man’s understanding of the person and work of Jesus in his case it all took place within a few minutes but only after he had an encounter with the Lord but in the end led to the worship of Him as God. This man knew Jesus’ voice but had never seen His face and though he was about to realize that he was face to face with the living God. You have heard that old saying “*seeing is believing*” **notice that it was what he saw that provoked his trust it was what he heard**, ah as Romans 10:17 says, “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” The reason for Jesus’ coming was salvation as stated to Nicodemus in John 3:16-17 but the result of rejecting this was judgment.

Vs. 37-38 There weren’t that many folks whom this man had seen and now what he heard matched what had seen. Never again in this life will this man’s eyes behold anything as beautiful as what they saw when Jesus spoke to him and he responded by trusting Jesus and worshipping Jesus. In John 10:27 Jesus said, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*” Then after Jesus spoke with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus then disappeared they said in verse 32 “*Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us*?”

Folks, I anticipate a moment like this when we who have been touched by Jesus will gaze for the first time into those eyes of the voice of the Word whom we know full well. Now notice his simple verbal response followed by action “*Lord, I believe*! *And he worshipped Him*!” Now based upon this passage he did so in front of the very ones who had cast him out and away from his parents and friends. There is such beauty in this man’s action especially in light of the sacrifice he was willing to make.

He had gone through the inquisition of the Pharisees and now this voice that he knew asked yet another question but not about how he had come to see, no this was a theological question, “*Do you believe in the Son of God*?” Oh how he must have studied Jesus face, looking deep into His eyes to detect the purpose of the question. I think that is why he responded the way he does, “*Who is He, Lord, that I may believe*?” “*I’ll believe in anyone You tell me too*”, he said to Jesus. The fact that he responded with the words “*Who is He*” indicates that there was nothing in Jesus tone or facial gestures that may an indication that it was Himself that He was speaking of. Then the phrase, “*Sir, that I may believe*” tells me that Jesus’ theology and was ready to commit to the person who Jesus identified as the Messiah. Now follow me on this Jesus **works** spoke before His **words**, this fellow was ready to follow the words because they proceeded by the works. Simply put Jesus theology was ***visible*** (and this with a blind man) before ***audible*** and if we Christians would practice this form of outreach we would have far greater success.

Then the words he did not expect to hear “*You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you*!” This man hadn’t seen all that many people but he had seen Jesus before his eyes were opened and he does what anyone would do and that is worship Jesus. He started the day a poor blind beggar and he ended the seeing and worshipping the Savior.

 The word “worship” here only occurs three times in John chapter 4 and 12 then here where it used it **always speaks of the heart’s surrender to God**. Now only God is to be worshipped and here this man shows his belief that Jesus is the Messiah by his worship. His encounter with Jesus has left him wanting more and if there is one greater than Jesus he was willing to follow him. I rather think that Jesus reveals to us what we are to do as a witness for Him and that is behave and act in ways that cause people to want who we represent. In the final analysis it was not that religion cast out a man but that a man who had been transformed by the Son of God had cast out religion. They cast him out and one wonders if he went straight to the temple to get a good look at it as he had never seen it before. How unfortunate it is that it’s often the religious system that keeps people blind.

**III. Vs. 39-41 A home without a fence**

Vs. 39-41 Now Jesus’ words turn from the man who was at His feet worshipping to those whose theology was dividing and has some words for them. The word for “*judgment*” is only found here in John and it comes from two words “***sift***” and “***separate***” thus Jesus says that His actions towards this man has sifted them and their response has separated them from fellowship just as they had separated the man from fellowship. In the third chapter Jesus had said to Nicodemus that He had not come into the world to judge the world but here He for judgment He has come but there is no contradiction as the word for “*judgment*” describes a **result** not an **action**. So the result of their rejection of Jesus was judgment it was their action that caused this not His. The reason for this Jesus explained was that they claimed to see but chose not too. Then Jesus charges them with willful rejection with knowing Who He is but choosing to turn away from seeing Him. e HH

Jesus draws the parallel between the physically blind and the spiritually blind as neither of them can see. The difference is that if you are physically blind your inability to see isn’t your fault but if you are spiritually blind and choose to stay that way then it is your fault. The cause of their blindness Jesus describes in verse 41 as, “you say we see” simple put pride and self-righteousness kept them in at state of blindness and sin. They would have been better off if their blindness was caused by **ignorance** rather than **arrogance** because ignorance can be cured by information where as it takes a change of heart to correct than arrogance. As the “Light of the World” the only ones that couldn’t see Him where those who refused to look. Think of this the man born blind cam to see and those who could see were blind. Folks it is easier for the Jesus to change blind eyes then it is for Him to work with prideful hearts. They saw the miraculous change in the blind man but denied it.

There are far too many folks like these Pharisees who were willing to kick a man out of the house all because of their own prejudices. The Lord has been dealing with me lately along these lines as **I believe it is important that before we tear down a persons house we need to build them a new one and invite them to live in it**. That is what Jesus did for this man He built him a house right next to the where he had been living his whole life and when the Pharisees kicked him out Jesus invited to come home to live. **It is far too easy for me at times as a pastor to be more concerned with my fences then with the house!** The Pharisees couldn’t see the house for the sake of the fences they had set up and they were endanger of judgment. There are three things that blinded the Pharisees and kept them blind:

1. **Tradition**: Being so set on the method that it becomes the object of worship instead of what it was intended.
2. **Prejudice**: Here the pride is not upon what has been done but rather on the way we think it is to be done.
3. **Pre-conceived ideas**: Finally, having already made up ones mind on something with our ever investigating it personally.

The common denominator with all three of these things is pride and a lack of a teachable heart. Jesus describes the failure of mankind when He says, “*that those who do not see may see, and those who see may be made blind.*” Jesus is not come to be the theological police He has come to be the spiritual paramedic. There is within all human the propensity of over inflating our own significance as we forget that our frame is but dust. Allow me to quote to you a word for Ray Stedman: “*When we are reading the Scriptures we ought to recognize how desperately we are in need of being taught of God. He is able to open our eyes if we admit we do not see. But if we think we know, and we are confident that we do not need any help, then we are stumbling on into blindness*.” Henry Van Dyke wrote a wonderful poetic prayer that says:

Grant us the knowledge that we need
To solve the questions of the mind.

Light our candles while we read,
Keep our hearts from going blind.

Enlarge our vision to behold
The wonders You have done of old!

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**1. 10:7 Gate of life**

**John 10:1-10**

**“The living door”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-6 No more stranger in the night**

**III. Vs. 7-10 One way, all welcome**

**I. Intro.**

The 9th chapter ended with a once blind man being kicked out of the Jewish religious system by blind religious leaders and being found and brought into a new relationship with Jesus. Here in this chapter Jesus explains what has taken place by using a familiar parable of sheep and shepherds as He has taken in that which has been cast out. In response to the Pharisees words in 9:40 “*Are we blind also*” Jesus first defined their blindness saying that it was based upon their **arrogance** not their **ignorance** now in chapter 10 He launches into three declarations about Himself which should leave no doubt as to whom He is as well as who they were.

1. Vs. 1-10 I am the door (verse 9) – they were thieves and robbers

2. Vs. 11-21 I am the good shepherd (verse 11) – they were hirelings

3. Vs. 22-42 I am the Son of God (verse 36) – they were blasphemers

Doesn’t Jesus taking in this once blind man remind you of David the “Shepherd king” who in 1 Samuel 22 was held up in the cave of Adullam (refuge) and all the “***put out, bummed out and stressed out***” came to him? Oh my friends I rather think that the “***Good Shepherd***” is always about gathering those who are in need of “Refuge” the misfits of life who no one wants. I’m so grateful that out Lord gathers that which this world and religion discards.

**II. Vs. 1-6 No more stranger in the night**

Vs. 1-6 In the first six verses of this chapter Jesus gives and illustration or parable and it would have been one familiar to all whom heard it. It was Homer who said, “*All kings are shepherds of the people*”, and his authority over the sheep is based upon his care of them. Three facts are important to realize before we get started:

* 1. First Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees
	2. Second, that He did so using the parabolic method. Jesus never employed the parabolic method of teaching to keep folks from truth but rather to illicit a response so as such again we see Jesus trying to reach those who don’t want anything to do with Him.
	3. Finally, in Isaiah 40:10-11 we are told, “*Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young*.” Clearly God saw Himself as the shepherd over the flock of Israel.

It is an interesting note that Jesus words about sheep and shepherds follow on the heels of the Pharisees excommunication of the man who was blind. The point being that it is not what a person says or the titles they hold that indicate they are a true shepherd but rather their care of the sheep. Now in light of that I’m sure most sheep would be totally unaware of all the details of what went into a shepherd’s day and not everything that he would do would be understood or appreciated “as sheep will be sheep”. The responsibility of the shepherded was to care for the sheep regardless of what the sheep thought of him. I read with fresh eyes the most common of psalms the 23rd and in between the stances are these remarkable claims from a sheep called David:

* **I shall not want**
* **I will fear no evil**
* **My cup runs over**
* **I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever**

Ah but when you fill in the blanks those amazing statements are thrown next to the sheep’s David’s experience:

* **HE makes to lie down in green pasture**: I rather doubt that every time David was made to lie down he wanted to. Or every time he was led by still waters, by the paths of righteousness it was the direction as a sheep he wanted.
* **Though I walk through the valley of death**: I’m certain that this was not a pleasant experience, nor was the rod and staff of correction always seen as a comfort.
* **Preparing a table before me in the presence of my enemies**: Sheep are skittish creatures and I’m thinking eating in front of a pack of wolves or lions would not have been easy to digest (pardon the pun). The sheep David is looking back at the benefits of having the Lord as his shepherd and only then does he fully understand the Lords care of him.

Here Jesus builds his teaching around figures that are taken from the life of a shepherd and in so doing He is setting himself apart as the True Shepherd of the sheep in contrast to the false shepherds of the religious leaders. In the East, shepherds brought their flocks into one central sheepfold every evening where half-a-dozen flocks gathered together and were guarded by a porter or gatekeeper behind locked doors. In the morning the shepherds returned and each called his own sheep. Although the flocks had been mingled together, each flock knew its own shepherd's voice, and each would follow its own shepherd and no other. This is the picture our Lord uses with regard to the encounter between the man who had been born blind and the false shepherds, the Pharisees.

First Jesus shares the marks of the True Shepherd of the sheep. The chief difference between a true shepherd and a hireling has to do according verse 15 the willingness to lay down ones life for the benefit of the sheep in his care. You see a hireling sacrifices the sheep for his life while the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. Jesus came to give not take and that is always the standard one can measure them by. Jesus said in Matthew 20:28 that the “*Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*.” But here Jesus in this parable mentions three marks of why He was a true shepherd:

1. **Prophesied** Vs. 1-2 “*He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep*.” By “the door” Jesus is referring to the normal, proper entrance to a sheepfold. There is the proper entrance to church and none of you came in here by way of the window this morning! The prophets had predicted the way the Shepherd would come to the sheep. They had foretold where he would be born of a virgin, they had said where He would be born etc. This is what Jesus means by this phrase that He came the predicted way.
2. **Proclaimed** Vs. 3a “*To him the doorkeeper opens*.” I believe that the “*doorkeeper*” is John the Baptist. He opened the door as the prophet said he would “*the voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord*” (John 1:23). Then as the apostle John recorded the Baptist identified Jesus by saying, “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29) So only to that Lamb did “*the doorkeeper opened.*”
3. **Preached** Vs. 3b “*The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*” Clearly Jesus implies that that His sheep would recognize his voice and there are **four things that would cause His voice to be recognizable**.
	1. **Personal** Vs. 3a “*He calls His own sheep by name*”. Every encounter with Jesus in this gospel is on a **personal basis**. In each of these encounters He met the individual personally, alone. Through out all the centuries since, every believer who has come to Jesus has come alone. Jesus never takes a group in at once. It is always you and he alone.
	2. **Instructional** Vs. 3b “*and leads them out*”. This is the same phrase that is used in Chapter 9 of the man who was born blind when the Pharisees “*cast him out*” of the synagogue. Jesus is saying that, He led that man out of the false teaching which they had used to keep him in spiritual blindness. Folks, when Jesus calls, us He leads us out of the blindness and darkness of the world.
	3. **Practical** Vs. 4a “*He goes before them*”. When He leads you out He does not leave you alone; he has already gone ahead of you. In every situation you have to face He has been there first. What a beautiful picture that is! The Shepherd goes before us in the words of David in the 23rd Psalm, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me.” (Psalms 23:4).
	4. **Relational** Vs. 4b “*the sheep follow him, for they know his voice*”. Finally, there is never with Jesus any mixed messages, no confusion or indecision as we have a relationship with Him and know His voice.

Notice that it says that He calls us leads us and then He goes before us all before the fact that we follow Him. Every good shepherd had a personal connection with his sheep, they were by and large loaners who spent a great amount of time away from people and the sheep became their companions one in which they would lay down their lives for the sheep, place themselves at the entrance becoming the door by which all must enter and exit. It was this constant care and constant presence around the sheep that caused the sheep to trust the shepherd be following his lead and knowing his voice. In Mark 6:34 we are told that “*Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things*.” Every shepherd had a distinct call that only their sheep responded to thus there was no problem each day in separating the sheep. Notice that Jesus says that each shepherd would call his sheep and then lead them out; you see sheep could never be driven or frightened into obedience they only could be called and led. So to with Jesus as He never beats us He calls and leads us, I find that comforting don’t you? When ever a stranger would enter that sheepfold the sheep would scatter trying to escape.

Isn’t interesting that Jesus had just spoke about how His sheep know His voice and follow Him but in no means follow the voice of a stranger and then John adds his commit that the Pharisees didn’t understand the thing which Jesus had just spoke, they walked right into the very illustration Jesus had just employed and didn’t know it.

**III. Vs. 7-10 One way, all welcome**

Vs. 7-10 Notice Jesus demonstrates this principal in verse 7 as John tells us that “*Jesus said to them again*” He didn’t yell at them call them names; instead He just spoke to them again. Our Lord just keeps repeating Himself, saying the same thing different ways giving every opportunity to cause those who are hard hearted an opportunity to respond.

That is why John tells us in verse 6 Jesus changed the parable a little becoming the “***door***” of the sheep. Twice in two verses Jesus refers to Himself as “the door” and by saying this He is saying that He alone is the entrance to flock of God and that the religious leaders had no right to toss the blind man out.

This is a picture taken from the time when the shepherd would lead his flock out of the sheepfold to the hillside where they grazed through the morning hours, and then in the early afternoon he would provide a temporary shelter built of shrubs where they can rest. This is a corral-type structure within which the sheep can lay, protected from wild beasts, and it has an opening across which the shepherd himself lies so that the sheep cannot go in or out without crossing over him, to get to the sheep whoever they may be would have to go through the Shepherd.

This figure indicates a further ministry of the Lord. Having called the sheep to come to him, and having led them out, the shepherd stood guard over the sheep and was the only door thus making sure that they could be at rest. The Pharisees, to whom Jesus identifies as “*thieves and robbers*” had ripped off the sheep by manipulating the truth. In the case of the man born blind they had robbed him of the true meaning of the Sabbath.

In verse 9 Jesus says, you will “*go in and out and find pasture*” and I think there are three wonderful truths here:

* 1. To “***go in***” speaks of always having **security** and peace.
	2. But when Jesus speaks of “***going out***” that suggests having **liberty**. Jesus himself said to his disciples, “*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.*” Does that not sound like life in general? There are wolves there ready to snap at us, chew us up, and spit us out. Ah but there is One who will go with you, the Good Shepherd who will never leave us and no one will be able to snatch us out of His hand (verse 28). So **with Jesus as our Shepherd we have both security and liberty**.
	3. Finally Jesus says, “*You will find pasture*”, the promise is that which nourishes us, food for the soul, for the mind, for the heart. What kind of pasture is this? Well Jesus said, “*I have come that they may have life, and they may have it more abundantly.*” Did you get that dear saint? “Abundant life”! Not just surviving, hanging in there living from day to day, but **a life filled with joy and peace and love**.

Those are the three great provisions, the daily elements of our inheritance in Jesus. Yes a life filled with excitement and adventure but in the container of joy, peace and love. Hey did you notice the difference between what Jesus does compared to what the Pharisees were doing and that is that they were kick the sheep out while Jesus was into leading them in? Now once they are in they have the freedom to go in and out through the door and find pasture. We know Jesus is referring to the religious leaders of His time as He say’s they “*are thieves*” not were thieves. Like what Ezekiel spoke of they were not true Shepherds as they were there only to “*eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings*”. Where as Jesus was there to love the sheep not ask who was responsible for the cause but take responsibility for the cure.

Jesus didn’t say He was “A” door but “THE” door and everyone else is a thief? If you read what the other so called ways to God said about themselves you will notice that at best they claimed only to be “A” way only Jesus claimed to be “THE” way. I’ve personally found that to be true as I’ve true other door’s only to find out that they were a rip off. Notice the use of the word in verse 9 “*if anyone enters by Me, he will be saved*”, Jesus is exclusive “THE DOOR” the only entrance and exit but that entrance is available so that anyone can come.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**2. 10:11 Guide of life**

**John 10:11-21**

**“The Good Shepherd”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 11-18 Four things that makes the shepherd good**

**III. Vs. 19-21The door that divides**

**I. Intro.**

This is yet another of Jesus’ “I AM” statements and again He stays in the realm of sheep and shepherding. It is important to note that this is being said to Pharisees who were antagonistic towards Him and yet Jesus is still demonstrating the care of a true shepherd in contrast to what they were in as much as His care of them was not predicated upon their liking Him. He will describe the type of shepherd He is in this section saying that He is the “*Good*” shepherd compared to the hireling. The word “*Good*” in the Greek it is the word “*beautiful*” and literally this phrase reads “*I am the shepherd, the good one*”, Jesus tells these would-be shepherds that He alone is the standard by which all others who care for the flock of God must imitate. Further more by the use of the word “good” Jesus is again making reference to the fact that He is God something that will be brought out clearly in verse 31-33. Jewish shepherds did not tend the sheep in order to slaughter them, unless they were temple sheep which were used for the sacrifice. Instead these sheep were kept to give wool, milk, and lambs, that is to say that they were kept that they would be fruitful. That is our Shepherds heart towards us that we would be fruitful and He has given His life for this.

**II. Vs. 11-18 Four things that makes the shepherd good**

**In these verses Jesus gives us four specific things that make His care for His sheep “Good”**.

1. Vs. 11-13 **He lays down His life for the sheep**: Five times in this section Jesus speaks of His death on behalf of His sheep.
	1. What makes this more remarkable is that it is the sacrifice of the greater on behalf of the lesser. And He did so not as a martyr, killed by men but as a substitute, willingly laying down His life for us. Jesus contrasted His care for the sheep with that of the hireling who only cares for the sheep because they are paid to do so. With the hireling Jesus says, “*When the going gets tough, the though get going*!” Jesus purchased us at the cost of His own blood, so we are precious to Him, the hireling as no real interest other than what he can get out of the sheep. The “*Good Shepherd*”, Jesus says loves unto death for the sheep as He is willing to lay down His life for them. That fact was something that the first disciples could never get over and I pray that it is something that we never get over His great love for us. Peter said in Peter said in 1 Peter 2:24, “*He bore our sins in his own body on the tree*”. What a contrast to the false shepherds whose only interest in the sheep is what they can get out of the sheep and the moment the sheep are under attack they take off.
	2. The second point with regards to this is that the truth of the gospel is not based upon what Jesus will do for you my friend but rather on what He has already done for you. Consider the words of Paul in Romans 5:8 where he proclaims that “*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*.” **Friends we can be certain of God’s intensions towards us in the present and the future because of what He has already demonstrated in the past before we knew God or desired to follow Him**.
	3. Jesus alone is the standard of what is “good” everything and everyone must be interpreted through the lens of His grace and goodness. In most cases the shepherd of the sheep was either the owner or the owner’s son but if the family was wealthy enough they would hire someone but they didn’t have the same care for the sheep. It’s kind of the way home owners treat the house way different then renters do, as they say it’s not their house. The prophet Amos in 3:12 speaks of the need for a hireling to produce a leg or two and piece of the ear if a lion attacked one of the lambs, as it was too easy for them to say that the lamb had bee taken so they needed to produce proof. Ah but when Jesus says in verse 11 “*The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep*” He is speaking of His willing death for the sheep but when He says in verse 15 “*I lay down My life for the sheep*” He is saying much more He is saying that He is laying down His life for their disposal, that they may share in His life fully.
2. Vs. 14-15 **He knows His sheep**: The Greek word for “*know*” here means more than an intellectual knowledge it speaks of relational knowledge. So when Jesus says He knows His sheep and is known by His sheep He is speaking of having a relationship with them. The shepherds in that day did not view their time with the sheep as a job or occupation but rather they saw the sheep as their family. You may recall that David in 1 Samuel 17 described his care for the sheep of his father that when a lion or bear came and took a lamb from the flock he went out and struck the lion or bear and delivered the lamb. What this indicates is that the shepherd viewed the lambs as they were his family. There are three things the “Good Shepherd” knows about each of us:
	1. ***Personally***: The Lord knows our **names**, and as we already noted that speaks to the fact that we are not a number to him but personally known.
	2. ***Specifically***: He also knows our **natures** and doesn’t assume things based upon all of mankind sense He formed each of He knows just how we are wired our distinct personalities as no two are exactly alike. What this means is that He knows best how to care for each one of us specifically as well as personally.
	3. ***Uniquely***: Finally, the Lord knows each of His sheep’s **needs**. Most likely we know our self’s better than anyone else but I believe that the Lord knows me even better than myself because often what I thought I needed was not what He knew I needed.

Jesus says, “*I know My sheep, and am Known by My sheep*.” What wonderful comforting words for His sheep. Perhaps we feel alone in our situation as a sheep, “*Oh there is none of the other sheep who suffer as I*!” And though that may be true when compared to other sheep it can not be said with regard to the Good Shepherd, He knows our struggles and disappointments He is acquainted with all our griefs. There is an old poem that says: “*If in thy path some thorns are found, Oh, think who bore them on His brow! If grief thy sorrowing heart hath found, it reached a holier one than thou*.” Because of those three truths we want to know our Shepherd better by listening to His voice and follow him where ever He goes. In Rev. 14:4 the 144,000 Jewish evangelists in the tribulation period are described as those who “*follow the Lamb wherever He goes*.” There is no greater definition that I know of to describe what in means to be a follower of Jesus than this. Hey did you know that the title “*pastor*” is the Greek word for shepherd and as such it is a calling not something that can be assumed by a degree. You see a hireling believes the flock exists for his benefit, ah but the “Good Shepherd” lives and dies for the good of the sheep. Hey folks the sheep dogs who care for the sheep ought to exhibit the same characteristics.

1. Vs. 16 **He knows how to gather sheep**: Jesus says, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold” In the 17th chapter Jesus well pray and say in verse 20, “*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word*”. So in Jesus’ prayer He’s praying for you and me as well. The “*fold*” here is Judaism and the other sheep mentioned here is that of the gentiles, you and me. During Jesus’ earthly ministry Jesus gathered mainly from the Jewish fold but after Pentecost the gathering took on a mainly gentile bent. But we shouldn’t think that there are two flocks as Jesus plainly says here that there is only one flock (the people of God) with one shepherd, Jesus. Jesus spoke of His heart towards this when He told Nicodemus in John 3:16 “*For God so loved the world*”, **the world** not just the Jews or certain people but all people that is why He gave His only begotten Son. One of the things that amaze me about these verses is to realize how much larger our Shepherd’s flock is then perhaps we may be comfortable with. Now though it is true that all that are part of His flock must hear His voice not the voice of a stranger yet with that said what if the way in which they hear what He has said concerning what He has said differs from the way we have heard Him say something to us? I’m speaking with regards to the nonessentials of the faith but oft times we feel the need to be divisive and not hang out with those who don’t see everything the way we see it. Ah with out Lord their will be unity, yeh we may disagree but let’s do so agreeably and recognize the fact that at some point all of us are going to get our theology straightened out a bit. Some folks wonder why we don’t chase after people when they leave to go to another church well the truth is if they go to another fellowship then they haven’t left the Church they are still apart of His church and He is still their Good Shepherd all I had was the privilege of being their sheepdog for awhile. The author of Hebrews wrote in 13:20-21 “*Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*” The laying down of His life broke down the walls that kept the gentiles outside of the covenant relationship with God.
2. Vs. 17-18 **He knows how to recover that which was lost**: *Specifically* Jesus is speaking of His voluntary sacrifice for His sheep and His resurrection but *practically* this speaks to my heart about our Good Shepherds ability to recover that which was completely and hopelessly lost. There have been many folks who have selfishly taken their own lives and there have been some who heroically have laid down their lives to save others but never has there been anyone other than Jesus who has heroically laid down His life for others and than been able to recover His life. Perhaps there is a portion of your life lost, you have given up on ever seeing it again my friend if you belong to the Good Shepherd then you belong to the very One who has proven that He can recover that which was lost by demonstrating in His own death and resurrection. Jesus laid down His life that we might have life; the Good Shepherd became a sheep so that we might know the Shepherd. In the O.T. if you had a needed a touch from God you would bring a lamb before the priests who would carefully inspect the lamb for defect and they kill the lamb on your behalf. You see it was the innocent lamb that would be judged so that the guilty wouldn’t be. The Lord is my Shepherd because the Lord became my Lamb; He was wounded for my iniquities, my sin and failure was placed upon Him, I live because He died! That is what the N.C. is He died that I might live now I chose to die to my self centered ways that He might live through me. Notice as well that no one took Jesus life He laid it down and He raised it up, many anti-Semites have said that the Jews are Christ killers but the truth is that we all our sins were placed upon Him but He laid down His life no one took it from Him.

**III. Vs. 19-21 The door that divides**

Vs. 19-21 Finally we move to two responses to Jesus Illustration:

1. The first declared He had a demon and as such they blasphemed Him. These folks chose to not enter in to through the “Door” and enjoy the benefits of a life under the care of the Good Shepherd.
2. The other response was they weighed the Good Shepherds words with His works and said that He was not a man who spoke or acted as if He was under the influence of a demon.

Now, though they didn’t agree with the first observation neither did they come to trust in the Good shepherd. Folk’s do you realize that all a person has to do to spend eternity apart from the Living God is to do nothing? To make no decision for Jesus is making a decision. Jesus had already declared that He was the “Door” well you all know what a door does it causes a “division” between those who are on one side and those who are on the other those who are on the inside of the sheep fold and those who are on the out. Someone well said that, “*Either Jesus was an ego-maniac madman, or he was the Son of God." By what we know of Jesus, is if fair to say that He was a madman*?” His words and deeds would not be consistent with an ego-maniac. I saw a documentary the other day and it was one the use of hate crimes legislation to stifle freedom of religion and it is aimed at Christianity primarily by the homosexual groups. Why do they do so? Because Jesus message of love is divisive as He says certain sin separates us but His laying down of His life demonstrates His love for all.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**3. 11:25 Giver of life**

**John 10:22-42**

**“Will the real Jesus please stand up”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 22-30 The plain truth**

**III. Vs. 31-42 I am who I say I am**

**I. Intro.**

There was a T.V. game show that ran for 17 years from 1950-1967 called “*What’s My Line*”. The just of the game was that the announcer would tell the story of the featured guest and then several folks would come on the stage and only one was the real person the others just pretended to be. The celebrity panel would then ask question of the quests that would try to ascertain who the real person was at the end of the show the host would then say, “*Will the real\_\_\_\_\_ please stand up*”. It appears to me that this game show is much like what the religious leaders are doing with Jesus in this section. The Jews quite literally hemmed Him in that He would not escape their inquiry. Their question is also an indictment that He had not been forthright with regards to His calling, they were saying to Him that He had been vague concerning whether or not He was the long awaited Messiah. The truth was He had been plain as to being the Messiah but that His interpretation of that office didn’t match theirs. Even John the Baptist had struggled with this in Matthew 11:3 when he asked “*Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another*?” One can only imagine what this was like for our Lord Jesus when people’s perceptions of who the Messiah would be were not biblical and because of this they wouldn’t recognize Him not because of the works but because the words He spoke concerning the office didn’t match theirs.

There are very few instances where Jesus came right out and declared who He was, there was the women at the well who spoke of when the Messiah would come and Jesus replied “*I who speak to you am He*!” Then there was that time in Matthew 16:16 where Jesus was questioning His disciples as to His identity and Peter answered and said, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*.” What is interesting about Peter’s statement is that it appears to have been a cumulative response by that I mean there is never a recorded time in the scriptures where Jesus came right out and told them who He was thus making Peter’s statement one that came by way of observation over time. My point in taking you to this? Only that **Jesus demonstrates His identity far more than He merely states it**. The psalmist makes just such and invitation to all in Psalm 34:8 when he says, “*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*”

**II. Vs. 22-30 The plain truth**

Vs. 21-24 The Feast of Dedication could be observed anywhere and so John mentions that Jesus observed in Jerusalem. The feast was not one that was instituted by the Word of God but rather by events. The “*Feast of Dedication*” is better known today as the “*Feast of lights*” or “*Hanukkah*” and it commemorates the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 164 B.C. after it had been desecrated by the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes predecessor of Alexander the Great. It is into this holiday that Jesus speaks again to the religious leaders that He had been dedicated (verse 36) by the Father and sent into the world and yet they were desecrating Him by blaspheming Him. Based upon Luke 10:1-13:21 Jesus had spent the three months between these two feasts in Judea and now He again walks into the temple into the area of Solomon’s porch and is surround by the religious Jews. There are two very interesting points with regards to the timing of this event:

1. Folks There was considerable time (three months) that has passed between verse 21 and verse 22 from late September just after the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2) to early December (this year starting on December 4th) and the Feast of Dedication (10:22). Which means that when John wrote this some 70 years later he placed them together based upon the Jesus’ use of the illustration and not because they happened right after each other. The point of bringing this up is that upon 70 years of reflection John sees Jesus words and works linked together transcending events and time as our Lord stitched together that which only upon reflection of the whole became clear.
2. Further more based upon this elapsed time it indicates that these religious leaders are still stung by Jesus’ words concerning Him being the shepherd, the good one and they being the hireling. Literally in the Greek they ask Jesus, “*How long do you hold our soul up*?” “*If you are the Christ, the Messiah just tell us*”. The request seems reasonable enough except when we realize that three months earlier when asked in 8:25 “Who are you” Jesus said, “Just what I’ve been saying to you from the beginning”. The request was more in line with, “*Tell us what we want to hear or we will kill you*!” When finally at His trial Jesus will tell them plainly they will convict Him of blasphemy and turn Him over to the Romans to be crucified.

Vs. 25-26 Jesus makes it clear that there were three reasons for their persistent unbelief:

1. Vs. 25a “*I told you, and you don not believe*”: The first thing Jesus tells them is that **the reason for their unbelief is not because of lack of information**! They asked Him, “*If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly*.” To which He replied, “*I told you.*” What He had not done in so many words He had done in so many works, “*The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me.*” Isaiah had said that when the Messiah came those who were deaf would hear, the eyes of the blind would be opened, the lame would walk (Isaiah 35). Now I realize that it’s a difficult thing it is to convince people when you do not look like what they expect! That is the problem Jesus had they had presuppositions as to what they thought the Messiah would be like and Jesus didn’t fit their mold.
2. Vs. 25b “*The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me*”: Next Jesus pointed out that **they had rejected the evidence he gave.** He was referring to the wonderful works of healing which he had done to fulfill the word of the prophet Isaiah. Why did they not believe him? Because, as they read the Scriptures, they selected the evidence they wanted to believe and left the rest. Friends there are many today who are a lot like this as they chose to select the evidence to their liking and are not open to all the evidence.
3. Vs. 26 “*You do not believe, because you are not of My sheep*”: Finally Jesus came to the real reason they didn’t believe, “***You have never come to me. You have never got close. You have never really found out who I am. You have never asked me to do anything in your life. You have no personal testimony of what I can do. You have not been part of my sheep*.**” This is the reason why many people never find God.

In Proverbs 26:4-5 there is a seeming contradiction as Solomon wrote, “*Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes*.” There are those who don’t want an answer they have already made up their minds and they are only looking for an argument and to those folks you do not answer them according to their folly. Then there are those whose folly is based upon ignorance not arrogance and to those folks you do answer them according to their folly. So Jesus just refers these folks back to what He has already made clear by both His words and His works.

Jesus has the explanation of why they neither hear His words nor believe His works in verse 26 “*You are not My sheep!*” From our perspective we become His sheep by believing but from God’s perspective we believe because we are His sheep. As we reflect upon our Lord’s words “*you are not of My sheep*” there was a time when this was true of all of us, yet now as I read these words and am humbled by the fact that now I am and of His patience with me as He continued to call my name. Their souls were in suspense but not those who had responded to His voice. Is that not amazing to realize that our souls need never again to be in suspense again?

Vs. 27 Jesus suggests **three things that indicate that we are one of His sheep** in verse 27 “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*.”

* 1. “*My sheep Hear My voice*”: First Jesus sheep are drawn to His word, they hear what He says and want to hear more, they hunger for insight into Jesus and what He has to say to them.
	2. “*And I know them*”: His word cause them to realize that they are wanted and secure no matter what His word may say to them. They realize that His word is personal and they are a part of His family.
	3. “*And they follow Me*”: Finally they desire to obey to follow His words for their life. That’s not to say that we will do so instantly, without a struggle or a complaint No, it may take us a while but eventually those who have heard His voice and are apart of His sheep will chose to follow Him.

Vs. 28-30 Then in the 28th verse Jesus speaks to these religious leaders who refused to recognize who He was by sharing three benefits of being apart of His flock. These three things are absolute necessary for us to be secure in His love and the lack of our recognizing these will always effect how we behave as His sheep.

1. “*And I give them eternal life*”: **Inexhaustible** His love for His sheep is inexhaustible, it transcends time as His love towards will never have an ending. “I keep giving them eternal life” Jesus said you see it is not something that He will give us if we do our part and pass the test. It is what ought to draw us to Jesus every day as we have found nothing and no one who loves us like He does.

2. “*They shall never perish*”: **Indestructible** His love for His sheep is indestructible, there is noting that can destroy His love towards us, His love won’t ware out, rust out or dissolve. It will never ever end folks, His love for us has no end, and part of its security is tied to its safety. His love has no destruction in it, can not perish. It is the thought of things coming to an end that causes much of anxiety in our lives. What will end as we know it will only increase never decrease.

3. “*Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand*”: **Irretrievable** finally He says that His love for His sheep is irretrievable, no one can snatch us out of His hand oh to God the reverse of this would be true for us that nothing or no one would be able to snatch Him from our hands. It is protected notice by both the Father and the Son (verse 28-29) has secured us and we are safer than all the gold in Fort Knock. We are more precious to the Son and the Father. No one, not even we ourselves, can take us out of the Father's hand. We may struggle, we may hurt, we may go through times of dark, deep depression and times of doubt and despair, but we shall never perish if we have come to him and are part of his flock.

*They shall never ever perish*” in the Greek. He did not say to His sheep “*I give you temporary life, you shall not perish for a time and most won’t be able to snatch you from my hand.*” No one is able to snatch them out of My hand, “Ah but can you jump out of His hand?” Well I don’t know about you but I am an “anyone” of verse 28, so I don’t believe I can outrun the span of His hand which covers the heavens.

What do these three things have in common? Well they are all security related aren’t they? When we view Jesus’ own words concerning Him being the Good Shepherd you see that He has three relationships with His sheep:

1. **Loving**: Because He died for His sheep that makes His relationship towards them as loving.
2. **Living**: Because He continually care for His sheep that makes His relationship towards us as a living one.
3. **Lasting**: Because He keeps His sheep and not one will be lost His relationship is a lasting one.

Jesus chose His friends to be His family! He reaches out His hands to any and all and to those who so chose He brings them into His family and in this family no one is able to take us out of His family. The same hand that holds the heavens has a hold on you how wonderful to realize this truth. So is Jesus speaking of eternal security, you know once saved always saved? Well I suppose it depends upon if we are talking about “*pigs or prodigals*”. What? Well the difference between a pig and a prodigal is what they return to, the pig returns to the muck for that is where he is most at home. Ah but the prodigal leaves the muck to return to the Father.

Vs. 30 Jesus makes a statement that answers the one that they asked to begin with “*If you are the Christ tell us plainly*” so Jesus said “*I and My Father are one*”. The use of the word one does not mean Identical persons but rather one in essence, The Father is God and the Son is God but the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. Jesus is not saying that He and the Father are one person in the Greek He is saying that they are one nature. There are those who try to claim that Jesus “oneness” with the Father was only purpose and mission and not nature but that is not what the Greek says. Then there are those who try to say that what Jesus is saying is that they are one in the same person but that is not what the Greek says. What Jesus is saying is that they are one in nature but two distinct persons and it is here where we understand the teaching with regards to the trinity One God existing in three distinct persons. If Jesus was merely saying that I and the Father are one in purpose and mission this would not constitute blaspheme. Thus the Jews clearly understood what Jesus was saying even if the J.W’s don not “*You being a man make Yourself God*”.

**III. Vs. 31-42 I am who I say I am**

Vs. 31-33 It is clear that the Jewish religious leaders knew what He was saying that He was of the same nature as the Father as verse 33 will clarify their view. There are those who like to claim that Jesus never made such claims as to His deity but even the enemies of Jesus affirm that He proclaimed to be God, yet there are those today who claim that He never said He was. No notice that what blew their minds was that **Jesus being a man made Himself out to be God** but you know what blows my mind is that **Jesus being God made Himself to be man**.

The first thing Jesus says is to get them to clarify the reason for their response, was it because His works didn’t match His words? And they say it’s not your works, it’s that you being a man make yourself out to be God. In John 14:11 Jesus will say, “*Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves*.” In other words His works proved His words as who else could cause a man born blind to see? They deny that it was the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath that caused them to seek to kill which is a lie because in fact that was the reason they sought to kill Him. The only way this was blasphemy is if it wasn’t true that He why Jesus referred to His works which proved His words.

Vs. 34-38 Now Jesus is going to meet these religious leaders on their own play field by using psalm 82:6. to refute their reaction “*I said, "You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High.*” Interesting way this is put by Jesus, “*Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '*?” It is your law but I’m the One who said it. Now this verse needs to put into the context that it was written to gain what Jesus is saying. You see psalm 82 is a psalm where God is judging the judges those who were suppose to represent God and His people but were instead abusing them ironically just like these very religious leaders. In verse 2 of that psalm the psalmist writes “*How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?*” Then the verse that Jesus quotes in verse 6 “*I said, "You are gods*, (judges appointed by God, His representatives) *and all of you are children of the Most High*.” Jesus’ argument is that if plan ordinary men who have the power as Judges over life and death can be called gods without blaspheme how much more the Son of God who has proven His claims by His works.

In the 36th verse Jesus He affirms His deity twice first by saying that the Father sanctified (set Him apart) and sent Him into the world which identifies that He was with the Father before the world began and secondly by saying plainly that He is the Son of God. Jesus claims to be preexistent, now one day I may take my little Hannah by the places we lived before she was born and she may ask me where she was at that time and I’d have to tell her that I don’t know but Jesus could say where He was because He has always been.

And to support this duel claim Jesus says again “*If I don’t do the works of My Father then don’t believe but if I do believe the works.*” What a great invitation by Jesus to examine the evidence honestly and then being willing to accept the findings.

Vs. 39-42 And again they try to arrest Him but by he escapes from them until He will present Himself before them as their King on Palm Sunday. So for the next few months Jesus went beyond the Jordan to a place where John had been baptizing earlier, where many believed on Him there based upon His works. If Jesus were to walk down the church isles where He is preached would what we have said about Him match who He is?

Hey did you notice that it says that “*John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true*.” Folks that is what we are to be we may perform no signs but do all the things that we speak about Jesus true? Jesus returned back to the very place His public ministry had started three years earlier the very place where John had declared “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*”. Here was a group of religious leaders who surrounded Him and demand an answer and Jesus tells them “*I’m the One you say you are looking for but you don’t recognize me because I’m not who you think I am*.” It was not Jesus who was hemmed in it all who by their own tradition and arrogance have encircled their own hearts.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**John 11:1-16**

**“What love is this?”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-6 The fear of the delay**

**III. Vs. 7-16 The fear of the journey**

**I. Intro.**

Jesus had raised others from the dead during His ministry: There was the Jairus’ daughter (Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56). And there was the widow at Nain’s son who was being carried out for burial in Luke 7:11-17. But this miracle perhaps more than any of the others was the most miraculous.

Paul wrote those familiar words in the “Love” chapter in 1 Cor 13 “*now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*” Ah but what happens when we find that we are no longer abiding in those three blessings of our relationship with Jesus, when situations or circumstances have arisen that seem to contradict what we believe to be true about our Lord? I suggest to you that it was a greater miracle to breathe His life back into the death of faith, hope and love then it was Lazarus’ lungs. Friends Jesus can deal with death and He can breathe life back into our faithlessness if we will but allow Him. The story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead serves as a catalyst to what this chapter centers upon and that is faith. I find there are **two great obstacles on the road of faith**:

* Vs. 1-6 **The fear of delay**: Have you ever noticed that our faith never seems to wavier as long the answers are on time? It is the “*wait and the delay*” that seems to seems usher in our discouragement. But as we shall see the antidote to delay is to remind ourselves that no amount of delay dampens the fervency of His love.
* Vs. 7-16 **The fear of the journey**: The “*what if’s*” are another thing that always seems to cause us to falter in our faith. But as we will see Jesus will use the “truth” as the antidote to fear.

The most challenging situation we face as a Christian is when God does not do what we think He was going to when we thought He was going to do it. Some call these crises of faith but no matter what you call it we will all have to go through it more than once. The story before us will go down next to His own resurrection as the greatest of all of Jesus miracles yet He didn’t do it the way most thought He would or when they thought He would.

**II. Vs. 1-6 The fear of the delay**

Vs. 1-2 In Luke 10:38 we are told “*that Martha welcomed Jesus into her house*” and here we are told that it Mary’s town. It may have been the Mary’s town (11:1) but it was Martha’s house. What this tells us is that Mary was more social she was more active in the community but Martha felt more at home serving behind the scenes. These two were different Mary was no doubt more expressive in her devotion towards Jesus where as Martha tended to demonstrate it with her service. But notice in verse 5 it says that Jesus loved them all, regardless of how they expressed their devotion towards Him. What is interesting is that in this moment of crises these two gals who express their devotion differently sent a message to Jesus based upon His devotion not theirs. Lazarus illness and death was not because of some failure on his or their part it was rather something that God was going to use to glorify the Son.

 Jesus’ relationship with this family was quite close they opened up their home as well as their hearts to this radical rabbi and He often stayed with them. Yet with that said this close nit relationship did not make them immune from life’s difficulties and challenges. I say this because we are often prone to think that our relationship with our Jesus ought to cause a few of the storms of life to pass us by and when they don’t we start to think, “*Hey wait a minute here this can’t be happening to me I’m Jesus’ close friend, He lies in the home of my heart*.” What we shall look at here is how this family handles this and how Jesus shows His love towards them. Folks **Jesus doesn’t always shelter us from the storm but He will always be a shelter through the storm**.

Vs. 3 On a positive note look at how Martha and Mary send word to Jesus concerning Lazarus’ sickness.

1. “*He who* ***You love*** *is sick*” not “***he who loves You*** *is sick*” though it was true that Lazarus loved Jesus that is not the way they approached Jesus no they approached Him based upon His love for them not their love for Him. To be quite honest my love for Jesus is quite fickle but His love for me never waivers.
2. The word here for love in verse 3 is not agape it is the word that describes full affection towards Lazarus that is all the visible signs of His love and they reminded Him of it. Yet when John commented on Jesus love for them in verse 5 he said that he had “*devotion*” towards them not mere emotion. **He was devoted to them so He delayed His coming emotion did not drive Him devotion did**!
3. Finally notice that no where do Martha and Mary instruct the Lord on what they want Him to do. Instead they start out reminding themselves of Jesus love then simply inform Him on the need. There was no ***commanding*** Jesus to do something there was only ***communing*** with Him.

Vs. 4-6 We are given two things about the **timing** that seem to contradict each other. First, has to do with when Lazarus died and to see this we need to construct a timeline of the events as given us.

* 1. **The time line**: First we need to realize that it took a whole day to travel 20 miles from Bethany to Bethabara where Jesus was with the disciples and this took place on day 1. Then the messenger traveled back the next day with Jesus’ encouraging words on day 2. Next we are told in verse 6 that Jesus stayed yet another day which took place on day 3. That makes the day of travel of Jesus to Bethany on day 4. Follow me on this now, based upon verse 17 where we are told that “*When Jesus came, He found that he (Lazarus) had already been in the tomb four days*”, that means that Lazarus was already dead on day 1 when the messenger first arrived. Now we place into this timeline Jesus words to the messenger in verse 4 “*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it*.” I can only imagine what those words meant to the messenger as he walked home through the day only to arrive upon the seen hearing that Lazarus was already dead. It appears he delivered the message based upon Martha’s words in verse 24 where she says, “*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*” But she didn’t see that Jesus was not speaking with regards to the resurrection but that Lazarus would come back to life now.
	2. **The lapse of time**: The messenger was sent with the words, “*He whom You love is sick*” which is further confirmed by John’s commentary in verse 5 “*Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister (Mary) and Lazarus*”. The problem comes when we place John’s commentary in verse 6 where he reveals “*So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was*.” Even when we factor in the fact that when Jesus heard the words from the messenger of Lazarus’ sickness he was already dead it still is hard to reconcile the truth of Jesus Love for this man and his sisters with His actions.

 How could the words that proceeded Jesus arrival be a comfort to those grieving over the loss of their brother? Yet, clearly Jesus in verse 14 knew that Lazarus was dead when He sent the messenger back to the two grieving sisters. Listen carefully my friends as Jesus was exhorting them to trust Him irrespectively of how contrary the circumstances appeared, else why send back a message? Under the service of this story lie our own circumstances and if I place myself in this story I would be questioning three things with regards to Jesus:

1. **Why did you allow this**?

2. **Why did you wait**?

3. **Why didn’t you do something for me when you have done so for others**?

Compounding these three questions was the confidence these had in Jesus love for them, they knew of His ability: He calmed the storms, healed the sick and raise the dead of those He didn’t know as well. If Jesus loved Lazarus so much why did He permit him to get sick in the first place? Why did He delay His coming seeing that He loved the sisters who were by now grieving for the loss of their brother? He didn’t even have to come He could have healed for a distance as he had with others. By my simple observation there seems to be a contradiction between Jesus stated love for this family and His actions towards them. Here is what we know, His love for us is no guarantee that we won’t suffer only that through such suffering He won’t leave us or forsake us, further more He saw that through such problems God would be glorified. It appears that the two sisters knew this as well when they sent the messenger they asked nothing from Jesus only told Him of the need and reminded Him of His love for Him. And in Jesus reply He promised that death would not be the ultimate result for Lazarus but rather He was destined for the glory of God.

Vs. 5-6 We are so used to critical situations demanding immediate action that even when we factor in the fact that Jesus already knows that Lazarus is dead still for the sake of the family one would think He would take immediate leave to travel to their home. Where was the flashing red lights and screaming sirens’, the running through stop lights in His hurry to met human heart ache and extreme sadness? Instead so uncharacteristic we see Jesus staying two more days, have you ever felt Martha in verse 21, “*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died*?” Oh it may have been too late for Lazarus but it would have been so comforting for the two sisters, but He stayed two more days. What could have been so important that He delayed two days? He sent a messenger with a message that didn’t seem to be a comfort now, yes in the future but now their brother was dead. Yet still our own hearts want to know WHY? **The answer is given us in verse 5 Jesus delayed His departure in the midst of their greatest hour because He “*loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*”** What? We often misinterpret God’s delays as His denials don’t we? We tend to think that His delays signify a lack of love towards us on His part especially when we look over the landscape of those He has seemingly rushed to aide. What we learn here is that His delay is not a sign of the absence of His love but rather it is a sign of His love as His delay is designed to help us not harm us, to cause us to grow in our trust of His love. I’ve watched with interest our little Hannah as she so likes to be held and when you put her down she cries but mom and dad are learning to let her cry a while before they run to pick her up so she will understand that they love her just as much when they aren’t holding her close to their hearts.

 Think of those two sisters grieving over the loss of their brother when the messenger returns alone with a message that would cause you to question not only the words but the heart and actions of the one you believed was the Messiah. Those sisters must have keep one eye one the bed where Lazarus lay and one eye on the road where Jesus would be coming but as the hours passed away so to did there hope with Lazarus’ passing. But two days later He comes and acts in much bigger way then you ever imagined. **They were wanting to prevent death and Jesus came showing that He is greater than merely preventing it He has come to conquer it**!

**III. Vs. 7-16 The fear of the journey**

Vs. 7-10 Now we move to the second part of the story with two great truths as it relates to the disciples and their fear of the journey. Still fresh in the mind of these disciples were the raised arms and stones in the hands of the religious leaders only a week earlier and now Jesus wants to go back there where they still have no idea how they managed to escape alive. They were staying a day away and by a peaceful river with no worries, life had just got back to normal or as close to it when you were a follower of a radical rabbi. Folks there are many times that we don’t much like the way Jesus is driving the bus of our lives do we? “*Uh pardon me Jesus but did you say we are heading back into danger and uncertainty? Um I’d think you need to consult the passengers before you take us on this journey because we really don’t want to see those sights again.*” Usually when this happens we want to get off the bus or change the driver don’t we? The Bible in Hebrews 9:27 “*it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*”, I don’t know if you have thought about it much but we have an appointment with death and tell that appointment date has come we are going to be here. Now the challenge is according to Eccles. 9:12 “*no man knows when his hour will come*” that is why we are told in Psalm 90:12 to “*Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom*.”

This return reveal quite a lot about the departure a week earlier doesn’t it? It reveals that His leaving was not based upon fear but rather timing, you see had it been fear He would not have gone back. To this Jesus explains the principals of timing (verse 9-10) **stay on His course and you have no fear on the journey but do your own thing and you will stumble**.

Vs. 11-16 “*Lazarus is dead*” Jesus said, then in the next breath He says, “*And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.*” The finality of death must have caught the disciples by surprise as Thomas now thinks he is on a suicide mission. But what Jesus was saying wasn’t upon their mission but rather about the opportunity for them to grow in their trust of Him. The event that was surround by grief would become an opportunity for belief.

Part of the problem of any journey is the uncertainty of what we will find at the destination. And in this case they didn’t much care for the journey because the destination was death. To this Jesus explains to His followers that death is not the destination but rather rest is! That is the word He employs here is different then the one uses in verse 14 which means slain here the word means to put to sleep. There was no fear, no uncertainty when you put your head on that pillow last night, you dosed off until the alarm brought you back and if your like most folks you would have preferred to remain under those covers. Jesus delayed His coming for two reasons the first was Love for the family and the second was faith for the disciples (verse 15). Isaiah the prophet spoke of a great truth in 55:8 about the Lord saying, “***My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.***” Friends, there are possibilities and opportunities in every situation that we cannot conceive of. So we must wait and quietly trust, knowing that he is working out something. Imagine what was going through their minds, “*He said Lazarus’ illness was not unto death but now He just said that He was dead, how can these both be true*?” Thomas devoted to the end said then we will go with you, we will go down with the ship. Oh I think I’m Thomas’ twin sometimes just going to grin and bear it determined to press forward but not believing that Jesus is going to do something wonderful, something glorious. That is the finally lesson **you will have no fear of the journey or the destination of you will simply trust His word**!

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**3. 11:25 Giver of life**

**John 11:17-37**

**“Lord, if You had been here”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 17-28 It’s too good to be true**

**III. Vs. 29-37 Tears at the tomb**

**I. Intro.**

Though medical science has made great strides in combating many illness that plague the world the death rates have not changed sense to fall of man they are still at 100%. You can watch your diet, watch your cholesterol and exercise and in the end you will become the healthiest dead person anyone has seen. Yet here we are told of a story where our Lord defeated deaths hold.

Hope is a difficult thing to grasp isn’t it? It reminds me of a story I heard about a Wisconsin couple celebrating a December anniversary in Florida at the same hotel where they had spent their honeymoon 20 years earlier. Because of the husbands job he flew to Florida on Thursday, while his wife waited at home to fly down to Florida and join him the next day. When the husband checked into the hotel, he discovered a computer with wireless internet service was now available in their room and he sent an email to his wife. Unfortunately he accidently left out one letter in her email address and his email ended in the box of a recently widowed gal who had just returned home from her husband's funeral. After reading the email message, she screamed and fainted. The widow's son rushed into the room found his mother fainted on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read:

 To: My Loving Wife

 From: Your Loving Husband

 Subject: I've Arrived

Sweetheart, I know you're surprised to hear from me. They have computers here now and you are allowed to send emails from your room. I've just arrived and have been checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. I'm looking forward to seeing you then! P.S. - Sure is hot down here!

**II. Vs. 17-28 It’s too good to be true**

Vs. 17-20 There is a little known Jewish superstition that said a soul stayed near the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body and one wonders if Jesus stayed four days to dispel that superstition. But as soon as Martha heard that Jesus was a short distance away she broke tradition as she left the house after the death of a family member as you were suppose to stay at the home 7 days.

Vs. 21-22 Martha’s words are based upon remorse and not upon rebuke she is able to see Jesus working but only with in the confines of her understanding. Her first words to Jesus in verse 21 were words of regret that she must have said and thought continually through those four days. “***If***” is such a big word to overcome in the hearts of people as it is a word of **imagination** and **speculation** yet in this case it also carried with it a hope of what might have been “if” Jesus would only have been present. Do you realize that there is not one recorded time that a person dies while Jesus was present? It seems as though Martha was quick to affirm her trust in Jesus even though she interpreted His promise in the future not in the present. Apparently Martha was wrestling with her hope as she says in verse 22 “*But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You*”. Then in the next breath she slips back to hope in the future instead of the present. Man does this ever seem familiar doesn’t it.

The question many want to know is just what did Martha mean by her words to Jesus in verse 22, “*But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give you.*” It is apparent by the context that she didn’t certainly believe what she had said as she would have responded very differently to Jesus reply in verse 23 “*Your brother will rise again*”. You see if she believed Jesus words at that moment she would have screamed, “*Halleluiah lets go get my brother now*!” Some think that what she meant by these words were for her and Mary not for Lazarus as they need hope and comfort, “*Oh Lord I know you can help Mary and I through the next days, weeks months and years of loneliness and heartache*”. The problem with Martha’s hope was that it was stuck in what she thought could happen instead of the person she was speaking too. Oh I do not fault her and resemble her far to much, as our hope is stuck upon our comprehension of the circumstances instead of the very why who is according to Ephes. 3:20 “*able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us*”. Jesus speaks words of hope to her as He gets her mind off the limitation of the situation and onto the power of the Savior. Martha is stuck in the theology of the “*last days*” but the problem is when we can only see the Lord working after we are gone or only towards others and not towards ourselves our “**last days**” become “**lost days**”. Ah friends in Jesus the only one that is going to die is the grim reaper. The only qualification is that what Jesus said to Martha, “*He who believes in Me!*”

Hey folks listen up that is a reason our hope is disappointed it’s because it lies outside of the scope of how we can see it accomplished. Paul wrote of this dilemma in Romans 8:24-25 (NLT) “*For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently.*” “*Lord if you would have been here, you could have kept him from dyeing and now that he is dead I know that eventually we will see each other*”, she was saying. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15:19 “*if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world*.”

Vs. 23-24 “*Your brother will rise again*”, Jesus said in response to the flicker of hope Martha had. But instead of rejoicing and celebrating because the creator has just said that Lazarus is going to be given back to them, she puts the promise in a theological box where it will stay a theory. Though what Martha was saying is a true statement it was said to protect against any disappointment of hope.

Do you ever do that? Read the word and the Lord speaks to you about a situation or someone comes in with a word from the Lord about a particular situation you are facing and you immediately place it into some futuristic context. Recently a brother came to me with a word from the Lord, first he said that in praying for me and this fellowship that we need to right now “***celebrate the victory***” then he said that I was called to keep my hands on the plow. Though I heard what he was saying I immediately interpreted those words of encouragement from the Lord in the context of general words of encouragement instead of specific words for now. While preparing for this study I reread what this fellow brought me and found the scripture in 1 Cor. 9:10 where Paul says, “*he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope*.” Oh so hard for me to simply believe, why? Because His words are too good to be true and in so believing I rip myself off of the hope that He has given me!

Vs. 25-27 Jesus didn’t deny her understanding as to the future resurrection instead He responds with the faith of His “I am” statements. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection and so did most of the Jews but what Jesus said took Martha from trusting in the cold doctrine and transformed her trust into a living person. Jesus not only declared to her that there was life after death but that He was that life.

Friends we are not saved by a text book, theory or theology we are saved by a person and by saying this Jesus moved Martha away from obscure into the visible. Jesus was telling her, “***When you know Me, your hope need not be academic it can be personal***!” Folks, when you’re sick you want a doctor not a medical book, I’m afraid that far too often we lack hope because our hope is resting upon the intellect instead of our relationship. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 1:30 “*you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*”. He became wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; this is what He became not what He taught these things were written upon His life. **Martha first looked to the past saying “*If You had been here*” then she looked into the future saying “*I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day*” but what she couldn’t see was the present that was standing right before her, Jesus said, “I am” not “*I was*” or “*I will be*”. “I was and I will be because I am” Martha.**

Now notice that Martha is not questioning Jesus’ His ability only His willingness as she affirms who He is in the midst of the most difficult of circumstances. The words “*I believe*” in the Greek are literally “*I have believed and I will continue to believe*!” “You are Lord, Messiah and God the Son”, she said I have believed that and I will continue to believe that no matter what happens. But Jesus is urging her “*If you believe that what can’t you trust me in the present*?” “*You’re limiting me Martha, I’m not just the guy that will make everything alright in the end I’m what you need right now*.”

Martha wanted to believe but when it came for Jesus to have the stone rolled away she said in verse 39, “*Lord, by this time there is a stench*”. I wonder how many times we have ripped ourselves off from the joy that could be our now if only we realized that He was wanting to bless us. “*Lord I believe you’re all powerful, I believe that you’re my only hope, you’re God, no doubt about it*.” “*But Lord I don’t believe that you would do something for me!*” You see Martha’s problem was that she didn’t recognize that Jesus was there and wanted to be there for her if only she would let Him. Both of Jesus’ previous raising of the dead happen on the within hours of their death but Lazarus’ body was already in a state of decay. I mention this to say that I believe that we are a lot like these two sisters and that the further the state of decay in our lives the less hope we have in the present that He can change anything. If what our heart is broken over is still warm to the touch, still smells as though there is life in it then we have hope in the present. Jesus tells her that where ever He is there is resurrection and life and His words were speaking to her not just of a future resurrection but a present life. How can we be sure that this is what Jesus meant? Well when Jesus had the stone rolled away and Martha warned that there would be a stink Jesus didn’t speak to Lazarus as a dead man but as one who could hear, “Lazarus come forth!” In this life there is nothing more hopeless than death, and yet to this hopelessness Jesus proclaimed life!

Vs. 28 It is interesting to note what Martha does with her struggle with believing that Jesus would do something just for her as it says that, “*she went her way and secretly called her sister, saying, The Teacher has come and is calling for you*.” Did you notice that there is no mention of Jesus saying this? “*I want to bless you Martha, I want to reveal to you how important you are to me.*” “*Yeh I know you love me let me go get my sister.*” Oh the struggle we have of just receiving Jesus love especially when we think someone is more deserving or better than we are, “*It’s Mary’s town Lord it’s only my house!*”

**III. Vs. 29-37 Tears at the tomb**

Vs. 29-32 Having tried to comfort Martha Jesus now ministers to Mary and sends word through Martha to met him away from the crowd’s of professional mourners. Mary seems to always be happiest at Jesus’ feet when things are going well or going bad you will always see her rising quickly to come and fall at His feet. There are a great many who love Jesus who find it easy to do so when things are going well but it’s a whole other thing to do so when things are going bad as we tend to pull away. Ah we ought to be more like Mary who no matter what her personal circumstances you could always find her at the feet of Jesus. Friends you will never grow in your relationship with Jesus until you consistently practice spending time at His feet regardless of your situation.

 Mary’s response to Jesus is the same as Martha’s “*If you had been here my brother wouldn’t have died.*” Here we have two radically different gals and they come up with the same exact words. Now I wonder if Martha’s words became Mary’s? I think we have all at times felt something then verbalized it and our words begin to effect those around us. Folks we need to watch what we say as our words of complaints, murmuring about things can bring others down as well. Paul wrote to the Romans in 14:19 saying that we need to “*pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*” Then in 1 Thess. 5:11 he exhorted them saying, “*Therefore comfort each other and edify one another*”. We need to be a people who seek to lift folks up not tear folks down because if we hang out with those who are always questioning and doubting it won’t be long until their language becomes ours.

Vs. 33-35 The weeping of Jesus is not the same as the weeping of Mary or the mourners theirs was wailing where as the word for Jesus’ weeping is that tears ran down His face. The word of God made flesh in sympathy of human suffering, sensitive, compassionate there is something extremely comforting in those two words “*Jesus wept*”. There are two amazing things in these verses, His question as to where Lazarus had been entombed and the fact that He wept. He never used heavenly powers when earthly ones would suffice and His weeping was not loud like the other mourners but rather tears were flowing His weeping wasn’t over Lazarus death as He knew that He would soon breath life back in him, instead His tears indicated His identification with human suffering and hopelessness. Isaiah 53:3 Reminds us that He is the “*Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*”. I also wonder if those tears were for Lazarus not because he was dead but rather because he was going to be brought back into this world. Paul wrote of this truth in Philip. 1:23 when he said, “*For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*”

With everyone crying by Jesus it effected Him as He asked where they laid Lazarus body and He went to see and wept as well. But the question remains was what caused Him to weep knowing that He was going to breath life back into Lazarus? There are **four possibilities** and one or all of them might be true:

1. Perhaps He wept because He was reminded that sin kills and breaks people’s hearts. Death is a constant reminder of what sin does as it separates fellowship, decays relationships and generally sinks up everything it comes in contact with. Hasn’t your heart wept because of what sin has done?
2. Perhaps Jesus wept because of all the doubt that surrounded Him even after He promised that Lazarus’ death wouldn’t be permanent? Jesus’ words said, “*It’s going to be alright*” but the cries of the mourners said “*no its not*!”
3. Perhaps Jesus wept because He knew He was going to bring Lazarus out of the presence of God and back into this world.
4. Perhaps Jesus wept because even though He knew everything was going to turn out alright those around Him were hurting and folks that hurt always moved Jesus.

Vs. 36-37 Jesus anger was at the horrible slavery that death has placed mankind under, oh to be sure it is our own fault but it angers our Lord. He is angry at the terrible results of evil it is the same sort of anger you feel when you read of a little boy who is beaten to death by his own father, or molested and sexually destroyed by some adult whom he trusts. Is it not great to realize that our Maker is sympathetic? Oh what a comfort it is to have a Lord that “*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*” (Romans 12:15)

“*Oh see how He loved them couldn’t He have done something*”? Some of them said. Oh yes He had the power and yes He had a plan but it wasn’t the right time until a few moments later. Do you have a hopeless situation where you don’t doubt the Lord’s power but you question His willingness may make a simple requests don’t just believe His in His power believe also in His love for you and wait for His time and you will here those wonderful words in verse 44, “*Loose, him and let him go*!” Our biggest enemy is death friends but Jesus has defeated death and because of this we shall be its champions as well. Jesus words in verse 25 ought to forever change our perspective on life and death. Ruth Graham saw a highway sign years ago and told her family she wanted its words on her tomb stone, so today if we would go to Charlotte you would read these words over her grave, “*End of construction. Thank you for your patience*”.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**3. 11:25 Giver of life**

**John 11: 38-54**

**“Loose him, and let him go”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 38-44 Two things Jesus didn’t do**

**III. Vs. 45-54 Two responses to His work**

**I. Intro.**

It is interesting to note that those that followed Mary interpreted Jesus tears as being shed because of the loss of a friend, tears that proved He loved him but was unable to help him. They questioned not His power but His purpose, “*Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also, have kept this man from dying*?” But He corrected this by saying, “*Take away the stone*” and “*Did I not say to you that if you believe you would see the glory of God*”. God’s power is always exercised within His purpose and the delay of His power was so that His purpose of glorifying God would be accomplished.

Now in this section we have two separate movements:

* 1. Vs. 38-44 The first centers around the miracle it’s self and what is fascinating is not so much what Jesus did (raising Lazarus) but the two things that He didn’t do and what they has to say to His followers today.
	2. Vs. 45-54 The second, part of this section concludes in verse 54 as verse 55-57 should be part of chapter 12 and not part of chapter 11. But at any rate this section concludes with two reactions to Jesus sign within those who observed as well as those who had heard about it.

**II. Vs. 38-44 Two things Jesus didn’t do**

Vs. 38-39 As we look at this section it is easy for us to focus on what Jesus did do (raise Lazarus) and miss completely two things He didn’t do instead he asked others to do.

1. **Didn’t remove the stone**: First we have the stone in front of a cave, in which Jesus says “*Take away the stone*”. Embalming is more of a Christian practice as even in the present day, the Jews bury the body the day the person dies as they don’t use the same kind of procedures to embalm the body so that it can wait a few days before it is buried. Lazarus had been dead four days in a hot climate and was now sealed up in a closed tomb. Think about that a moment and you can understand why Martha thought that her brother would be pretty ripe by that time. With Jesus’ command to “*take away the stone*” people must have been thinking as Martha that “*by this time there is a stench*”. Perhaps people thought that Jesus wanted to get one last look His friend Lazarus. Ah but He didn’t need help to remove the stone did He? I mean if He could bring back folks from the dead and remove His own stone from His tomb He certainly didn’t need to have someone else do it for Him yet plainly we are told that **He asked others to do what He Himself could have done**. That is what makes Jesus words all the more amazing in verse 39 when He said, “*Take away the stone*”. There is at once a protest from Martha concerning doing so but He does not rebuke her He instead just brings her back to what He already said that through her belief she would see the glory of God (verse 40).

I think there is a practical spiritual picture in this as well. There are things in our lives that are starting to decay, things that we have closed up and are letting off a foul odor but before Jesus can breathe His life into that area we have to take away the stone and expose the problem. **We have to let Him in before He can lead us out**, if you know what I mean? Now you would think that we would be all too happy to do so but the truth is we are a lot more like Martha in our attitude, “*Lord, by this time there is a stench*”! “*Lord, I’m embarrassed about this rotten part of my life I know it stinks, can’t we just keep it shut up out of sight*?” That is where the text gets very interesting, don’t you think? Jesus had given Martha and Mary a promise that part of their life that they loved though it was dead and decaying was going to live again but they needed to believe the promise by letting Jesus in. Hey, even though what’s on the inside stinks, we’ve got to let Him in to deal with it. You know what we do don’t you when we are aware of an area that stinks in our life? Well we tell the Lord He can’t come into that area because it’s a mess and kid ourselves that we will let Him in as soon as we get it all cleaned up ourselves. I’m afraid to say there are far too many Christian’s that are emitting foul odors in their lives because what sinketh remains closed to Jesus.

Vs.40-42 The fact is that the possibility of Lazarus was in a state of decay provided the evidence that Lazarus had indeed died. Now notice that in verse 40 Jesus told them “*if they would believe they would see the glory of God*”. What is interesting is that their faith wasn’t necessary for their brother to come back to life but their faith was necessary for them to see the glory of God in it. The failure in faith of Martha didn’t hinder Jesus ability to work **it only delayed Martha’s blessing of seeing God glorified** ahead of time. Friends Jesus doesn’t need our faith to work miracles He can do so with out it. Oft times we think He is the engine and our faith is the battery but that is not the case the miraculous work of our Lord does not hinge upon our faith. **Our faith is beneficial to us to that we would see the glory of God in the work of God.** The prayer of affirmation is unusual as Jesus didn’t pray out loud very often most of His prayer life was private. But here He openly thanks the Father for always hearing and in saying this He is doing so that others would hear and believe. His prayer is so unlike our prayers as there is no hint of a request, no spelling out to God what needs to be done, instead just words of gratitude for God the Father’s continual relation with Him and the reason why He is praying publically instead of privately.

Vs. 43-44 Jesus working of miracles were never designed as some sort of slight of hand, some magic trick, no they were always out front in the open. By the way the loud voice was not for Lazarus it was for those gathered around so they could hear that it was Him who was doing the calling. Back in John 5:25 Jesus had said that “*the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live*.” One day Jesus will call again only this time He won’t just mention one name but the name of all who have trusted in Him. The word’s of Jesus to that which was past hope dead and decaying is “*come forth*”. No elaborate ceremony, no fancy formula just His two words. In Romans 4:17 Paul wrote of God saying that He “*gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did*”. Someone has well said that Jesus mentions Lazarus by name least the whole cemetery came forward. Now if I had been there at that moment I would have thought, “*What on earth is He doing*?” If Lazarus doesn’t come forth then all those things that He had said about Himself would have been easily dismissed and Jesus couldn’t have said, “*How bout two out of three*?” What a sight that must have been, how startled the people must have been at Jesus words some may have been tempted to chuckle if it wasn’t a funeral. Then there would have been the sound of someone scuffling their feet and perhaps the muffled sound of someone trying to speak. To some this must have looked like Lazarus had been cast for the movie “*Return of the mummy*”. So out comes Lazarus bound at his hands and feet wrapped up staggering, just imagine what would have happened if this was a night the place would have scattered.

2. **Didn’t remove the grave clothes**: Jesus’ other words that He could have done are found in His words “*Loose him, and let him go*”. Perhaps there are a few folks that are thinking of those very words right near the end of every Sunday service “*Loose us and let us go*”. Hey did you notice that Jesus brought to life a dead person but it was to His followers He gave the privilege of loosing him and letting him go? Jesus told His followers to untie his hands and feet so that he could move as he was designed to do so, to unwrap the grave clothes. Isn’t cool to realize that Jesus knew that man needs more than just life, man need liberty and freedom as well and all those are a part of what He offers. **He grants life than He uses His followers to grant liberty and freedom.** We can’t redeem anyone but through the power of Jesus we can help folks live free from the hang ups of the past once they have been redeemed. That is what Jesus does for us as He calls us to focus our faith on Him, not on the solution to the problem or the eventual working out of it, but on what he can do right now. That is what we are called to do, Jesus saves them and He calls us to “*Loose them, and let them go*”. How do we do that? Well we **have to be near folks** to do so you can’t “*Loose them, and let them go*” from a distance. Then you have to:

* **Talk with them**
* **Pray for them**
* **Stand by them**
* **Love on them**

And if we do that they will learn to walk in Christ right beside us! Hey folks, Jesus is still calling folks from the tomb of sin, wrapped up in the deception of this world with the fragrance of death upon them to come forth out of the hole they have placed themselves in.

Now notice that Lazarus coming forth was incomplete as he came forth still bound hand and foot with grave clothes as he would one day need them again. You see Lazarus was not resurrected he was resuscitated. Now remember when we get to John 20:5 that John will say that he outran Peter to Jesus tomb and when he looked into the tomb he saw the “*linen cloths lying there*” and here we see that Lazarus came out wearing his. So what’s the difference? Well Lazarus was going to need his again one day but Jesus was resurrected into His glorified body as will be the case with us. Kind of makes you wonder why all the fuss of making sure we have a nice suit or pretty dress to burry us in doesn’t it? I see in these two things as the privilege our Lord gives His followers to do we are to be apart of encouraging folks to let Jesus in and then we are to be a part of loosing them and letting them go!

**III. Vs. 45-54 Two responses to His work**

Vs. 45-54 The next part of this deals with the effects of the sign upon those who witnessed it. We can sum up the effects in one word, “***division***” many believed on Him but some went away to the Pharisees. People live under a mistaken notion that if they could only see a miracle then they would believe but this just proves that is not always the case. It is not the evidence that leads a person to trust Jesus it is the Holy Spirit and their reception of Him. We can see the difference between those who examine the evidence and those who refuse to do so knowing that such honesty would lead to a change in their life. In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus spoke of the parable of Lazarus the poor beggar and the rich man who died wishing that God would send Lazarus back to warn the rich mans relatives. But Jesus said, “*If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead*.” This is the last miracle John records before Jesus crucifixion and here we are given two responses to it. What I find interesting is that these two groups saw the same event but had to opposite responses.

1. Vs. 45 Notice how John words this in verse 45, “*Then many of the Jews who had come Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him*.” They came to Mary, watched Mary’s devotion to Jesus even when she was disappointed and discouraged, then saw what Jesus did they believed. So many in the world are watching us and will continue to do so before they will ever see what Jesus did for them. It seems to me personally that **the Lord best reveals His beauty through the darkness of my difficult circumstances**. Sometimes I wonder if the greater witness happens when folks observe not a miracle but watch those who profess to believe go through situations still clinging to the love of Jesus.

2. Vs. 46-54 There were those present who saw Lazarus come forth and instead of running to the Jesus they ran to the Pharisees to report Him that He was doing something that took away their importance. The first response by the religious leaders was to call an emergency meeting to discuss the situation of the miracle and what ramifications it would have on their position. The polls were now in and Jesus was winning in a landslide and they were going to lose their power base. The Pharisees looked this and asked what are we going to do? “*The numbers are slipping and we are in danger of falling out of power and He is gaining in popularity*.” Then based upon the polls they predicted the future and it showed that they were going to lose. And because of this not only Jesus had a price on His head so too did Lazarus according to chapter 12. These religious folks were concerned neither for truth nor for the glory of God they only cared for their positions amongst the multitudes. They were in control over the people and they were profiting from it they realized that with Jesus popularity the folks would need them as they would have Jesus instead. In Acts 19:24-27 Paul ran into this same attitude in Ephesus as Demetrius the silversmith got guild and the crowd in an uproar as so many folks were getting saved that it threatened the idol business as no buddy wanted the little idols of Diana. “*If we don’t do something then the Romans will come and take away our position, and we got to stop that from happening.*”

According to Acts 23: 6-10 the high priest, Caiaphas, was a Sadducee, not a Pharisee and as such didn’t believe in a resurrection as the Pharisees did but on what Caiaphas suggested the death of Jesus they could all lay aside their theology for their self importance. Caiaphas was placed into the position as high priest because the Romans who had the finale authority sold it to him and apparently he was very wealthy as he held onto the position for 18 years. And the high priest says, “*You don’t know anything, it’s expedient for us*”, oh the things that people have done for personal expedience! Lazarus is bad theology for the religious leaders and so they will have a plot to kill Lazarus. Caiaphas needed to apply his words to himself “*You know nothing at all*” seeing that he had no idea what he was saying. Webster’s dictionary defines the word “expedient” as “*characterized by concern with what is opportune; especially governed by self-interest*”. Caiaphas answer to the concerns is that it is better to sacrifice one for the many national interests are more important that any one individual. There is no discussion if He is who He claimed to be no discussion of right it all boiled down to politics. But the interesting thing is that prophetically he was right as Jesus would die not just for the nation but for all mankind. So the official decision that day was that Jesus was given the death sentence as they wanted to be in control but they fail to realize that their action was proving that God is in control not man. They wanted to do this now but Jesus removed Himself from their grasp and they absolutely didn’t want to put Him to death on the Passover on a Sabbath but they did. All their meetings from here on, in the words of one commentator, were simply “*meetings for Messianic murder*.”

Notice the elegant way he suggests murder of the Messiah to the multitudes, “*It is expedient to us*” Politian’s can with their words make chaos sound like a concerto can’t they. And with these words piety will be sacrificed on the alter of policy; such is the way of man. And for any other that would be the end but John adds that “*this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation*”. The irony is that the very thing they feared would happen did because of their failure to believe. And from the very words of the high priest Caiaphas comes the prophecy concerning Jesus that He would for all of mankind. **God takes these damning words and overrides them causing them to become great words, words of faith, hope and love**. There conclusion was to get rid of Jesus, destroy Him and they could remain victorious but looking back we can clearly see that in destroying Jesus they ended their reign and ushered in His. The best we can tell that it was around February when Jesus took leave and went into a city called Ephraim (*increasing fruitfulness*) and in only two months he would come back here to fulfill Caiaphas’ prophecy. Jesus was clearly waiting for God’s timing away from what man wanted, but clearly intone to what the Father had for Him.

 Now we know that Caiaphas wasn’t right in the heart yet the God used him to say something that was right in the Word, my point? Well because the greatness of God He can use anyone to speak His heart. Ah but just because God can and does use a person to speak His heart doesn’t necessarily mean that they are right in the heart! What we need is not to get out of the situation but rather to get everything out of the situation. The reality is that often it is in the fiery furnace that we see Jesus. It was a sad realty that the religious leaders were not concerned about God being in the right place they were concerned about maintaining their place.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**John 11: 55 – 12:11**

**“Flies at the table of fellowship”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 55-57 Waiting for Jesus**

**III. Vs. 1-3 Three aspects of worship**

**IV. 4-11 Let her alone**

**I. Intro.**

Last week we left of with Jesus leaving and taking residence with His disciples in a city called Ephraim which was around 15 miles away from Jerusalem. The psalmist spoke of what must have been going on in the mind of Christ in Psalm 69:20 saying “*Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none*.” From 11:55 to the end of chapter 13 we are in the time of the count down to the cross. From this last week of Jesus' ministry, before the final fatal week in Jerusalem, John chooses three incidents to record:

* Vs. 55-11 Jesus dinner party in Bethany
* Vs. 12-19 The triumphal entry
* Vs. 20-36 Jesus’ words to a group of Greeks

Jesus probably was in Ephraim some 40 days with His disciples just hanging out with them until He would head towards the cross. At the same time Jesus was Ephraim people were preparing for His arrival.

**II. Vs. 55-57 Waiting for Jesus**

Vs. 55-57 In these verses John records for us the overall atmosphere in Jerusalem:

1. Vs. 55 They were preparing themselves for the Passover by purifying themselves. The area was filling up with more than 21/2 million coming into a city and no Holiday Inn’s as we have to day people were camping out all over the hillsides and readying themselves for the feast. It was necessary to go through the rites of purification in order to be able to participate in the temple precincts on the feast days. So they would go early so that they could go through the purification rites.
2. Vs. 56 They were looking for Jesus with great anticipation. Jesus was a sensation for the nation and the curiosity seekers were hoping to get a peek, like the paparazzi do celebrates today.
3. Vs. 57 Finally there was a sinister group of religious leaders who hoped to arrest and hold Him over for trial and execution as there was a price on His head.

Josephus tells us that they were going to sacrifice 250,000 sheep which doing the math of one sheep per household would mean that there was 2.5 million folks that would fill up Jerusalem. No wonder they would be asking around if any one should see Jesus they should report it. You see in the midst of the 2.5 million people was the Son of Man, in the midst of the 250,000 lambs was THE Lamb of God. Ah my friend far too often that is the case with you and me as it is hard for us to find Jesus in the midst of the chaos. They are all anticipating His arrival but with 2 ½ million folks in town they have spies out to see if they can spot Him and how does Jesus respond to this well we shall see next week he come in to town riding a donkey making a public proclamation.

**III. Vs. 1-3 Three aspects of worship**

Vs. 1-3 So the week before the cross we find Jesus with this same family in Bethany (house of dates) two miles from Jerusalem spending time with those He loved. We find out in the other accounts that the supper was not being prepared in the home of Martha but rather is a former leper’s house that Jesus healed named Simeon. This is not Simone the Pharisees house to where Mary Magdalene who was a repentive prostitute came and wept over His feet and wiped them with her hair as that was done in Galilee. If we link together the other accounts that have just precede this then we wonder if Zachaeus and blind Bartimaeus might have been some of the dinner guests as well, what was that conversation like? So despite the fact that Jesus was wanted man Simeon wanted to throw a party for Jesus and invite folks over as a way of saying thank you.

Now it is interesting to note that we can see **two elements of what a church is**:

1. First in verse 1 we are told that Jesus came to where Lazarus, Martha and Mary were at which suggests to me that the first aspect of what a Church is centers around fellowshipping, hanging out with Jesus. What’s cool about this picture to me is that it is Jesus who comes to them, Jesus who initiates. In Matt. 18:20 Jesus said “*where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them*.”
2. Second we are told that they made supper for Him. Now I like that when people gather they do so around eating, there is a reason we call this place calorie chapel. But I also think spiritually this speaks of gathering to gather around feeding upon the Word of God, partaking of Him as we break apart the Word.

Then in the three siblings we get a **three full picture of what worship is.** The key to worshipful service is to be found in the phrase “*as unto the Lord*”! As long as what motivates our service is unto the Lord then it will be worshipful.

1. Next it says that “*Martha served*” we seem to always find Martha serving; she expressed her devotion by serving. Back in Luke 10 when we are first introduced to her she is busy serving. There she became stressed in her service so much so that she told Jesus to tell her sister Mary to get up and help her in the kitchen. Jesus had to remind her not to allow her service to keep her from her worship. Martha was serving In another’s house with at least 17 attending, when we see her upset there were only four of them. Her service is now an act of worship instead of distracting her from devotion. We too can become so busy that we stop being blessed, where **I get too** becomes **I got too**! Jesus told her in Luke 10:42 “*one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part*”. Ah but something has changed Martha’s perspective on her service now as we read, “*they made Him supper and Martha served*”. The first thing we see is that “***they*** *made Him supper*” there were those who learned that serving didn’t hinder worship and then there was Martha who learned that worship was the only way to serve. Folks in every Church the numbers suggest that it always the 14 Martha’s who serve while the rest enjoy the meal but may I make a suggestion that perhaps it’s time that the rest of us get up and get involved along with the 14 Martha’s and if you do then you will find the meal will taste better than you ever imagined. The second thing I note that changed was Martha began to see the miracle and blessing in serving. What caused this change? Well I suggest it was the death of her brother and his sitting at the table with Jesus now. What was at one time seen perhaps as a burden was now seen as a blessing because it was lost to her and then brought back.
2. Next we are told that “*Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.*” This speaks of yet another aspect of church life and that has to do with our witness. “*Our witness, why all Lazarus did was sit at the table with Jesus what kind of witness is that*?” Lazarus seems to be quite content to be known as the man who sat at the table with Jesus rather than the man who spent 4 days dead and was now alive. The importance of Lazarus’ testimony was not about him it was about Jesus. To Lazarus worship centered around his companionship and friendship with Jesus and is always a centerpiece of worship. Listen up saints as this is a great truth of how you and I are to be witness.
	* 1. Notice that a witness isn’t what we do it is who we sit next too. Lazarus presence at the supper table was proof positive that everything Jesus was saying was true. That is all we are called to bear witness of that we who were once dead are now alive. Friends, we can all get caught up in the things we are doing for the Lord and simply forget that our witness is most visible not by what we do but rather who we are hanging around the table with. It does no good to talk to others about Jesus if we haven’t spent any time talking to Him.
		2. The second thing to notice here is something we have to assume and that is Lazarus didn’t come to the table still bound up in the trappings of death. The point I’m trying to make is the greatest evidence of the resurrection is the fact that you and I aren’t still walking around like we just came out of a tomb. We are free from the things of the old life, liberated from the things that stink.
		3. Finally may I say that I’ve found that what attracts folks to Jesus is when they see us at the table with Him, hanging out with the Lord laughing. I wonder if Jesus spoke of that day when he came out of the tomb and looks on people’s faces, I can’t be sure but if He did I bet they all joked about it. Simply put the best way to share your faith is to show them your life and how you now out live your former life.
3. Finally we see the fifth aspect to church life in verse 3 where we are told that “*Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil*.” Now what might not be immediately apparent is that this was an act of worship. That pound of costly oil in the alabaster box was her dowry and as she willing sacrificed it at the feet of Jesus and it mixed with her tears she was worshiping. Isn’t it interesting that we don’t see her singing instead we see her sacrificing that which was precious and her weeping and wiping at His feet? She hadn’t used that costly oil to anoint her brothers body at his burial and she didn’t wait to use for Jesus’ either. Mary was showing her devotion to Jesus before it was to late while the other two Mary’s did so afterward. She was giving the roses of her love while Jesus was still alive instead of placing them over His coffin after He was dead. To which Jesus both commended her and defended her. There are three Mary’s that were close to Jesus, Mary His mother, Mary Magdalene and this Mary of Bethany. And of those three the only one that wasn’t at the cross or the tomb the next day was Mary of Bethany. Isn’t that interesting as we always see her at the feet of Jesus but not at those two times? Could it be that all her time at the feet of Jesus worshipping Him she understood something that the other Mary’s didn’t and that was that He wasn’t going to stay on that cross and His body didn’t need to be prepared for burial because it wasn’t going to stay in the tomb. Folks, when you and I stay at His feet worshipping we will have greater insight in this life than others. Is life confusing? Do you find that you’re running after Jesus only to find things not what you thought they would be? Why not try worshipping at His feet and giving what is precious to Him your heart. Mary carried this alabaster jar of extremely expensive fragrant oil with her, **which speaks of premeditation**. Maybe during those four days of Lazarus death she took inventory of what she wished she should have said and done towards her brother and now she is not going to waste another moment to say I love you. So she pours at the very best of what she had for Jesus.

There are three things about Mary’s act alone that speak to the aspect of worship:

1. Mary’s gift was humble: When a guest entered the home, usually the guest’s feet were washed with water and the guest’s head was anointed with a dab of oil or perfume. Here, Mary used this precious ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus. Then she used her hair to spread it upon Him. Her precious ointment was only good enough for His feet.
2. Mary’s gift was costly: She used a pound of oil of spikenard and based upon Judas’ estimation it was valued at a years wage. At that time spices and oils were used as an investment and such was the case as it appears this may have been her dowry. Spikenard comes from a plant found in India and she poured a whole pound of it upon His feet instead of dapping a part of it upon His head according to the other accounts she poured it upon His head and ran over His body unto it dripped upon His feet which then used her hair to wipe His feet. Mary reveal the same attitude as did David in 2 Samuel 24:24 when He purchased the threshing floor which was to be the future sight of the temple saying to Araunah, “*I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.*”
3. Mary’s gift was personal: Jewish women never let their hair down in public they always kept their hair up and covered. Notice the longevity of Mary’s devotion as it is still being remembered to day. Folks this type of worship never grows out of style. The only time they would do so would be for their husband in an act of adoration and devotion (*hence the phrase to let your hair down*).

All three of those aspects reveal to us what true worship really is doing them?

**IV. 4-11 Let her alone**

Vs. 4-11 These are the first recorded words of Judas and we can see that he was the quintessential businessman, “*Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor*?” His behavior and subsequent betrayal look all the darker when lay next to Mary’s devotion. Interesting that on the outside it might appear that Judas’ actions seem nobler than Mary but the truth is that it was all a façade. Judas’ comments serve as a contrast to true worship with regards extravagant devotion which he considered a waste of time. He does so by false pretenses of suggesting that the best way to worship Jesus is to give to man but we are told that this was only said because the man he had in mind was himself. One of the most amazing things to realize is that Jesus placed Judas in charge of the money knowing what kind of man he was. There are those that suggest that Judas was embezzling in order to purchase land to build himself a mansion so that when Jesus became the leader of the world He would live in luxury and at the time of Jesus death he was only 30 pieces of silver away from the transaction. At any rate what Jesus saw as worship in Mary’s gift Judas saw as waste and it was because he had other ideas about how to spend the money. I’m afraid that there will always be folks who tend to view giving as an act of investment instead of an act of worship.

 Friends we got to be careful here don’t we? For it is easy for us to be more concerned with commerce then we are with Christ! John’s commentary for the business like attitude is that, “*This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.*” Folks it easy for us to see in Judas this thieving attitude but the truth is the Lord has entrusted us with **a box full of time, talent and treasure** and we can begin like Judas to think that’s what inside of it is ours and not His. Judas was entrusted with the care of what had been given and over time he saw what was in that box as his instead of belonging to Jesus and to be perfectly honest at times I think we all begin to act that way at times. How can we tell if this is happening to us? Well just like Judas when what the Lord has been given is spent channeled in a different direction then you we can gauge our reaction to that. Folks what we offer the Lord is suppose to be an act of worship not an investment and in given of our time talent and treasure we are saying that, “This is yours Lord not mine!” Paul said it this way in 1 Cor. 4:7 “*What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it*?” Hear what Jesus tells Judas, “*Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always*.” Jesus isn’t saying that meeting the needs of the needy with what the Lord has provided is wrong just that making it a priority over the worship putts it in the wrong place. We are always going to have the opportunity for activity but such activity should never be at the cost of intimacy.

 Jesus said to Judas, “Let her alone”, in the KJV and I think that carries the tone of His words best. There wills always someone that will criticize your devotion isn’t there? There are those who may even profess their relationship with Jesus that will put you down for your devotion saying that you are a part of a cult. The waste made of Judas was his life! Hebrews 12:15 reminds us that we can “*fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled*”. James reminds us the tongue that can cause such division comes in it’s own cage so all we have to do is shut our moths and keep it locked up. If there is no compromise in your life then the enemy will come at you through the tongues of others as he is the accuser of the brethren. Mary came to realize that what was in that bottle that was so precious meant nothing when compared to her devotion towards Jesus. When she let down her hair she took on the role of a salve and in her devotion she was ridiculed by Judas someone in the company of Jesus. How often this has been plaid out over the century’s within the wall of His church that those who so worship are put down for their devotion. There are those who want to give their best to Jesus as an act of worship and there are those like Judas who are there to get what they can from Jesus and at times it is difficult to distinguish. Mary’s devotion filled the house with the fragrance of her love Judas words filled the house with the stench of the flesh. He could have had a years wage in the box and he would betray Jesus for just 30 pieces of silver.

Hey saints the Christian life ought to be a beautiful balance of worship, work, and witness. Did Jesus still smell this sent on the cross the sent of devotion? In Ephes. 5:2 we are told that “*To walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma*.” There were two scents that filled the room Mary’s devotion and Judas’ devotion to himself. Judas was a critic, the story is told of a young pastor at his first church and of a wealthy parishioner who made it her job to critic him after every service during which she would pick lint off his suit and pull off lose threads this went on for several month and it really began to grind of the young pastor so the day before the next Sunday he took a pool of thread an a needle and ran the thread through his coat while placing the spool in his pocket. So after the service she did what she had done each and every Sunday pick on the pastor, only this time when she went to pull the lose thread it just kept coming until she had a good size ball in her hand. Judas is picking at the thread of Mary’s devotion and will end up making a nose for himself, so it is good to heed the words of Jesus, “*Let her alone*”. Now that would make a good sign wouldn’t it, **“*Let em alone*” signed Jesus**! What Judas is suggesting is that this was too much love and devotion to show to Jesus. Folks Jesus will never criticize you if you if your love for Him is extravagant. Mary knew that He was soon going to lay down His life for her and the whole world and this was the only way she knew to say thank you.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**John 12:12-19**

**“Joyful and Triumphant”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 12-15 The hour has come**

**III. Vs. 16-19 A donkeys’ testimony**

**I. Intro.**

All four gospels record the only public demonstration that Jesus allowed in His earthly ministry. The last we read in John was that Jesus was at a quite dinner party in His honor now John skips to a few months later as Jesus is seen heading up a public parade. John’s account of the triumphant entry it is abbreviated when compared to the other gospels and knowing that John had the other gospels I suppose he knew that it was well covered so he doesn’t cover it as thoroughly as the others had and the only detail he adds is the use of palm branches. Further more John spends more time speaking of the reaction to this event from three groups as he does telling us the event it’s self.

The first thing that strikes me when looking at all four accounts is that this event does not seem to be as spontaneous in fact it seems as though Jesus orchestrated it. He is the one that made the arrangements for the donkey as well as the timing of the event. I can only guess that He did so based upon the prophetic word. Since John’s account centers more on the reaction to the parade we need to ask ourselves what this mean to three groups of people:

* Jesus
* Romans
* Jew’s

“***What did this act mean to Jesus***”:

* Certainly was an act of obedience to the Father.
* Then it was a fulfillment of the Word.
* Finally Jesus was openly announcing to the people that He indeed is the King of Israel (John 1:49), the promised Messiah.

“***What did this act mean to the Romans***”:

To the Roman’s who would keep a special watch on this day it must have been quite comical to watch a poor peasant ridding a donkey to the shouts of save now, as there was nothing triumphal about it to them. Whenever a Roman general was victorious he was given a “*Roman triumph*” when he returned to the city our equivalent in American would be a “ticker-tape parade”. The victor would be permitted to display the trophies he had won and the enemy leaders he had captured but as these Roman soldiers watched they saw none of that. Had they had the spiritual eyes of Paul that day they would have seen behind Jesus what Paul comments on in Col. 2:15 when he says that Jesus “*disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it*.” How did Jesus do that? Well according to the 14th verse He would nail it to the cross.

“***What did this act mean to the Jews***”:

That is a more difficult question to answer as it involves three different groups, the **disciples**, the **pilgrims** and the **people from Jerusalem** (religious leaders included), all of which we will look at in detail. But to some up these three Jewish groups let me just say that Jesus riding a young donkey that had never been broken seems to indicate that the young donkey had greater understanding of who his master was then did everyone else that day.

**II. Vs. 12-15 The hour has come**

Vs. 12-15 We left off in verse 11 with the words, “*Because on the account of him* (Lazarus) *many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus*”. This is the first time Jesus will say “*My hour has come*” (verse 23) up until this time He has always said “*My hour has not come*”. It is only when we go back to verse 12 and get the timing of this event that the significance comes into focus. John told us that it was 6 days before the Passover which would make this the tenth day of Nisan or Sunday the April 6th A.D. 32. There are two significant points to make about this one **practical** the other **prophetical**.

1. **Practical**: According to Exodus this was the day that every Jewish family celebrating the Passover was to choose a lamb to sacrifice. They would then give the lamb to the priest who would watch it for four days to make sure it was with out spot (flaw) or blemish (defect). So on this day as thousands of lambs were being selected by families for the sacrifice came the “*Lamb of God*” with out spot or blemish into the city to the cries of “*Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel*!” Perhaps the people were thinking of Psalm 118:25-26 “*Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.*” But as the people were doing that according to Luke 19:41 Jesus wept as He saw the city. Now you know what “*Hosanna*” means don’t you? Well it means **save now**. Ah but before those words the psalmist say’s in verses 22-24 “*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*” At Jesus birth the angels announce that there was “***peace on earth***”, and in Luke 19:38 as Jesus rode towards Jerusalem the “***city of peace***” the people said that there was “***peace in heaven***” but without the “***Prince of Peace***” in their hearts there would be no peace. You may remember that in Luke’s account in 19:39-40 that “*some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, Teacher, rebuke Your disciples. But He answered and said to them, I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out*.” They were selecting a lamb that was going to be sacrificed for their sins at the very moment when the Lamb of God could “Save now”. The author of Hebrews in 10:4 says, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins*.”
2. **Prophetical**: Ah but that is not the only significant point to the timing of this. Here we have to go back to Daniel 9:25 where the Lord spoke through Daniel saying, “*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times*.” If you do the math you will come up with 483 years and Daniel said that those 483 years would start at the command to restore and build Jerusalem. It just so happens that we have the date according to Neh. 2:1 that this decree went forth as Nehemiah went before king Artaxerxes on the “*month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes*”. We know that King Artaxerxes reign began 465 B.C. and 20 years later makes it 445 B.C. So the first of Nisan would have been our March 14th 445 B.C. The Jews used a 12 month 360 day calendar and then they would put in a 13th month when necessary to correct the calendar and if you place the use of that calendar with the date of March 14th 445 B.C. and count out the 483 years or 173,880 days the date according to Daniels’ prophecy when Messiah the Prince would come would be on April 6th A.D. 32 and that was this very day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey to the cheers of Hosanna and the waving of palm branches. No wonder Jesus cried out in Matthew 23:37 “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*” In Daniel 9:26 the prophet said “*And after the sixty-two weeks* ***Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself****; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined*.” So Daniel clearly saw that Jesus entry was one linked to the cross.

There are there are two other things that are remarkable about this event and has to do with what **people were waving** and what **Jesus was riding**.

1. Vs. 13 “*A great multitude…took branches of palms and went out to meet Him*”: Every year we celebrate this event as Christians calling it “*Palm Sunday*” but this was not some spontaneous event for the Jews as they had done this before. You see around two hundred years before this after a successful revolt led by Judas Maccabee (*whose name means the hammer*) over the blasphemous Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes the people celebrated the victory over oppression by waving palm branches. In fact it became such a symbol that it was minted on the back of their coins. The **palm branches were a symbol of Jewish nationalism** as such this was little more that a patriotic rally, and the crowds looked to Jesus as a political and national savior, but not a spiritual savior. So 200 years later a multitude gathered and cut down palm branches to celebrate the coming victory when they thought a new “*hammer*” had come thinking He would come and break the yoke of bondage and oppression of the Romans. Oh friends don’t miss this truth as Jesus came into Jerusalem to defeat a much greater oppressor then the Roman’s, He came as the “***Savior***” not the “*Hammer*” to break apart the bondage that our sin has upon our lives. Folks the greatest oppressor in our lives isn’t some political force, it’s not the economy or some outside enemy, NO it’s that fellow you see in the mirror each and every day! So how did these people respond when Jesus wasn’t the hammer but the Savior? Well they changed their words of “***Save now***” to “***Die now***” and little did they know that in order to “***save now***” He needed to “***die now***”. I find the response interesting as it is always easier for you and I to praise the Lord when we think He is going to do what we think He should do and whole other thing when what He does is tell us to go wait at the foot of the cross.
2. Vs. 14-15 The final remarkable thing about this is the fact that Jesus came riding a donkey. In Zech. 9:9 the prophet said, “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.*” But why not a horse as Kings didn’t ride donkey’s they came on horses? Well the rabbis had a theory that said that the Messiah would come ridding on a white horse if the nation was ready to receive her Messiah but He would come riding on a donkey if they weren’t ready. So when will the nation be ready? When will the Messiah come riding upon a white horse? Well the prophet predicted that the nation wouldn’t be ready but in the next chapter he said, “*And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn*.” (Zech. 12:10). So according to Rev. 19:11 that will happen at the end of the tribulation as John declares that he “*saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war*.”

**III. Vs. 16-19 A donkeys’ testimony**

Vs. 16-19 The traditional view of the “*Triumphal Entry*” is that it was long over due and the people’s response was a genuine expression of their understanding of Jesus right to rule the nation. But the first thing that indicates that this may not be accurate is that this multitude had come to the feast and as such were not residents of Jerusalem but were pilgrims many from other countries. In Matthews account we are told that Jesus drew near the city from the Mount of Olives and upon this route these pilgrims cried Hosanna and waved their palm branches. Matthew goes on to tells us when the whole multitude arrived in the city the reaction of the inhabitants of the city was far from the “***save now***” that they had chanted along the way as they only asked “*Who is this*” to which the pilgrims said, “*This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee*”. (21:10-11) A further indication that not very many understood the significance of the event at the time is John’s own words in verse 16 where he admits that, “*His disciples didn’t understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him*.” Apparently the pilgrims who started the parade did so because they had heard of the sign Jesus had done in raising Lazarus from the dead. The people saw Jesus raising of Lazarus as a sign that He was indeed the Messiah. “*One who could summon a dead man back to life would certainly be able to deliver the holy city from the yoke of Caesar*.” And the Pharisees, well they too didn’t get what was going on as they saw the crowds and commented, “*Look, the world has gone after Him.*” In fact it was this reaction that changed the plan of the Pharisees not to take Jesus during the feast to arresting Him out of desperation at the time they didn’t want to.

Jesus also knew of the 9th chapter of Daniel as to the specific day of the event.

John records three responses to Jesus triumphal entry:

* 1. Vs. 16 First we have the group that John himself belonged to and he says, “*His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him*.” They were stupefied until He was glorified, “*What’s all the commotion, waving of branches, the shouten of save now*?” Friends there are a lot of things going on in our lives now that seem to be confusing and causing lots of commotion don’t they? Hey but wait a minute perhaps the problem lies in the fact that we aren’t noticing Who’s riding through it all, Jesus. Hear me out on this one it is when we look at Jesus glorified that all the commotion will clear up in His glory. There are a lot of times that it takes me seeing Him glorified for me to understand the things written.
	2. Vs. 17-18 That brings me to the next group those that had been their when Jesus had raised Lazarus testified. The multitude was recognizing Jesus to be the King but the king they wanted Him to be and soon they will reject Him. Sense the time of Jesus there has always been folks who have watched Jesus bring back folks from the dead and because of that some have come asking Him to “save now”. Friends this Christmas as we gather let’s not forget that we are still the greatest proof that Jesus’ words are true, that He has come as the “Savior” not the “Hammer”! All of us according to Paul’s words in Ephes. 2:1 “*He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, were once dead*” so why not come out of the tomb of the world and start living in freedom and joy.
	3. Vs 19 Finally we are given the last group, the Pharisees who in 11:57 said “*if anyone knew where He was, he should report it*” now have found Him and calls it too late as all the “*world has gone after Him*”. They viewed Jesus a threat instead a savior and because of it they were bummed out.

Oh the Irony as the crowds cried “*save now*”:

* + - The disciples didn’t “*understand now*”
		- The Pharisees couldn’t “*find how*”
		- The multitudes would in four days would change their shouts from “*save now*” to “*die now*”!

Finally it appears the triumphal entry wasn’t “triumphal” as far as Jesus was concerned as we are told in Luke’s account that as He entered the city He wept. So as the tears ran down His face He said in 19:42-44 “*If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation*.” Jesus came on a donkey; His crown was made of thrones, his scepter a broken reed His triumphal entry is really ours friends.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**John 12:20-36**

**“Sir we wish to see Jesus”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 20-26 Subtraction to multiplication**

**III. Vs. 27-36 Elevation to exaltation**

**I. Intro.**

The 12th chapter provides for us Jesus’ last public teaching opportunity, though He will be teaching the disciples and those gathered near Him. Based upon the text this message of Jesus was meant for the ears of the Greeks but why would the Greeks the most educated bunch of folks seek an audience with a Jewish rabbi? The Greeks are best described in the words of Paul in Acts 17:21 where we are told that they “*spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing*.” You may recall that Greek mythology was a mere representation of their own sinful life style which was engaged in parties and orgies. These had become frustrated with the Greek life and had heard of the stories of a God who came down as a man but continued to live as a God. Yet with that said they have travelled along way to hear from Jesus which suggests that the philosophies and mythologies of the world didn’t hold any true answers and they sought not another philosophy but a person.

Perhaps you’re like these Greeks as we start a new year and you want to make an appointment with Jesus, you have a few things you liked to ask Him concerning your situation. That’s perfectly alright remember in Matthew’s gospel we are told that a group of gentile magi followed a star from the east to seek Jesus near the time of His birth. And now here we are told of a group of gentiles that have come to inquire of Jesus at His death. **The point is that the brightness of His glory is always drawing people to Him in good times and in bad times**.

**II. Vs. 20-26 Subtraction to multiplication**

Vs. 20-22 The Greek indicates that these folks kept asking Phillip to see Jesus so they were persistent. Now probably they had come into contact with Judaism through the Old testament but had not became Jews. Interesting that the Greeks picked out of the disciples the two that had Greek names Phillip and Andrew to see if they could gain an audience with Jesus. At any rate they came to Phillip and he went to Andrew and Andrew and Phillip went to Jesus. Andrew is always bringing folks to Jesus and it never seemed to matter what they originally came for or the doubts they may have had Andrew treated them all the same by bringing everything and everyone to Jesus.

Vs. 23-24 From the beginning Jesus’ ministry in 2:4 He spoke of “*His hour not yet coming*” but here for the first time He says that His hour has come and by that He means the very purpose of His coming His death burial and resurrection. At every juncture of His life His hour had not come so no one could lay a hand on Him not Herod at His birth nor satan at His temptation nor the hoards of angry religious folks during His earthly ministry.

Now in Jesus’ reply it appears at first glance that Jesus is brushing off these seeking Greeks but in reality Jesus’ is providing the answer to their request to see Him. Further more Jesus’ reply was to be delivered by Philip and Andrew. The first thing we notice in Jesus’ words is the analogy He employs, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*” The use of the phrase “*Most assuredly*” was akin to saying “*listen up, pay attention*” which is then followed by the analogy which is one though the realm of agriculture. Why did Jesus employ an illustration using agriculture instead of Biblical prophecy? Well Jesus knew His audience would not have known the prophetic word. The Greeks were educated but not in Old Testament scripture they were educated in the sciences, philosophy and nature, so Jesus spoke to them in the realm of their understanding. Friends it does us no good to quote scripture at folks who don’t understand it in the first place it is better for those folks to put theology into their understanding.

So what was Jesus trying to communicate to the Greeks? The context of Jesus’ words come from the Greeks trying to “***see Jesus***” to which Jesus tells them they won’t truly be able to “***see***” Him until after His death and resurrection. If I was too hold up a grain of wheat to you it would not seem very impressive, in fact it would appear to be plain with no real purpose. Ah but plant that one seed into the earth and wait and see what it will be able to accomplish as it will bare much fruit. In fact if you took that grain of wheat and planted it and kept repeating that process of planting every grain of wheat that each stock produced in 14 years it would fill up every inch of soil in the earth. Jesus word’s hit the crux of the matter as folks have no problem with Jesus as a ***person*** but they have a huge problem with Jesus with regards to His ***purpose***. Jesus the teacher, Jesus the prophet, Jesus the miracle working liberator, no problem but Jesus the Savior of our souls big problem. Why? Well because if Jesus is the savior of our souls it means that our souls need saving and if our souls need to be saving then we can’t keep living the way we want to.

Hey folks, the answer to those seeking Jesus is always to be found at the cross; in fact the answer to all the questions we are facing can be found there. “*Why Lord, why*?” we cry out and the answer is “*My arms are open wide for you and I love you*!” “***I alone can make sense out that which makes no sense. Watch and wait and you will see what I can produce in My love from that which has fallen from your life and is swallowed up in the hopelessness of this life. Why I’ll water it in My word and daily I’ll shine the rays of my love upon that seed and some day you will recall not just the sorrow and despair but you will see a field of fruitfulness***.” The measure my friends of God’s greatness is best seen not in His creating something out of nothing but in ***His recreating beauty from ashes***. That is what the Lord promises in Isaiah 61:3 when He says through Isaiah “*console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified*.”

The kernel of grain left alone can produce nothing but if it is buried and dies it can then multiply. Three thousand-year-old grains of wheat found in the tombs of the Pharaohs were found to be absolutely the same as any grain of wheat today. In fact, when they were planted they began to grow even though they were totally unchanged for 3,000 years or more. So to you with you and me if we want to be fruitful **we will need to die too multiply** and in this instance contrary to mathematic principals “***subtraction***” is the only way to “***addition***”. Paul would say to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 15:31 “*I die daily*” now in saying this he can’t be speaking of dying physically because you can’t do that more than once so Paul us speaking of dying to the old nature the self centered life.

Vs. 25-26 Notice that Jesus never grants that audience but sends His disciples with His words, “*You can’t see Me except through the cross; you won’t know Me unless you come to see me through My death, burial and resurrection*.” In this last teaching He tells everyone listening the key to living life: “*He who loves his life will lose it*”. We are called to hate our life in the sense that we freely give it up for God. Our life is precious to us, but only because it is something we can give to Jesus.

So Jesus followed His words with, “*Tell them that if they want to follow me they are going to have to die to the self life*” that was exactly the opposite of what the Greek philosophies suggested ads they said indulge yourself. The key to living life is not by pushing yourself to the top, looking out after number one but rather dying to your self centered life, that my friend is the key to a joy filled life. **Here friends is the great Christian paradox, the unmistakable mark of an authentic gospel**: It begins with dying, with a cross. If the gospel that you hear preached on the radio, the television, or wherever, does not begin with a cross, does not begin by telling you that something in you has to die, it is not the true gospel. This is the identifying mark. “*He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life*.” **That doesn't mean you have to hate yourself, it means you must recognize that living for yourself will never supply what you really want out of life**. A. W. Tozer said, “*The cross is the symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent end of the human being. The man in Roman times who took up his cross and started down the road had already said goodbye to his friends. He was not coming back. He was not going out to have his life redirected. He was going out to have it ended. The cross made no compromise, modified nothing, and spared nothing. It slew all of the man completely and for good. It did not try to keep on good terms with its victim. It struck swift and hard and when it had finished its work the man was no more*.” If you belong to Jesus, every day will have its cross, every day will have something you ought to do but you don't feel like doing, that is your cross. Jesus said in Luke 9:23 “*He who follows me must take up his cross daily and follow me*”. Every day has its bit of death in order that it might bring forth life. The end result is a life so glorious, so complete, so obviously what we were made for that I can hardly find the words to describe it. But the testimony of millions is that it's all true. Life comes only out of death.

**III. Vs. 27-36 Elevation to exaltation**

Vs. 27-30 John does not mention the Garden of Gethsemane even though he was their but he does include an incident which has sometimes been called “*little Gethsemane*” for it reflects the same agony of spirit felt by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. This incident occurred perhaps two days before the experience in the garden.

Jesus saw beyond the **crisis of the cross** to the Glory of obedience and friends that is what we need to do as well. Jesus used the image of a seed to illustrate the great spiritual truth that **there can be no glory without suffering, no fruitful life without death, no victory without surrender**. Notice that Jesus didn’t say “*What shall* ***I do***?” but “*What shall* ***I say***?” He knew what His purpose was and it was that which guided Him not anything else. In the hour of suffering and surrender my friends there are *only two choices we can pray, either “Father, save me!” or “Father*, *glorify Thy name*!” Friend’s God’s promises to us are not based upon our being “***comfortable***” they are based upon us being “***conformable***”. That is what Paul reveals to us in Romans 8:29 where we read “*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be* ***conformed to the image of His Son***”. That is God’s work in us conforming us into the image of His Son. If we are looking for comfortable lives, then we will protect our plans and desires, save our lives, and never be planted. But if we yield our lives and let God plant us, we will never be alone but will have the joy of being fruitful to the glory of God.

I love the fact here that in Jesus words He is honest, “*now My soul is troubled*” as Jesus pondered the reality of the cross He realized its implications that becoming man’s sin offering brought namely momentary separation from loving fellowship with the Father. Next notice that Jesus clearly had a choice, “*what shall I say? Father save Me from this hour*?” “*Shall I put My desire above My calling and obedience; shall I put this above others*?” Then instantly comes the reply, “*But for this purpose I came to this hour*.” And what was that purpose? Well Jesus says, “*Father, glorify Your name*.” Jesus gives you and me a great way to always evaluate the decisions we face:

1. Always put purpose above your person: So many decisions we make center around how they benefit us personally with little or no regard to how they work with in our purpose and calling.
2. Secondly, we need to ask ourselves, “Does this decision bring glory to me or to God?” Friends you do those two things and you will stay on coarse.
3. Third, remember that the cross is much more than and instrument of death it as an emblem of Love and Grace so when we focus upon His love and grace we will go towards self denial. Hear now how Paul put it to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 4:17 “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*”.

This is the third time the voiced of the Father thundered from heaven, first at His baptism, then on the mount of Transfiguration and finally at the end of His ministry as He spoke of the cross. The interesting thing is that each one of these times had to do with Jesus’ death:

* + Baptism is a symbol of death
	+ At the transfiguration according to Luke 9:31 He spoke with Elijah and Moses about His death
	+ Finally here right after His words about the cross.

My point? Well do you ever feel as though God doesn’t talk much to you, you have a hard time hearing from Him? Well may I make an observation based upon the fact that every time Jesus spoke of dying the Father thundered His words of encouragement? Where do you stand in reference to dying to your self centered nature? The truth I have found in my own life is that ***I always seem to hear God’s word the best when I’m surrendering the most***! Now those around Jesus just heard thunder but Jesus heard the words and so too when the Lord speaks to our hearts some will hear noise others may call it a religious experience but we will know that it was the Lord speaking.

 I love the fact that Jesus proclaims our victory here don’t you? The outcome was not in doubt the moment the decision to go to the cross was made and sin and satan were going to be defeated. Isn’t interesting that once sin was dealt with satan is a goner? Folks when we give into the flesh and choose to be disobedient we give satan something to grab onto in our lives. In 1 John 1:7 we are told that “*if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” So as John tells us in 1 John 1:9 “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.” Now the word “*confess*” just means to “*speak the same as*” in other words when we agree with Jesus about our sin then “*He is faithful and just to forgive us*”. Friends Jesus blood covering us makes us “*slippery*” to satan’s hold so why not agree with Jesus about our sin and keep the devil at bay in your life.

Vs. 31-36 It is interesting to note that the Roman’s, the Jew’s and satan thought that it was the cross that was judging Jesus but reality the crossed that defeat the world system and satan thus securing victory. The Greek word used for lifted up in verse 32 has a deliberate double meaning as it means a literal “***elevation***” (*as in being raised up on a cross*) as well as “***exaltation***” (*being raised in rank or honor*). So in this word is the idea that His elevation of the cross caused is exaltation. The people had been taught of the triumph of the Messiah but they were unaware that His triumph was tied to His suffering. The people didn’t understand the two comings as they understood that the Messiah would live forever and here was the One they thought was the Messiah saying that He was going to die. These folks wanted to talk theology with the Jesus and He wanted to talk relationship with them saying, “*While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.*”

Jesus explains what the glory consists of by listing three things:

1. Vs. 31a **First**, “*Now is the judgment of this world*.” In the cross men will be able to see what is wrong with the philosophy of the world, what is evil in what sounds so right and necessary. Here the world's phony values are exposed the fact is you cannot be a Christian and continue to live on the basis that your life belongs to yourself. That is the life of the world and all of that is judged in the cross.
2. Vs. 31b **Secondly**, Jesus declares, “*Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.*” Because we are continually victims of the deceptions of Satan we do not realize how total is his control of the human race. All men blindly follow demonic delusions that Satan sends into the world. We find ourselves manipulated by Satanic values and have no idea of how helpless we are to change, apart from Christ. The great word of the gospel is that when we believe in Jesus and follow him, we are freed from the power of Satan, transferred into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love. For the first time we can do something permanent about the habits that destroy us, hurting us and others, wrecking our plans and sabotaging our highest hopes and dreams. In the cross the power of the devil over the human race was broken and deliverance to individuals was made possible.
3. Vs. 32 **Thirdly**, Jesus says, “*I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*” John tells us what they mean when he adds, "He said this to show by what death he was to die." These words of Jesus are clearly a reference to the cross: By means of the cross he would draw all people to himself. No one can escape Jesus of Nazareth. He stands at the end of every path. Though we may neglect him and be indifferent to him now, there will come a day when we will have to face him.

Did you notice that the time of judgment of this world coincides with Jesus suffering and victory on the cross? The instrument of the world’s judgment of Jesus becomes that which mankind will be judged upon the cross. We are coming to a time when our enemy satan will be forever cast out, his evil influence forever broken, oh what a glorious time that will be.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**II. 1:19-12:50 Public portraits (Seven signs in His public ministry)**

**10:1-12:50 New life (Third, fourth and fifth truths)**

**John 12:37-50**

**“Our own judge and jury”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 37-43 Surprising results**

**III. Vs. 44-50 Final public words**

**I. Intro.**

Last week we read of Jesus surprise response to the Greek’s desire to “see Jesus”. In His response Jesus told them if they wanted to truly “see Him” that it was only possible if they saw Him in His purpose (the cross) and was willing to follow Him there as well. To illustrate this John now gives us the results of Jesus 3 ½ year ministry on earth as he interjects his commentary here as to why so many who had witnessed Jesus’ miracles yet didn’t respond to becoming “sons of the Light”. The first thing of note is the context as to how John viewed Jesus miracles they were “***signs***”. There is a tendency to make the sign the destination rather than something pointing towards a destination. Jesus worked His miracles to point people towards Himself instead folks saw the work marveled in it but failed to see what these signs told them about the very One who did them. Time and again we see this example in the Word that people would witness Jesus work and fail to read the sign and then hear the Word and realize what the sign had been pointing towards.

 Friends let that be a “sign” for us that Jesus has already given us the greatest “sign” of His love and it’s the cross so now we need only be in His word as “*Faith comes be hearing and hearing by the word of God*.”

**II. Vs. 37-43 Surprising results**

Vs. 37-38 John is about to record the final public words of Jesus having already told us in verse 36 that after these things He departed to spend the final days with His followers. But before John gives us those final words he summarizes the results of Jesus public ministry and I must say it is quite revealing. He declares to us that although Jesus “*had done* ***many signs*** *before them, they* ***did not*** *believe in Him.*” Now that flies in the face of common thought that it would have been much easier to believe in Jesus if we would have been able to witness the signs that He did. I mean show us one blind man that can now see, one lame man that could now walk, one dead man now breathing and we would say that’s enough for me, after all “*seeing is believing right*”? The key to understanding this passage before is to be found ironically in the word “*believe*” which repeated 8 times in 14 verses.

 Jesus authenticated His words with His works and yet the results are not what we would expect. To further understand this dilemma we have to remember that John only hand selected the “***signs***” that he has recorded in fact we are told in chapter 20:30-31 that “*truly* ***Jesus did many other signs*** *in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these 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.*” **Just how many other signs did Jesus do**? Well John tells us the amount of volume in chapter 21:25 where he declares that “*There are also many other things that Jesus did, which* ***if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written*.**” That changes our perspective on this a bit don’t you think? **The evidence of Jesus words about Himself were *constantly* being authenticated by His works so that the outcome should have overloaded the senses bringing everyone into belief**, yet John declares that they did not believe. How is that possible, that the general result of Jesus public ministry with His works constantly bearing with His words was unbelief?

John is answering the hypothetical question, “*If Jesus was so great, why didn’t everybody believe on Him?*” And to do so he takes his readers to two prophecies in Isaiah the first one in the 53rd chapter and the second one in the 6th chapter and he is going to explain the unbelief of the people in verses 38-41 and what we find is a **threefold progression** that was prophesied in the book of Isaiah.

1. Vs. 37-38 They **would not believe:** To understand this John quotes Isa. 53 which predicts the Messiahs mission but before it speaks of His mission in the very first verse John records the words here saying, “*Lord, who has believed our report? To whom has the arm has the arm of the Lord been revealed*?” In spite of all the clear evidence that was presented to them, the nation **would not believe**. They could not say that Jesus didn’t do any signs among them He raised the dead, the lame walked, the blind saw he feed the multitudes twice. So the first thing that we learn is that in spite of the constant words and works of Jesus God knew that this would not be enough to convince most people to believe. Why? Well they simply “*would not believe*” the lack of belief ***had nothing to do with a lack of evidence, the refusal to trust was not based upon a drought of information that was not the case and God said so 750 years before the event took place***. In Luke 10:13 Jesus said “*Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes*.”

Sometimes people will ask what about the Pigmies in Africa, you know the ones who have never heard about Jesus? Well hear we have the answer to that and it is rather simple it is not what we don’t hear that judges us it is what we have heard and chosen to reject that does. That is what Paul tells us in Romans 1:20 “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*”. I’m not certain what will happen but I kind of think that every time people were told the truth concerning Jesus, every time His character came into the conscience mind will be replayed and it will be that which each and every person heard and witnessed about Jesus that will rise up and testify against them the word will end up being a witness for or against them depending upon what they have done with what they have heard.

Vs. 39-41 So reviewing this John informs us of the result of Jesus constant signs was unbelief because they “***would not believe***” now John tells us in verse 39 they “***could not believe***”. There was a group around Jesus who did believe and there were many who had trusted in Him still the majority of people would not believe because they “*could not believe*”.

1. Vs. 39 They **could not believe:** As they continued to resist the evidence they hardened their heart to the truth and became those who could not believe. Those who did not believe in verse 37 became those who could not believe in verse 39 because they would not God allowed them to have what they wanted. Since their wills were already made up God gave them over to it so that their minds would match their wills. That is the point of the quote in verse 38 as it is from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah in fact it is the very first verse where the Lord says to Isaiah, “*Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*” Isaiah will go one and speak about the suffering of the Messiah in verse 4-6 to say “*Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*” So **before the Lord spoke to Isaiah He told Isaiah that the nation wouldn’t believe the manor by which the Lord would save the world.** Paul describes this condition in Romans 1:18 where he says that the “*wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who* ***suppress the truth*** *in unrighteousness*”. That is why we need to heed the word of Isaiah in 55:6 where he admonishes us to “*Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*”

What I’m about to say may seem a bit odd but **from a purely statistical perspective I know of no one who would say that Jesus public ministry was a success**. With all the great claims and promises Jesus made then supported those with the proof that He could alone fulfill every promise by His works there were only a handful of people who believed Him, those my friends are just the facts. Least you think that some how I’m finding fault with Jesus method I am not what I am saying is that the problem lay not in Jesus Method in fact I believe that the problem was in the heart of those who saw and heard the evidence, “*they could not believe*”.

That brings me to the third and final progression that John brings up:

1. Vs. 40-41 That they **should not believe:** John quotes from Isaiah again only this time from the 6th chapter. So when a person who would not believe continues to do so until they become those could not believe God grants them what they want so that they should not believe other wise He would violate their free will. You see I am of the opinion that the evidence was so overwhelming that it was enough to make:
	* **Stones cry out in worship**
	* **Donkey’s that had never been ridden to submit**
	* **Wind and waves becoming still at His mere words**
	* **Bones and other parts of the human body becoming whole at His command**

**That the human mind had no chance but to become convinced but in so doing God would be forcing the head to do what the heart had no intention of doing**! Now my opinion is supported in the words of Isaiah 6 where we are told that, “*He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts*”. To recap; they “*would not believe*” because they “*could not believe*” so God said, “***they should not believe***” because if He hadn’t done so “*They would see with their eyes, understand with their hearts and He should heal them*” but **it would be against their wills, man would lose their freedom of choice in the face of the evidence**! Isaiah was told that he was to “*Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive*.” (Isaiah 6:9) So God confirms the decision of the unbelieving heart, He does not create it but neither will He violate it.

Vs. 42-43 There is yet another group who do believe but because they love the praises of men more than God won’t admit so publically as we are told as a result of Jesus constant words and works and that “*even among the rulers many believed in Him*” and as positive as that is John goes on to say, “*but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue*.” The evidence was overwhelming enough to elicit belief but not enough to risk expulsion form their former life. John tells us that even among the rulers many believed of Jesus yet they publically denied doing so for they feared being put out of the synagogue because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Now one of those was no doubt Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who we are told in John 19:38 “*was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews*.” Now I mention these two because obviously they didn’t always stay in the state of believing but not doing so openly. You may recall the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:32 where He warns “*whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven*.”

Mere intellectual agreement isn’t enough with out personal commitment because it is with the heart one believes and with the mouth one confesses and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. There is no neutral ground with Jesus as He said in Matthew 12:30 “*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad*.” There are many in the world today like these rulers who have a conviction with regards to the Christ but not enough to cause them to confess as much to those near them as they wish to remain secret saints. Convinced of the truth but not to the point of confessing it is a cowardly way live but there were some who in time could no longer live that way and were among those who came forward at Jesus death. John tells us that the reason behind such cowardly action was that, “*they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*”. **What brought about conviction with confession**? I suggest to you it was the reality of seeing their mere conviction hanging upon a cross, Jesus conviction went the full distance to His confession seeing upon His willingness to die for the sin of all!

**III. Vs. 44-50 Final public words**

Vs. 44-50 Finally John records after the fact Jesus final public words in light of the results of His public ministry. John says that “*Jesus cried out*” a phrase that describes the manor in which He said these His closing words, that Jesus did so with a tremendously strong emotional appeal.

1. Vs. 44-45 The first thing in His appeal is the **relational connection** His with the Father and those because of their belief in Him are also connected relationally with the Father. These words serve both as an admonishment as well as a warning that not believing Jesus words will be what judges a person. John will elaborate on this further in his first letter where he says, “*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” Jesus in Luke 19:10 said that “*the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” It isn’t Him who judges us it is our own actions if we continue to not trust Him.
2. Vs. 46-48 The next thing of note is the **personal connection** to Jesus one in which Jesus clarifies as changing their address from abiding in darkness to abiding with Him in the light. He had brought back into this world that which it lost the “*light of life*” which is brought into every heart that believes His words (and that is the word rhema). His words were to be for salvation not condemnation, He came to liberate not captivate. But the rejection of that which saves will in turn judge the very person who rejects them. Jesus tells us something very interesting here in verse 47-48 and that is that He has not come to judge the world but to save it and in rejecting Him a person judges themselves. It is very much like a person who fall overboard and someone throws them a life preserver but they choose to not put it on. The life preserver wasn’t thrown overboard to judge them but if a person rejects it they have judged themselves by rejecting it to save them.
3. Vs. 49-50 Finally Jesus goes back to His relationship with the Father but the **emphasis has to do with authority** and as such has **with a sense of finality and eternal consequences**. Jesus says that if you believe in Him then you believe in the Father and that is interesting because people would like to tell you that you can believe in God without trusting in God the Son but Jesus says no. Jesus concludes His last public teaching with a promise of eternal life if they will but receive His word and that His word equals the word of God. Friends you and I have it so much easier to believe because we are looking back at the finished work of Christ and simply asked to believe the evidence after the fact while these folks were asked to believe the evidence prior to the cross, so we truly have no excuse not to trust.

And with these words Jesus public ministry ends with only a little over have the book completed. John has carefully and purposefully chosen what words and works he included in his report and even gave us the results of those 3 ½ years upon those who witnessed them, “they did not believe”. Had the book closed at this point and not given us nine chapters to weigh the events of the final few ours of Jesus life I reckon that His name would have long ago been forgotten as little would have come of his time upon this earth. But the results of these nine chapters is the fact that we are here reading this text testifying of having personally met Him and demonstrating as much from the position of a transformed life. Friends never under estimate the power the cross has upon all of mankind as many who heard the words and saw the works that didn’t believe having known of His death and His temporary burial have gone on record to the point of death themselves declaring that that same tomb that held Him so briefly is and always be empty.

 The clear teaching in this section is that the Word offers salvation to those who will but trust its message but the very word that can save will judge if rejected. In John 15:22 Jesus said, “*If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin*.” The sad truth is that many who reject Jesus do so because they are more afraid of what man will say about them then what God will say about them. Do you realize that all a person has to do to go to hell is nothing! Procrastinate and keep doing so until your heart becomes hardened to the truth to the point where you will not be “judge” and the truth is He came to save it is those who reject His salvation that are judging themselves. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:9 “*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” Next week we will pick up in chapter 13 with Jesus huddling together with His team in the upper room.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**a. 13:1-14:15 Prophecies (sixth truth 14:6 one direction)**

**John 13:1-17**

**“Loving service”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-5 The love of service**

**III. Vs. 6-11 The receiving of service**

**IV. Vs. 12-17 The teaching of service**

**I. Intro.**

Chapters 13-17 constitute Jesus fair well address to His disciple’s words that He wanted to impart to them before the cross and He starts it off not with words but rather with action. Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Sunday, and on Monday had cleansed the temple. Tuesday was a day of conflict as the religious leaders sought to trip Him up and get evidence to arrest Him. These events are recorded in Matthew 21-25. Wednesday was probably a day of rest, but on Thursday He met in the Upper Room with His disciples in order to observe Passover.

It seems every generation has realized that there is something that the world and this life just can’t live without and it’s LOVE. Soon after the death of President Kennedy in 1965 Burt Bacharach wrote the words to a song that that echoed this sentiment and it went like this, “*What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It’s the only thing that there’s just too little of*. *What the world needs now is love, sweet love, no not just for some but for everyone.* ” And in this section Jesus will define just what this love looks like. Hours away from the greatest demonstration of love the world will ever know Jesus called the fellows to a dinner and He told them that what they needed more of was “*Love sweet love*”, not more zeal, dedication or knowledge but LOVE. Skipping ahead Jesus will tell them in verses 34-35 “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*.” But before He teaches them He sets up a demonstration at the dinner table.

**II. Vs. 1-5 The love of service**

Vs. 1 John gives us the timing of the event as being before the Feast which would be the last meal He would share with His disciples. Jesus’ life was lived in anticipation of this hour He knew when it had not yet come (John 2:4) and He knew when His hour had come (12:23). From the human point of view, it meant suffering; but from the divine point of view, it meant glory.

In all the other gospel accounts the central part of this meal is the communion meal they will share, the Lord’s supper or the Eucharist but John does not even mention it and in it’s place John speaks of the washing of feet which he places some where during the Passover meal. The most important thing to look at in understanding this event isn’t so much what Jesus did as to ask the question why He did so and John tells us:

1. Vs. 1a “*When Jesus knew His hour had come*”: So the first thing John tells us is that there was a specific timing to the foot washing, **it was a divinely appointed time.** He was going to depart from this world and return to the Father and loving service to one another needed to be understood. With Jesus’ public ministry now concluded His hour as come and in around 24 hours Jesus will hang on the cross so He spends the final hours ministering to His disciples. The cross of Christ is not mentioned in this chapter but its shadow is over all His words:
* It was the cross that indicated His hour had come
* It was through the avenue of the cross that Jesus would depart from this world
* It was through the instrument of the cross that Jesus demonstrated His love to the end
1. Vs.1b “*Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end*”: The second thing we see is that it was **motivated out of His love**. Within a few hours He would be hanging upon the cross for the sin of the world. In John 15:13 He will say, “*Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*” and here He demonstrates this prior to the cross where sacrifice and service become intertwined. Notice that John who has had 70 years to reflect upon this says that “***having loved*** *His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end*.” “***Having loved***”, suggests that John reflected upon the time spent with Jesus over the course of those years and peers into what at times perhaps he didn’t always identify as love. The summation of those three years of so many signs was that “*they did not believe*” but the summation upon John’s reflection was also that “*He loved His own*”. Friends you and I will have all eternity to reflect on how many times “*He loved His own*”, oh forgive us Lord for our blindness of your loving us! Loving His “*own*” doesn’t diminish the love Jesus has for all but it does suggest that those He has a relationship with can enter into that love in a way that the world can not. Finally we are told that He loved them to the end, that His love continued to the uttermost, though His life was ending His love didn’t. Amazing love especially in light of the fact that His disciples had given up on Him, stopped caring about Him and only cared about themselves. Oh how I am personally challenged by this as I believe that we can often act this way towards the people of the body of Christ as well. In every given situation our words and works will either cause us to stand up on a hill a hurl stones at folks or it will cause us to go down into the valley and help carry someone’s cross up the hill of Calvary (2 Sam 16:5-14). A lot of folks will say they love you, write it upon a piece of paper or send it in a card but won’t be willing to travel with you baring your burden as Paul admonished the Galatians 6:2 “*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*.”
2. Vs. 2 “*And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him*”: The NIV renders this “*The evening meal was being served*” and I believe that was most likely the case as verse 30 indicates that the supper was not ended but was rather in progress when Jesus stopped the meal and served His disciples. Jesus was always aware that there was an invisible kingdom that surrounds us powers of darkness that are at work in the sons of disobedience as Paul describes in Ephesians 2:2. Of further interest is that shortly before this Judas gave himself over to satan for the purpose of betrayal and based upon John 6:70 a year earlier Jesus had already recognized Judas was and adversary or devil. Apparently prior to the meal the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way that they may kill Jesus when Judas went his way and conferred with them how he might betray Jesus to them. Some suggest that it may better translated that the devil had already made up his mind that Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, should betray him. Folks satan was looking for a man to betray Jesus, and had probably been “cultivating” Judas for a long time. But now the choice was made and Judas was his man.
3. Vs. 3a “*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands”*: Our Lord knew he was the director, the one in charge of events. He was not, therefore, a victim of a “Passover plot.” He knew what he had to do, and he himself would see that it was carried out. In John 3:35 Jesus said “*The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand*”, so for 3 ½ years Jesus had known that the victory was already won. Friends what difference would it make in our attitude and action if we lived in the reality that all things have already been given into Jesus hands and it is those very hands that were pierced? Folks Jesus went into this situation as a victor, not as a victim. Now these words are an important context as Jesus is about to stoop in humble service to His disciples but in so doing He do it from weakness but rather from a position of victory as all authority.
4. Vs. 3b “*and that He had come from God and was going to God*”: Jesus knew exactly who he was. He knew his origin: He had a deep sense of his own identity. Those who know who they are, we say, are "secure." They cannot be derailed, or turned aside from what they are determined to do. Friends the ability to live with the innate comprehension of what our purpose is a most powerful way to live. Paul wrote in Philip. 3:12-15 “*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you*.” Personally it is this struggle that seems to cause me an anxious heart and the sad truth is the liberty from my anxiety is so near!

Vs. 4-5 It was customary that the lowest servant of the house would wash the feet of the guests as they came into the house, especially for a formal meal like this. For some reason, this didn’t happen when Jesus and the disciples came into the room. So they ate their meal with dirty feet and at sometime during the meal Jesus got up from the center of the table and began to wash their feet. So why didn’t any of the disciples wash feet? Well perhaps they would have been willing to do so for Jesus but they couldn’t wash His feet without being available to wash the others’ feet, and doing that would have been an admission that they weren’t the greatest so no one’s feet got washed! So washing His disciple’s feet in was taking on the position of the lowest of all servants. This was different than we might think:

1. First they wore sandals and walked roads of dirt so their feet would have been very dirty.
2. Second, this was a formal meal at a table that was a low to the ground like as coffee-table configured in a U-shaped table. Because of this the guests would not sit on chairs but lounge on pillows sit with their status at the table reflected by how close they were to the host or leader of the meal. They leaned on pillows, with their feet behind them which meant that the dirty feet would be close to the table during the meal.

Now realize that this act happens the evening before His death and He isn’t thinking of Himself He is thinking of His disciples. He just didn’t want to appear as a servant He gave himself completely to the work. According to the traditions regarding a relationship between a teacher and his disciples a teacher could never ask a follower to wash his feet and here we see a teacher washing the feet of His disciples.

“*With all things in His hands*” friends, He could still “*lay aside His garments and take a towel*” have you ever become preoccupied with your own stuff feeling that all things are in your hands and yet you notice that there is a need? Well here is what Jesus did He laid aside His garments and took a towel of servant hood. In Luke 22:24 as they entered the room we are told that “*there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest*” and by this action Jesus forever demonstrated true greatness. Did these fellows get the message? Well it appears so decades later, when Peter wrote to Christians about humility, he put it like this: “*be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility*” (1 Peter 5:5). Literally, that is “***wrap the apron of humility around your self***.”

 Jesus had said to His disciples recorded in Matthew’s gospel, “*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth*” (Matthew 28:18) and here in verse 3 “*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands*.” What does He do all power and knowing that all things had been given into His hands? The power of the universe vested in Him? He goes over and He takes a towel and girds Himself. In the span of five days two feet washing are mentioned the first one took place at the house of Simon the leper where Mary took expensive fragrant oil and pored it over Jesus wiping what dripped of Him onto His feet with her hair. Now five days later Jesus who had been anointed by Mary is the one washes the dirt off of His disciple’s feet just prior to teaching them. Remember that Luke tells us that just as they were coming into the upper room they were arguing which one of them was the greatest and yet Jesus still calls them His own.

Oh dear friends aren’t you glad at that fact today that as you came in here you may have been bickering and fighting behaving in a way that suggested that you are the greatest but Jesus still calls you ***His own*** even if we don’t always act as if we belong to Him? Not only does He call us His own today we are told that He also loves us “***without limit***” as that is what the words “*He loved them to the end*”. So right off the bat this morning you have two great things to remember that even though these disciples came into that room with **stinky feet and stingy hearts**:

* **He calls you His own**
* **He loves you without limit**

May I just say that I rather think that our **stinky feet and stingy heart** is tied to our failure to realize that “**He calls us His own**” and “**He loves us without limit**”? How is such love possible? Well because Jesus knew that had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and was going to God. Someone wan has well said that, “***Only faith concerning the past and hope concerning the future and allow you to love in the present***”. Did you notice that Jesus didn’t just wash their feet He dried them with the towel that He was girded with? You see Jesus doesn’t just wash you and then leave you to drip dry, He doesn’t leave you all wet He dries you off as well. What? Well that is what Paul indicates in Philip. 1:6 “*that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*”.

**III. Vs. 6-11 The receiving of service**

Vs. 6-11 This simple act of humble service takes on a much larger meaning as Jesus equates it with His humble act of dyeing for us and washing our dirt with His blood. Notice what Jesus says here and that is that He has no part, no fellowship, and no relationship with those who His blood has not washed off the dirt of our sin. Having heard this Peter indicates that he wants this relationship and if it is foot washing Jesus wants He can have his hands and head as well. Interesting Peter even in his compliance is still trying to tell Jesus what to do. Sometimes others service towards us is a humbling thing for us to sit under other who wait on us. “*Man’s humility does not begin with the giving of service; it begins with the readiness to receive it*.”

Peter didn’t understand why His master would act as a slave to which Jesus “*You won’t get it now but you will after My death burial and resurrection*”. Strangely this comforts me as there are several things in my life right now that I know God is at work in but I don’t understand. Far too often in my heart I say, “*Lord I don’t get it so you’re not going to get all of me*” thus making my following Him conditional upon my comprehension. Folks we need to hear what Jesus is saying to Peter and that is “*What I’m doing you don’t understand now, but you will know after this.*” When Peter heard that his unwilling to surrender to Jesus’ sacrifice of service would mean that he wouldn’t experience a relationship he wanted a bath. Peter didn’t want anything to cause a separation in fellowship with his master.

Folks how about us are we willing to surrender head and foot to Jesus to make sure we don’t lose any of our intimate relationship with Him? Exodus 30:21 informs us that the hands and feet of the priest had to be washed before they were to offer the sacrifices. When the priest was first called they would under go a head to toe washing kind of like a baptism but it was only once and from then on out they just washed their feet and their hands. So to with us Jesus has already washed us in His blood now when ever we approach His alter all we need to do is confess our heart to Him to stay clean.

**IV. Vs. 12-17 The teaching of service**

Vs. 12-17 Jesus now tells them that what He did and the way in which He did it is the mark of how His church is to function. Folks we are to humbly serve one another being involved in washing away the dirt and gunk the world places upon the path of life. The Christian life is not a theory to be observed in a pristine laboratory it is a long walk through muck and mire of this world which will require each of us to come alongside those whose steps have become cumbersome and impeded that we wash their feet with the water of His word. Jesus said nothing of where those disciples had been even though it was all over their feet instead He just took a wash basin and began cleaning. Spurgeon wrote on this section these powerful words, “*If there is a position in the church where you will have to work hard and get no thanks, take it, and be glad. If you can serve in an area that few ever want and none appreciate, take it with great joy. There is no great rush after the lowest places; you will rob no one by seeking them*.”

Why humble your self you may ask? Well because after humility comes exaltation, the way up my friend is always down. Do you know why so many people are depressed, well it’s because they are tired of failing at trying to climb above others only to find someone still Higher. My suggestion is stop climbing up above others and instead start doing what Paul said in Philip. 2:3 when he wrote “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*” Take a look at a fruit tree and you will see that the branch that bears the most fruit always bows the lowest, so if we want to be truly fruitful bow the lowest and serve others. Instead of throwing in the towel perhaps we out to grab the towel and put it around our waste and start serving others.

**Faith makes all things possible, hope makes all things inevitable but love makes all things enjoyable**. Friends Jesus demonstrates that love doesn’t point out stinky feet it sets aside it’s to wash them. If we aren’t willing to wash them our self’s then we ought to keep our moths shut about the odor. And notice whose feet Jesus washed:

* A doubter in Thomas
* A denier in Peter
* A back stabber in Judas

In other words Jesus didn’t love the lovable He loved the unlovable. Every person lives near a bucket and we simply have a choice to wash our hands of the responsibility or take the bucket and wash some feet or if you will we will be stone chucker’s or cross bearers. At the very time Jesus was going to betrayed He chose to bear the cross and wash the feet of those who reject and betray Him.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**a. 13:1-14:15 Prophecies (sixth truth 14:6 one direction)**

**John 13:18-35**

**“Behold what manor of love”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 18-21 Rejecting love**

**III. Vs. 22-30 Reasoning love**

**IV. Vs. 31-35 Receiving love**

**I. Intro.**

John spends 5 chapters on 1 day something no other gospel writer does. I have on my computer Fox News and I check in on a regular basis to see what is going on in the world and most of what I see is ugliness especially in man’s in humanity to man. Car bombings, a pregnant woman murdered and buried in a backyard just an overall hatred towards our fellow man being displayed everyday. I was driving behind a Subaru on 1st street the other day when we stopped waiting for the light to change I began reading their bumper stickers, “*Arms Are For Embracing*”, “*Ban the Bomb*”, “*Abolish Hate*” I mean there were a lot of stickers that shared those sentiments on this car but underneath them in the center were two stickers that were a total contradiction to what was printed above as they read “*Proud* ***Bush****-Hater On Board*” and “*Impeach* ***Bush*** *Torture Cheney*”. I rather think that this person summed up the view of many folks today and that is “*arms are for embracing*” those that agree with us, “*bombs are to be banned*” accept to blow up those we dislike and “*Hate is to be abolished*” only upon those that we like and that like us. It is to this that Jesus address us today again upon the way of life by which the world will know that we are followers of Christ by our love for one another. No doubt upon reflection of this night the disciples could see by Jesus treatment of Judas that His words were far more then a sentiment to be placed upon a bumper sticker they were seen in His actions of love towards one who hated Him.

**II. Vs. 18-21 Rejecting love**

Vs. 18-19 In verse 18-21 Jesus reveals to His followers who His betrayer is and this shows us that Judas’ betrayal was no surprise to Jesus as early as a year earlier (6:70) Jesus had mentioned it to the fellows but although He knew He gave ample time for Judas to repent up too giving him the dipped piece of bread. Jesus foreknowledge did not derail man’s freewill but neither did man’s freewill detour Jesus plan or purpose. Jesus choice of the 12 included Judas with the knowledge that Judas would betray Him yet with the continual love and acceptance He gave all of them. Judas I believe becomes a forerunner of all of humanity that ***rejects Jesus’ love for them*** around it, aware of it but refusing to accept it.

Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9 when David wrote this psalm over a 1,000 years earlier and in using this psalm he was probably referring to his counselor Ahithophel, who turned traitor and joined Absalom’s rebellion in 2 Sam. 16. It is significant that both Judas and Ahithophel committed suicide by hanging themselves. The phrase “*lifted up his heel*” carries the idea to of kicking or tripping with the heal thus taking a cruel advantage over someone. In the Jewish culture it was seen as the height treachery to eat of the same bread and then against the one who gave you the piece of bread. Perhaps one of the reasons Jesus says this is over the concern that Judas’ betrayal would cause some of the others to be weakened in their faith as well.

Before we examine Jesus definition of Love in verse 34-35 John introduces us to two fellows that clearly thought of themselves as followers of Christ but failed to manifest Jesus’ type of love, Judas and Peter.

1. Vs. 18-26 **Judas**: Jesus is describing what was about to take place with Judas one of the men Jesus had chosen to love, demonstrated His love towards was going to act in a horrible way to Jesus without any reason or provocation. Further more Jesus continued to love him and treat him as a friend knowing that he was a traitor and that he wouldn’t turn. Some will say that Judas had no choice to be a traitor and that in being one fulfilled the prophecies, but Jesus didn’t need Judas to do betray Him to fulfill prophecy just as the rocks would cry out in worship too Him if people remained silent something else would have happened that would have fulfilled God’s word. No, Judas made a choice to first continually reject Jesus constant consistent love towards him and eventually betray Him. So Jesus says, “*This was no “Passover plot” that escaped my attention, I’m telling you that it was written about by David 1,000 years before it happened so now I’m telling you I that I know about this betrayal be a friend so that when it happens you will believe that I am the Son of God*.” Then Jesus says, “*Pay very careful attention to what I’m about to tell you*” that’s what the phrase “*Most assuredly*” means. Then Jesus tells them, (with Judas present) that the reason Judas is doing this is because **he has never received Jesus love for him (verse 20)**. Judas who had been around the love of God for 3 ½ years saw Jesus lavish him with attention and care, was there for him during good times and bad; simply refused to submit his life to Jesus and refused to accept His unconditional unmerited love for him. In Mark 3:13-19 we are told That Jesus “*appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons*” Then Mark tells us the list of names and says that one of those had been given power was “*Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him*”. Again the evidence is that even though Jesus knew what Judas would do He treated him no different. Right at the beginning of this gospel John told us in1:12 “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*” Friends it is possible to go to church hear the word of God, be in a loving Christian home be involved in Christian service and still refuse to receive His love for you. So we see that **the reason that Judas failed to manifest Jesus love was that he simply refused to receive it for himself.** Judas difficulty was not that he didn’t believe in Jesus, I believe that he did but that his belief in Jesus wasn’t based upon who Jesus was it was based on who he wanted Jesus to be. In verse 21-26 Jesus announces this betrayal to the disciples and according to this account dipping that piece of bread and giving it to Judas caused Jesus to “*boil in His spirit*” **not** in anger but in heart ache for Judas. Do you know that God’s love is a jealous love that does not like to lose even the most hateful person? And as we are told in Matthews gospel each of them begin to wonder if the person Jesus is speaking of is themselves. Friends that is one of the clearest indications of spiritual health I know of as not one of them said, “*It is Him! Oh, Jesus must be speaking of Judas.*” In fact when compared to themselves they were quite surprised that it was Judas as far as they were concerned each of them thought of themselves as the worst sinner they had ever met. But even Judas asked “*Is it I?*” and we can see how self deceived he was. There was no “*the devil made him do it*” Judas invited satan in and all he had to do was say yes to Jesus and that would have meant no to satan.

**III. Vs. 22-30 Reasoning love**

Vs. 22-23 This disciple who is not named here is named in John 21:20-24 where we are told in verse 20 “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” is none other than the “*disciple who would not die*” in verse 23 and we know him to be John. I think it is a wonderful thing that John refers to himself as the “*disciple whom Jesus loved*”. If you and I every time we were going through a difficult time would simply remind ourselves that we are the disciple Jesus loves how much more encouraged we would find ourselves? Oh what a difference it would make if in every situation we would but remind ourselves that we are the disciple that Jesus LOVES, not to the exclusion to the other disciples, not to a greater degree that the others. That we would begin each and every action and word with the reminder that we are His beloved. You see God loves us the “*most*” just not “*more*” than others. We all could get shirts that say, “*God loves me the most*!!!” In John 17:23 minuets after this Jesus will pray, “*I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that* ***You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me****.*”

We also see John “*leaning on the breast*” of Jesus seeing himself as loved by Jesus. Again that we would all lean on the heart of Jesus and rest in His love for us! As Judas was hating Jesus He was offering him a gesture of friendship that is how we are to treat those who hate us. The more I know Jesus the more I love Him and the more I know me the more I’m amazed that He loves me, which causes me to love Him more. What ever troubles your heart the best place to hear from Jesus about the things that concern you is leaning upon His heart towards you! Spurgeon wrote, “*Jesus is speaking to each one of us, saying “Helping you is the least of the things I do for you. I have done far more and will continue to do so. Before the world began, I chose you, I made promises to you, I laid aside My glory for you, I gave up My life for you. Now if I did all this, I will surely help you now. Bring your empty pitcher and I will fill it up. Gather up all you wants and bring them here, your emptiness, your sorrows, your needs. The river of God is flowing; it is ready to supply your needs, go further in this assurance, the eternal God is your helper*.” A year ago such words of His betrayal didn’t register a comment from His disciples but now as He glanced about the room each of them according to Matthew 26:22 became “*exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, Lord, is it I?*” No doubt their arguing of who was to be considered the greatest (Luke 22:24) added to this. It appears though that based upon verse 28-29 that none suspected Judas.

1. Vs. 24-25, 36-38 **Peter:** This is the only time the word “satan” is found in the gospel of John and it is in the context of Judas who rejected love for the acceptance of hate. Jesus admonishment for Judas to execute his desire quickly reveals Jesus assurance of victory; remember as we were told in verse 3 the Father had put all things in Jesus’ hands so He was perfectly able to defeat this plan of Judas and satan. Next we see that the reason why Peter failed which will be more clearly seen in verse 36-38 and we will take up next week. Simply put he failed to manifest Jesus love because he believed that natural love, the kind of love we have for those that we are close with will not fail. How do we know this? Well in the 21st chapter Jesus will question Peter on his love, “*Peter do you have God’s love for Me*?” to which Peter confessed, *“Lord you know that I have a natural friendship for You.*” But a natural loving bond isn’t what Jesus is talking about in 13:34-35. That kind of love my friend will just, “***Peter’s out***”!!!! You see Peter failed because **he took strength in his love for Jesus instead of Jesus love for him**! So how do we come to grasp this love Jesus has for us so that we can manifest it to all? Well the first part comes naturally FAIL! What? Yep, just fail enough times which we will all do and you will come to appreciate that what’s the most important part of our faith isn’t to be found on what we do for Jesus but what He has done for us. The 2nd part of this is that we will turn to the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in His love.

Vs. 26-30 Giving a piece of bread that you had dipped was a gesture of great love and by this demonstration and Jesus’ words Judas now knew that Jesus was aware of his plot to hand Him over to the religious leaders. Also I believe this was Jesus last attempt to get Judas to receive Jesus love for him but Judas chose not to receive Jesus love but rather to receive the devils’ hate. Had Judas responded to Jesus opportunity to love he would have be forgiven of his hatred and none would have known of it. At the foot washing Jesus reveal LOVE through humility and sacrifice, through the dipping of the bread he revealed LOVE of those who hate you. Friends both of these are forerunners of the cross where we see Jesus humility and sacrifice and demonstration of LOVE for those who hate Him.

The devil always works best in darkness and hatred though he wants to appear as an angel of light. Perhaps it was Jesus’ acts of love towards Judas that caused him to run out into the night in hatred as he never did want to simply receive the love of Jesus. Friends it is a humbling thing to simply receive the love of God when we know that such love is not given based upon our worthiness, His love is lavished upon us because HE is great not because we are. It was after Judas’ departure that He instituted the Lord’s Supper, something that Judas as an unbeliever certainly could not share. Judas was out in the night, controlled by satan while Jesus was sharing love and truth with His the rest of the disciples. What a contrast!

**IV. Vs. 31-35 Receiving love**

Vs. 31-33 Even though Judas left in darkness Jesus said that this was the time of the brightness of God’s glory. Five times in two verses Jesus uses the word “glorified or glorify” it is clear that Jesus didn’t see the cross as an instrument of defeat and humility but rather as an instrument of victory and glory. Notice that Jesus does not offer this new commandment until after Judas has left and He starts with by saying that Judas departure marks His and the Father’s glorification immediately, which is a reference to he cross.

This is the first time Jesus called His disciples “*little children*” it’s an intimate word that indicates that He viewed them as His family, His offspring, many commentators believe it is right here at theses words that Jesus began to institute the Lord’s supper. At this same moment through out the land father’s were sitting down at tables with their families inviting questions from their children about the Passover celebration and traditionally the youngest child was given the place to ask the father, “*Papa, what do these things mean*?”. So perhaps in an anticipation of this Jesus says, “*Little children, this is what all this means*”. “*What does the Passover mean, Papa*?” Well says Jesus, “*It means I’m going to be leaving you now as I’m the true Passover Lamb that takes away the sin of the world*”. And in 12 hours from this time He will be on the cross and in 20 hours He will be laid in a tomb.

Vs. 34-35 His words concerning their inability to follow Him now must have hit them like a tone of bricks as they had left everything and everyone to follow Him and now He tells them “*you can’t come right now*”. But Jesus will explain to them the reason for the delay as He will start with instructions on how the world will know that they are followers of His, LOVE. Jesus speaks of a love for one another that is qualified by the way He has loved us, where as the former commandment is that we love our neighbor as ourselves. This is not a love that is called out by the qualities that we appreciate; no this is a love that is exercised without regards to whom it is lavished upon. The word for “new” here does not mean new in the since of never seen or known prior but rather “new” in the sense of freshness in other words the commandment isn’t new but the way it is to be put into practice is fresh. In Matthew 5: 43-44 Jesus said, “*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*” and this is a quotation from Lev. 19:18. Jesus commandment went far beyond what had been understood to treating everyone especially the body of Christ as better than ourselves.

Jesus’ command gives us the frequency as well as the depth and object of our affections as He says:

* “*Love*”: Which is in the present tense in the Greek thus it tells us that we are to “keep on loving one another”.
* “*One another*”: Informs us that the object of our consistent love is each other.
* “*As I have loved you*”: Tells us the degree or depth of this love and it is without limit (verse 1). Thus the commandment may have not been new but the extent of it and the manor of it was fresh. Jesus set His own example of love as the measure and manor of love.

Think what would happed to the history of the world if we started apply this commandment to our live? Why marriages would be changed, families overhauled no more church splits, wars would never start. But how do we love unloving people? How do I get beyond the obstacle of my cynical distrust of people where I constantly battle my long ledger account of their wrongs while ignoring my own faults and failures? Well Jesus tells us how, “*As I have loved you, that you also love one another*”. By this we learn three very important things:

* First we learn that such **love is not based upon merit**: He has not loved us because we deserve to be loved, or have earned it by just being lovable.
* Secondly, we understand by Jesus’ words that such **love is a choice in which we sacrifice our rights for others need to be loved**. We are making a choice to say that others need for love is greater that my need to be understood, accepted, appreciated and yes even loved in return.
* Finally, there is a cause and effect we are only able to love one another if first we have received His love towards us, in fact the Greek has it “***since*** *I’ve loved you, you also love one another*”. Simply put **we aren’t manufacturing this love we are only giving what we have received from Jesus to others**.

Folks Jesus love will be the measure, the cause and the identifying mark of authentic love from him. Practically speaking then that means this love will have three characteristics:

1. First, it will be **without prejudice with respect to people**: Sense His love is shed aboard to all so will ours even towards those that aren’t nice towards us. It goes out to people who need love regardless of what they are like, no matter how dirty, leprous, hurtful, proud or arrogant they may be. It goes out because they need love, without respect of persons.
2. Secondly, it **will be expressed in deeds, not just words**: It will not be mere talk about love, sing love songs it will show its self by expression in deeds that it will not advertise afterward. Jesus said it this was in Matthew 25:35-36 “*for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me*.”
3. Thirdly, it is **a love without end**: It is not for only a season, for a time it has no limit as we saw last week in the words verse 1 “*He loved them without limit*”. This love never gives up on them and instead of throwing in the towel wraps the towel around the waste and washes the feet of even a Judas.

Someone has well said that the only way can operate this way is if we stay next His love ourselves, then like a piece of steel next to a magnet we tool will become a magnet of His love attracting folks to stick to Jesus. Rather than violent, angry, injurious people who strike back at everyone who comes in their path they have become tender, loving, gentle people, changed by the love of Christ. That is what Jesus means by "as I have loved you."

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**a. 13:1-14:15 Prophecies (sixth truth 14:6 one direction)**

**John 13:36-14:4**

**“A place for you”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 36-38 You can count on me**

**III. Vs. 1-4 A home for the homeless**

**I. Intro.**

Here were these fellows who had left everything to follow Jesus, family, friend’s occupations they were all making following Jesus a priority surely everything would go their way sense they were walking the right road but suddenly every thing is falling in on them. I had a similar experience on Thursday morning as I walked into the sanctuary only to find part of the roof had come down over the stage. I rather think many of us have had that experience in our lives when it feels as though the roof has come down on our stage. No doubt these disciples could relate and what we are given is Jesus’ words to those whose roofs have are coming down. So what does Jesus say to encourage these fellows? Well He speaks about heaven as their home. Did you know that the Bible speaks of heaven as a reality 557 times why it’s a fundamental truth in the scriptures?

According to the Washington Post 88% of Americans believe in a literal place called heaven and aren’t you glad they do? I mean can you imaging what Americans would be like if they didn’t? Why our society would be spending millions on trying to stay young, we would be obsessed with cosmetics, deities, anti wrinkle creams and plastic surgery just to appear to be younger than we are. A society that didn’t believe in a literal heaven would see crime rates soar off the charts because there would be a belief in only the hear and now and no concern over eternal consequences. A society that didn’t believe in a literal heaven would be consumed with entertainment, amassing fortunes. Hey, wait a minute that is our society isn’t it? That my friend is because though our society intellectually believes in a literal heaven they don’t believe heaven is a reality! And it may surprise us a bit but neither did the disciples.

**II. Vs. 36-38 You can count on me**

Vs. 36-38 Peter’s response is based upon Jesus’ words in 33 where He said, “*Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you.*” It seems as though the words “*You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you*” caused Peter to think his devotion towards the Lord was certainly stronger than that of the Jews and superior to what the other disciples had as well.

From 13:36-14:24 we have recorded four questions from Jesus disciples, (Peter, Thomas, Philip and Judas not Iscariot) that indicate that peter was not alone in this view as all of the disciples seem to see heaven and life from a earthly perspective yet for over six months Jesus had been speaking of heaven.

* Peter asked, “*Lord where you are going*”
* Thomas asked, “*Lord we do not know where you are going*”
* Philip asked, “*Lord show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us*”
* Judas asked, “*Lord how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world*”.

But to be painfully honest **they aren’t alone in looking at Jesus through the lenses of our earthly existence**. Far too many professing Christians few Christianity as an accessory to their lives and if the accessory doesn't compliment the outfit (i.e. personal agenda) then they toss it. We have evidence of this in Peter recorded here as **Peter seems more concerned about what Jesus tells them they can *not* do instead of being concerned about what He has just told them they must do to be with Him** in verse 34-35. Jesus has just told them a commandment by which they will be know as His followers and all Peter can say is “*What do you mean we can’t come with You Jesus as you told the Jews*?” Luke 22:31-34 fills us in a little more on verse 37-38 where we are told that “*The Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me*.”

Friends let me share with you a sure fire way to know if you are in the wrong, “*If you find your self arguing with the Lord, you’re wrong*!” Now you may say, “*Well I’ve never argued with the Lord, pastor*!” Really? *Have you ever thought that your plan, your way was better than the way He has taken you through*? You see Peter thought he knew himself better than the Lord knew him and he thought that his plans were better than the Lord, it is here that I can really relate to Peter. If we trace Peter’s steps after his assertion that he would never forsake the Lord we see:

1. **He argued with the Lord**
2. **He slept in the garden when he was suppose to be praying**
3. **Next we see him following a far off at Jesus’ arrest**
4. **Finally we see this led to his denial**

Folks I believe we can see a progression of failure in Peter’s behavior that we can avoid: **Arguing with the Lord leads to a lack of prayer which causes us to following Him a far off which leads to denial**. “*You can count on me Lord*”, said Peter. But Jesus tells him that he will fail because he wouldn’t count on Jesus. Friends, that is always the root of our failure thinking that we can count on ourselves to pull us through but the truth is we can only count on Jesus to pull us through.

Jesus says, “*You can not follow me yet in victory, in glory but you will one day*!” To which Peter argued, “*If it is a matter of dying I’m ready, I’ll lay down my life for you.*” Peter had not yet understood of Jesus’ sacrifice and what was in view was his willingness to sacrifice. As wonderful as Peter’s words and his devotion are they were based upon emotion which made this nothing more than commotion. It is this emotion based boast that Jesus challenges by saying, “*Will you lay down you life for My sake*?” Friends there are two things that challenge me in Jesus correction:

1. First, I’m challenged by these words as correcting me with regards to any attitude within myself as my security or my sense of strength. I’m reminded by Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 10:12 “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*.” Paul went on to say in 2 Cor. 12:10 “*Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*” Folk’s it is the adverse situations and circumstances that remind us that our boasting with regards to anything coming from us is foolish that is why Paul told the Galatians in 6:14 that “*God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*”
2. Secondly, Jesus’ words challenge me with the reality that giving up my physical life to be with Him instantly in eternity is much easier thing to do when compared to dying to my self centered flesh that I may live for Him now! Friends the Lord has called us to lay down our former ways of thinking and acting that He may live through us. Paul wrote of this sacrifice in Galatians 2:20 when he said, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*”

Now in light of those two observations allow me to insert Jesus question to Peter, “*Will you lay down you life for My sake*?” It is this same Peter who claimed through his emotion that he was willing to die for Jesus we will see in a few hours unwilling to be laughed at and made fun of by a servant girl, which proves the point.

**III. Vs. 1-4 A home for the homeless**

Vs. 1 There is no chapter break from 13:38 – 14:1 and in light of their failure Jesus encourages them with hope. Jesus words to Peter were, “*I know the worst that is in you Peter but if you trust in Me and not in yourself I’ll take you to heights you never imagined*.” This section opens and closes with our Lord’s loving admonition, “*Let not your heart be troubled*” (John 14:1, 27). We are not surprised that the Apostles were troubled. After all, Jesus had announced that one of them was a traitor, and then He warned Peter that he was going to deny his Lord three times and Jesus followed that by saying He was going to leave them (John 13:33). The truth is a self confident heart will eventually lead us to a troubled heart.

Jesus opening words “*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me*”, could be called the, “*Manual for Stress Management, a remedy for anxious and troubled hearts*.” What is even more comforting in Jesus’ words is the context that they come right after the revelation Jesus spoke of concerning Peter’s denial. So right after Jesus speaking of Peter’s failure Jesus tells Peter that He is bigger than even his failure. Notice that Jesus uses the word “*your*” which means that He wasn’t just referring to Peter’s failures He was including all of the disciples and I rather think mine and yours as well. Friends these words of Jesus were being said to fellows whose world’s were coming apart, now that ought to bring some hope to those of us whose world’s are coming apart even if we have had a hand in tearing them apart. Some folk’s seem to subscribe to the stoic philosophy that we are never to be anxious, never worried or in fear but I’m of the opinion that it’s not if I’m going to be anxious but rather what I do with my anxiety when it’s there. Paul wrote to the Philippians’ in 4:6 “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*”. Peter would later write in 1 Peter 5:7 “*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*” The truth is we may be able to prevent stress or even feel stress but we can give it to the Lord so that we are not overcome by it. So how do we do that?

* “*You believe in God, believe also in Me*”: Jesus “*keep on believing in the father and the Son*”. Our seeking feeling is because we have momentarily taken our eyes off the Lord and onto our situation, so Jesus reminds that “*Don’t look down, look up*!” The psalmist wrote in Psalm 121:1-2 “*I will lift up my eyes to the hills-- from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*” “You’ve found relief form anxiety in the promises of God and they had found strength and help from those passages in times of pressure. But now he gives them new truth which goes beyond anything in the Old Testament. “*I want you to believe this too*,” Jesus says.

Vs. 2-3 Then He gives them three truths that believing will comfort their hearts during this season of uncertainty:

1. Vs. 2 “*I go to prepare a place for you*”: First **Jesus promises that His departure is in preparation for something far greater.** The word “*mansions*” is the word used for “*resting place*” so this literally reads “*In My Father’s house are many resting places*”. No need to be troubled dear ones this life will soon be over and you will be staying with Jesus and the Father at His house, your new home. Jesus has been adding on to His Fathers place for over 2000 years. I often wonder if many of our trials aren’t allowed to come into our lives to cause to realize that we are getting far to attached to things in this life and disregarding what awaits us. Peter had been perplexed at the thought of not being able to follow Jesus and here Jesus comforts him by saying that He is leaving to prepare a place for them where there will never again be a separation. These words spoken by Jesus were words a groom would say to his bride upon their separation before their marriage as he would be adding onto his father’s house where they would live together. They were meant to comfort the bride with hope knowing that what awaited her was her husband in a new life of two *becoming one. The phrase “receive you to myself”* is literally *“I* *will take you along to our home*!” Finally Jesus says that, “*where I am, there you may be also*” in other words Jesus is saying to us “*I’m doing all of this so that we can always be together*”.
2. Vs. 3a “*I will come again and receive you to Myself*”: Second **Jesus promises that His departure is only temporary.** Peter’s failure was that he believed in himself Jesus antidote was keep believing in the Father and the Son. Friends, you and I will fail the Lord many times but don’t let your heart be troubled. Why? Because He will never fail you my friend! So when that soldier asked Peter if he too was one of Jesus’ disciples and he swore he didn’t know Jesus and at that very moment Jesus looked at him it wasn’t an “*I told you so*” look it was an “*I still love you*” look! How do we know? Well when Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to the women, He said, “*Go tell the disciples and Peter that I have risen.*” And Peter was one of the first ones that Jesus appeared. On the day of His resurrection, He appeared to Peter. When the disciples came back from Emmaus and met the other disciples, they said, The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to the women and to Peter! The Lord had that personal little talk with Peter afterwards. And then of course, John gives us great insight into the talk at the sea of Galilee with Peter when Jesus sort of re-commissioned him and put him back in the business up there at the sea of Galilee.
3. Vs. 3b “*that where I am, there you may be also*”: Finally, **Jesus promises that though His departure is temporary His return is everlasting**. Someone has well said, “***You don't go to heaven to find Christ. You go to Christ to find heaven.***” Peter was going to fail the fellows were going to scatter but Jesus said not to worry guy’s I still have a place for you and it’s with Me in our Father’s house. The antidote to a troubled heart is trusting in Jesus’ words! You see you only prepare a place for someone if you are certain of their arrival thus the words, “*If it were not so, I would have told you*”. Friends better than the “*mansion*” of our dwelling is the words “*that where I am, you may be also*”. Now listen up because there is a twofold work of Jesus going on as we speak you see **He is in heaven preparing a place for us, and at the same time He is at work in us preparing us for that place**!

So how did Jesus calm their troubled hearts? Well by reminding them that they would one day be with Him in heaven (My Father’s house). Notice the specific personal words of Jesus as He promises them that He is going to prepare a place for “***YOU***”. He is custom designing a place where everything will be just as we like it and the best part is that He will be right there with us. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15:19 “*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*” And in Col. 3:1-4 Paul wrote “*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*” The truth is that if a person is not a believer this is as good as it gets ah but for the believer in Christ my friend this is as worse as it gets! What does complaining about the lack of time and concern over our environment have in common? Well both suggest that we are not designed time space and matter. Birds don’t fuss about flying, fish don’t complain about the water, earth worms don’t protest the dirt but man kind is constantly in bunch over our dwelling place and my theory is that we aren’t built for here and now we are designed for the here after! The poet Robert Frost said that home is the place that, when you arrive there, they have to take you in. Jesus earthly occupation was a master carpenter and in heaven is building a place for us to be with our Master. So we see Jesus is building His church on earth and a home for that church in heaven. When John tried to describe heaven, he ran out of things to describe it so he finally listed the things that would not be there: death, sorrow, crying, pain, night, etc. Friends there is a misconception that Jesus teaches us the way to heaven but the truth is He is the way. How does Jesus’ assurance of going home to heaven help to calm our troubled hearts? Well “*Who mind’s the journey, when the road leads us home*?” Paul said it this way in Romans 8:18 “*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*.”

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**a. 13:1-14:15 Prophecies (sixth truth 14:6 one direction)**

**John 14: 5-14**

**“A glimpse of glory”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 5-7 I am the Way**

**III. Vs. 8-11 I am in the Father and He is in Me**

**IV. Vs. 12-14 Greater works for the asking**

**I. Intro.**

Last week Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them that His departure didn’t signal the end of something but instead it ushered in the glorious beginning. His Love for them was greater than their failure and He was leaving to prepare a place specifically for each of them, a place that they would never be apart from Him or each other. Friends with each passing day I long more and more for us to be together. There is only one reason we are apart each from each other and that is He has called us to gather in more folks to come with us. To that end in these verses we are given seven theological truths which will enable us in this quest:

1. Vs. 7 The Father is only known through the Son
2. Vs. 9 Jesus is the exact expression of the Father
3. Vs. 10 The unity of the Father and the Son
4. Vs. 11 The works of Jesus reveal the heart of the Father
5. Vs. 12 The promise of greater works through us
6. Vs. 13a The promise of doing that which we ask when it is consistent with His nature.
7. Vs. 13b The promise that when He works in us and through us it will glorify the Father and the Son

**II. Vs. 5-7 I am the Way**

Vs. 5 The second question came from Thomas and his focus was not on why he could not follow Jesus but rather where He was going and the way in which He would go. Peter took issue with Jesus assessment that they could not be with Him saying that he could go and no one or nothing could stop him. Where as Thomas question the path and method of going. In the light of the soon events of the cross Jesus is telling Thomas that the way to God runs through the cross. I rather appreciate Thomas as he is the kind of fellow who will never go beyond what he can understand the kind of man who would not pretend to know something when he didn’t and asked, “*How can anyone know the way when they don’t know the destination*?” Jesus had called himself “*the life*” to Martha (John11:25) and “*the door*” to the Pharisees (John10:7) and “*the light of the world*” (John 8:12). He spoke “*the way of God in truth*” (Mark 12:14). And here He is the **only way to God, the personification of truth, the centre of life**. Jesus does not rebuke Thomas instead He makes an amazing claim saying “*I am the way, Thomas you’re questioning the path and I tell you I am the path, the only path, the only truth and only in Me do you have life*.” “*You don’t have to be concerned about the destination when you know the way and I am the WAY*!”

Vs. 6 Notice he does not say, “*I show the way, I teach the truth, I give life*.” He is not merely a “*way-shower, truth teacher of a life giver*” He is the “**WAY, TRUTH and LIFE**”. Aren’t you glad that Jesus said this as it makes the destination simple and certain? We don’t have to try to buy a stairway to heaven, follow a yellow brick road no we just need to receive Jesus’ love for us and we are home. In only a few hours in John 18:38 Jesus would face Pilate the representation of Rome and all its splendor and knowledge and Pilate is going to say, “*What is truth*?” In Matthew 7:13-15 Jesus Told His disciples, “*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*” Jesus said, “*Look, no man comes to the Father but by Me*.” Friends I’m just reading His words He said it, He made that claim, and the truth is you either believe it or you don’t. You can believe that you can get there on your own good works, your own good effort, you’re own sincerity in being religious but Jesus said you can’t get to the Father but by Him. Jesus words contradict the opinion that there are many ways to God as He proclaims with certainty that “*No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” Follow the logic here my friend if Jesus’ words here are not correct then He is not only not the only way the God He is not even a way to God. The idea that all religious beliefs are equally valid based upon a person’s sincerity of belief makes belief more important than truth. Now if that is true in the realm of religion it ought to be true in other realms so if I thought I could become a pumpkin and I believe it to be so than I should be before your very eyes become a pumpkin. Peter said it best before the Sanhedrin for healing the lame man Acts 4:11-12 “*This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*.”

Vs. 7 And to make sure we understand this Jesus says, “*If you know Me, you would know the Father*.” Now there will always be those who see these words as very narrow minded but friend truth is always narrow minded. Jesus then reassures Thomas you see Thomas' problem was not that he did not know the Father; it was that he had not realized that he knew the Father. Some think that they will have to wait to meet the Father but Jesus says that we know the Father as soon as we receive His Son. The word “*know*” is used 141 times in the gospel of John but he employs four different words:

1. There is a Greek word that simply means knowing a fact.
2. Then there is a word that means to know the truth behind the fact.
3. Then there is a word that describes knowledge based upon an intimate relationship.
4. Finally there is a word that describes an even deeper relationship in which we keep perusing it.

**III. Vs. 8-11 I am in the Father and He is in Me**

Vs. 8-9 It is at those words that Philip interrupts with a heart felt desire to draw near to God and what he didn’t understand was that He was standing right next to Him. Philip cried, “*Show us the Father*” and Jesus said “*If you have seen me you know the character and nature of the Father.*” Jesus says “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*” interesting to me that no image can depict God but the person of Jesus can. Paul told the Colossians in 2:9 that in Jesus“*dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*”. Then in 1:15-17 Paul said that in Jesus “*is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist*.” This should put to rest the notion that in the Bible there are two God’s the mean God of the Old Testament and the good God of the New Testament. As Jesus says that if you want to know what the Father is like you need only to observe My life. In Exodus 34:6-7 The Lord declares His nature to Moses saying, “*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty*...” **The truth of the matter is Thomas and the boys had not truly come to know Jesus as much as they had come to love Him**.

Folks there will be times where we are in the midst of a trying time and we will cry out, “*Where is God*” and the answer is on a Cross because of love. I wonder how many times I’m like Philip, “*Lord I need you, I’m wiped out and need your love*” and I’m right next to Him. Reading the words of Jesus to Philip in verse 9 “*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me*”? I can’t help but hear them for myself as well as there are times that I allow my circumstances to blind my eyes to what I know to be true about my Lord. I watch little Hannah when she wants to be held and we are right next to her she begins to fuss and I look into her little brown eyes and say, “*I’m right here booboo*” but that’s not enough so I pick her up. When Paul was in Athens in Acts 17:27 he spoke of this reality to the philosophers saying in their quest for God, “*that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us*”. So if you want to understand the nature of the Father get to know the Son.

Vs. 10-11 What Jesus tells Philip here is that there has been a constant change that which they only knew as information about the Father has become visible in Jesus. The author of Hebrews put it this way in 1:1-2 “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds*.” “*Phil*”, Jesus said, “*Every then you have heard Me and everything you have watched Me do reveals to you the Father*.” “*Keep trust in Me, Jesus tells Philip and the disciples and you will keep growing in that relational knowledge*.” Both the words and works come from the heart of the Father through the heart of the Son. The works of Jesus support the words of Jesus and now Jesus tells His disciples they come from the Fathers heart towards man kind. When Peter on the day of Pentecost preached to the people that gathered, he said in Acts 2:22, “*Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was proved to be of God by the signs and the wonders that He did in the midst of you*”. What concerns should we have when we realize that the maker of heaven and earth is our Father?

**IV. Vs. 12-14 Greater works for the asking**

Vs. 12-14 It is quite apparent that Jesus expected ministry to continue after His death and resurrection not to end. That is why the book of Acts starts with the words, in verses1-2

“*The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen*” The former account Luke speaks of here is his gospel so if that is what Jesus began to do this is what He continues to do through those called by His name. Peter says in 2 Peter 1:4 we have “*been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*.” Here we see Jesus saying three things:

1. “He who believes in me (*keeps on believing in me, not just he who becomes a Christian but he who keeps on growing and trusting as a Christian*) *the works that I do he will do also*.” First is the admonishment to keep trusting in Jesus no matter what they were to experience.
2. “*And greater works than these he will do*”. We need only go to the book of acts and see what Jesus was able to do through Peter and others. The miracles were not greater in quality, for Jesus said in 13:16 that “*the servant is not greater than his lord*” so what Jesus is saying is that they are greater in scope and quantity. The magnitude of God’s greatness is best seen in that He can take ordinary imperfect vessels and work wonders and speak the truth and grace in which He did through His Son. Paul spoke of this to the Philippians in 2:13 saying that “*it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” Greater is not purpose or person but in effectiveness, like saying that those who have taken Thomas Edison’s idea of a light bulb have done greater things with it than what he accomplished but where would we be if there was no first light bulb?
3. “*Because I go to My Father*”. Why is it greater in magnitude? Well two reasons:
	* 1. Vs. 12 First Jesus says, “*Because I go to My Father*”, this will be brought out further in verse 16-18 as Jesus will introduce us to the Holy Spirit who in verse 17 will “*dwell with and be in us*”. The greater works are made possible by the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit something that is quite obvious when we notice the difference in Peter after the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. In Acts 1:8 Jesus had told them that they “*Shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*.” Friends the empowering of the Holy Spirit is not an option it is necessity if we are to be His witnesses.
		2. Vs. 13-14 Second, Jesus says, “*Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do*”. Notice Jesus qualifies His words by saying that our prayer must His name that is consistent with His character and nature. James put it this way in 4:3 “*You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures*.” When we pray we are praying to Him for that which is His passion that He will accomplish it in His time His way for His glory! Well what is He passionate about?
			+ He is passionate about **people not our prosperity and possessions**
			+ He is passionate about **His glory not our goods and greatness**
			+ He is passionate about **our holiness not just our health and happiness**.

In Jesus’ name is in the Father’s will thus the reason why it will be granted. Friends we have no right to ask nor should be expecting when we ask things from God if they aren’t in His will, the out come is that what we ask that Jesus will do will glorify them both. In reading this we see the first instance where Jesus is telling these disciples to pray to Him. So when we ask anything Jesus concerning the things that He is passionate about we have this guarantee. “*Oh Jesus grant me people who don’t know you, folks who are hurting touch them Lord*” *Oh Jesus I want you glorified in my business, my marriage my church!*” “*Oh Jesus I want you to change my heart, my attitude, my actions to what Yours are!*” And Jesus’ promise is I’m doing it my child! I was thinking about that with regards to living life here and the difficulties we face. You see we can’t wait to get off this planet because it is so difficult but we fail to recognize that we aren’t here for our purpose and plan but for His. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 6:20 “*For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's*.”

Folks this is a great mystery as God works with His creation as we put forth effort to reach lives that He has placed upon our hearts He energizes it anoints it and miraculously, mysteriously it bears life. As an old country preacher once put it, “***He puts unction in our gumption***.” As amazing as those words are Jesus now speaks of His greatness as seen in how He will continue to work imperfect instruments. Jesus has encouraged these failing disciples with three things so far:

* **The hope of heaven**
* **The goodness of God the Father**
* **And now principal of prayer**

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**b. 14:16-16:33 Promises (seventh truth 15:5 abiding promise)**

**John 14: 15-31**

**“Another Helper”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 15-17 Abiding forever**

**III. Vs. 18-24 Good news I’m leaving**

**IV. Vs. 25-31 Peace of His presence**

**I. Intro.**

In many ways the upper room discourse was the first Christian retreat offered by Jesus. During the retreat He commanded them challenged and comforted them, sounds like a typical retreat doesn’t it. Jesus introduces us to the Holy Spirit and what His role will be in the life of the believer. There recorded for in Jesus words several things that the Holy Spirit does in the life of the believer:

* 1. Vs. 15-17 He will be as Jesus is to us one who will come alongside to help
	2. Vs. 18-24 He will continue to make Jesus love real to us
	3. Vs. 25-27 He will enable is to do more than cope we will hope
	4. Vs. 28-31 His presence will forever remind us that we have already won

So far we have seen that Jesus encouraged the disciples with the:

* **The hope of heaven**
* **The goodness of God the Father**
* **And the principal of prayer**

Now we see Him speak to us about **the reality of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives**.

**II. Vs. 15-17 Abiding forever**

Vs. 15 Jesus says continual love will be visible in continual obedience. He does not equate love with sentiment or emotion but rather with action. Friends it is wonderful to experience the sense of love for our Lord that tears well up in our eyes or our hands raise in adoration during our worship but true love that is connected will be endeavoring to be putting into practicing His words in our life.

The question we need to ask is, “Just what are His commandments?” Well the first one that comes to mind is the one He just mentioned in 13:34 “*That we love one another; as He has loved us.*” In Matthew 22:36-40 a religious lawyer came to Him and asked, “*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*.” Have you ever noticed that we don’t have a problem loving ourselves? I mean if we had taken a photo of this fellowship the first thing each of us would do is to try to find ourselves in the picture, “*Oh man that is a horrible picture of me*.” That is why Jesus in Matthew said as yourself as it is assumed that we already love ourselves so just treat others as you want to be treated. Ah, but in 13:34 He said treat each other as I just treated Judas who was betraying Me. Listen to John as he writes in 1 John 2:1-6 “*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*”

Vs. 16 Here we see the work of the Godhead as God the Son prays to God the Father to send God the Holy Spirit to those the Son has prayed for. The word “*prayer*” here is make a request of. Folks notice that these words of Jesus about keeping His commandments are not with out His provision to do so, “*Jesus never asks us to do something that He has not provided the resources to accomplish His purpose if we would just rely on His provisions.*” There are six things Jesus tells us about the Holy Spirit:

1. Vs. 16a “*I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper*”: The first thing we note is that He is a gift from the Father for all believers. And How do we know who is a true believer? Well the true believer will be the one living in obedience to His word. The drawn to Jesus His love for them will manifest the same love towards others. To empower them in this Jesus will send the Holy Spirit.
2. Vs. 16b “*He will give you another Helper*”: Next we notice that Jesus clarifies the Holy Spirit by saying that the Holy Spirit will be another of a “*like kind*” in other words He will carry on the ministry of coming along side the disciples just as Jesus had. For three and a half years He had been by their side and He promises that with the Holy Spirit He won’t ever leave. In fact that ministry of the continual abiding presence that He had with will be more available because He will be able to do so to all at the same time. So the nature of Jesus reveals the heart of the Father and the nature of the Holy Spirit reveals the heart of the Son. The word for “comforter” is a word that means “*a person summoned to one’s aid*”, and refers to an advisor, a legal defender, a mediator, or an intercessor. The greater work Jesus spoke of that will glorify the Father and the Son will be accomplished through us by way of the Holy Spirit.
3. Vs. 16c “*That He may abide with you forever*”: What a glorious truth this is that the Holy Spirit will never depart us again my friend. Think of this next time you are down and wiped out that you have indwelling you the Holy Spirit who has come to make His home in your heart. The Holy Spirit would abide temporarily with people before this time as He would not dwell in them but here Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will never leave us though according to Paul in Ephes. 4:30 where he says “*do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*.” So that it is possible for us to behave in such away that we can disengage His effects upon our life. Paul tells us what things can grieve Him saying that, corrupt words, (defined as words that don’t build up others) then Paul say’s all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking. Folks do you realize that He is called the “HOLY” Spirit for a reason because He is absolutely holy and He indwells us.
4. Vs. 17a “*the Spirit of truth*”: Friend you can absolutely rely upon the word’s of the Spirit, no confusion as He is not the author of confusion only truth from the Spirit of truth. He is the Spirit of truth and because the world will not receive the truth and neither does it desire to be Holy so they won’t receive the Holy Spirit.
5. Vs. 17b “*whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him*”: The use of the word “whom” tells us that the Holy Spirit is not a force or an influence but a person. Jesus says’ that this is an entirely new source that was previously unavailable to people. He can not be attained through a degree, or a pedigree no He is only given to those who have a relationship with Jesus.
6. Vs. 17c “*but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you*”: Finally Jesus says that you don’t have to drive to some remote location to tap into this resource as He dwells with us and will be in us. The word “abides with you” means to be at home with and it is in the present tense which means time with out end.

**III. Vs. 18-24 Good news I’m leaving**

Vs. 18 Jesus promises not to leave us behind not helpless orphans but with the Comforter of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us tell He comes. Paul tells us in Ephes. 1:13 “*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*”.

Jesus told these fellows that His departure didn’t mean that they would lose Him instead that He would come back to them be means of the Holy Spirit and continue with them. Here we learn the primary work of the Holy Spirit and that is to continually make Jesus real in the lives and hearts of His followers. The clearest sign of a Spirit filled life won’t be the visibility of the gifts of the Spirit it will be rather seen in Jesus’ characteristics being manifested in our lives. Paul describes them as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-25 saying that the “*fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*.” That is why the world will see Him no more but His disciples will see Him as He is in the Father and we are in Him and He in us. That is why Jesus told us in Matthew 28:19-20 to “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and lo, I am with you even to the end of the age*.”

Vs. 19-21 Jesus said “*because I live, you will live also*” years later Peter would write in 1 Peter 1:3-5 “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*.” Friends the love that Jesus speaks of over and again is not just a feeling or a sentiment it is action.

 Notice the phrase “*because I live, you will live also*” certainly this speaks of eternal life but I believe that it also speaks about living in this world as uses a word not for eternal life but one that means zest that “*enjoyably exciting quality*” quality of life. **Friends Jesus living doesn’t just provide a comfortable landing it provides a wonderful journey**! A life that was meaningless and dull now is filled with purpose and adventure it has switched from obstacles to opportunities. Also take note of the phrase “*you in me*” which is defined as being in the same way as Jesus is in the Father. Here we are talking about an abiding relationship where there is such fellowship that a nature is shared while distinction is still possible. Paul described it best saying in Col. 1:13

That, “*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*”. How wonderful it is to belong to His family but Jesus goes on to say “*I in you*”! Here we learn that it is He in us that makes us sufficient that we are not

left to some how please him apart from His work through us. How does this all work? Well Jesus says through loving surrender called obedience verse 21. Listen how Paul described in Galatians 2:20 when he said “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*.” You see the key to this is not the law but love as Paul says here, “*who loved me and gave Himself for me*.”

Vs. 22-24 Judas here is called “*Thaddeus*” in Mark 3:17 and is called he brother of James in Luke 6:16. At any rate he asks a very interesting question “*Why didn’t Jesus go over to the Chief Priests after His resurrection and say, what do you go to say now*?” Well in Luke 16:31 Jesus said, “*If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead*.” You see the reason people don’t trust in Jesus has nothing to do with evidence and everything to do with sin.

Those words startled Judas as relationship was still going to be based upon obedience but the motivation was going to switch from fear to LOVE. Read through the commandments and you will see that they were based upon “*If you do this, then I will do this*” and what should have happened was instead of the Israelites saying “*all that you have said we will do*” they should have said “*Lord, I can’t do this I have a heart problem*!” So the Lord allowed the nation to come to the conclusion that they couldn’t keep His commandments and in the words of the Lord through Ezekiel 36:26 God promised to “*give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*” Friends listen up as **I’m afraid many of us Christians fail in our relationship with the Lord because we have placed our obedience ahead of His love for us thus making His love conditional**. His love towards us is what makes obedience possible other wise it becomes only works to earn His love. It will never be difficult to keep Jesus words in our lives when we are doing so because we are responding to His love for us with loving surrender. I’m convinced personally that we will never be able to set aside the things of this world that we have attached love towards until we are convinced that they are keeping us from something greater HIS LOVE!

**IV. Vs. 25-31 Peace of His presence**

Vs. 25-27 Jesus reminds them that the Holy Spirit is coming at His request, in His name as His replacement with the sole purpose to make Jesus further known to them. One of the main responsibilities of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to be our teacher. Isn’t it wonderful to be taught the Book from the author Himself? He will come alongside us and unfold the truth to us bringing into remembrance the word that Jesus spoke. The psalmist said in Psalm 119:11 “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!*” The way in which the Holy Spirit will do this is by teaching them and reminding them of every thing Jesus ever did and said. Thus the emphasis is switched from what we remember to what God the Holy Spirit will bring to our hearts. In computer terms the Holy Spirit is our data retrieval system so that nothing is lost in our comprehension on the Lord.

The end result of the Holy Spirits continual work of reminding us and teaching concerning Jesus is PEACE the root word here means to “join”. Our hearts will be infused with a quietness and rest that comes from the security of knowing our Lord. This peace is more than just the ability to “cope” with life it carries with it “hope” for we know that our Lord is in charge and we know what kind of God He is. “My peace I leave with you”, Jesus said! Notice by use of the words in verse 27 “*Let not your heart be troubled*” that the addition of the Holy Spirit abiding in us and working through **does not grant us exemption** from trouble rather just the necessary things to sail through them. Heaven my friends is not our destination it is our motivation. In 1 Cor. 2:10 Paul says that “*the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*” **Not a tranquilizer something to cause you to cope but something that will cause you to hope**! Paul spoke of this peace in Philip. 4:7 by saying that “*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” No wonder Jesus said of this peace that we need not let our hearts be troubled. Jesus leaves us with the double blessing of power and peace! Power to live in this world to affect it and peace to know that some will choose not to be transformed. The power of the Spirit to change and peace of God to comfort the hurting. Thomas a’ Kempis said, “*All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace.*”

It is a wonderful thing when we realize that God is in control and not us or the government, or fate. You see if the God who loved me so much while I was still apart from Him that He sent His only Son to die for me is in charge what worries do I have now that I have been brought into His house? When a young person dies we often say, “What a shame they had their whole life in front of them” but when they are a believer the shame is that we will miss seeing them for a season but I’m certain they aren’t thinking, “*Man I wish I was back in the place of pain, sorrow and heartache*”.

Vs. 28-31 In this final section Jesus answers when the Holy Spirit will come and the answer is to be found in the final phrase of verse 31 “*Arise, let us go from here*”. The truth of this ought to have three reactions:

1. Vs. 28a “*If you love Me, you would rejoice*”: Why? Because, all that is upside down in the world is going to be made right. Jesus says, “*Fellows, if you love me than you know that all that is messed up in this world is going to get fixed permanently*”. Jesus departure signified the END, the end of death, sorrow, heartache, pain etc. Aren’t you glad that Jesus went back to the Father? Jesus told them this in advance so that they wouldn’t think that this wasn’t part of His plan and if they would just trust His words they would see that He had a glorious plan all along.
2. Vs. 28b “*I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I*”: Secondly Jesus is saying that all of His earthly limitation which He had during His incarnation will be over. Now He will be able to do all that He could do prior to His earthly visitation. The Father is greater than the Son in position but not in essence or being as He had already said that HE and the Father are one.
3. Vs. 29-31 “*Now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you will believe*”: In other words Jesus is saying that satan is going to be defeated and He is telling them ahead of time. They were soon going to go through a time where it will look like satan has won and that Jesus is defeated the power of darkness has snuffed out the “Light of the World” but it will be this very act that will forever defeat the devil, “*He has nothing in ME*” Jesus says. Amazing statement that satan has no place to grab hold of Jesus no other human could say such a phrase and it be true. So at the end of the supper Jesus said to His disciples “*let us go from hear*”, great words don’t you think?

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**b. 14:16-16:33 Promises (seventh truth 15:5 abiding promise)**

**John 15: 1-17**

**“The fruit of the vine”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-6 Cultivating closeness**

**III. Vs. 7-11 Evidence of fruitfulness**

**IV. Vs. 12-17 Love defined**

**I. Intro.**

In the 14th chapter Jesus spoke to the disciples about hope in heaven while they were in the upper room. I find it interesting that what He is about to tell them happens while they are on the move from the temple to the garden and His message is about how to live in the garden before we get to glory. Being that we are only a few days past Valentines day this section defines for us what kind of love Jesus is speaking of as He declare that love is found in two analogies the vineyard and friendship.

In 1965 the “**Righteous Brothers**” sang, “*You've lost that loving feeling, Oh, that loving feeling, You've lost that loving feeling, Now it's gone, gone, gone Whoa-oh*.” Hey perhaps she lost that “*loving feeling*” because what her love was just a feeling. I’m reminded The great reformer and evangelist of the 1500 John Knox cried out “*Lord, give me Scotland or I’ll die*” but what many are unaware is that the Lord responded back with the words, “*First die and then I’ll give you Scotland*”, love my friends is a decision not just an emotion.

**II. Vs. 1-6 Cultivating closeness**

Vs. 1 It appears based upon 14:31 that Jesus and His disciples left the Upper Room which we believe was in the southwest corner of the city of Jerusalem on the side of Mt. Zion. They would have wound their way through the vineyards that grew around Jerusalem at this time. Further more it was Passover which meant that there was a full moon as they passed through the vineyards, down through the Tyropoeon Valley and around the walls of Jerusalem, through the Kidron Valley then back to Gethsemane's garden on the Mount of Olives.

Now it is interesting to look at that 31st verse as He said, “*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here*.” The first part of the sentence gives the understanding to the first part where He says; “*that the world may know that I love the Father*” in other words Jesus departure towards the cross would demonstrate His love for the Father and the Father’s love for the world.

There are four different parts to this analogy:

1. Vs. 1**The Vine**: In Isaiah 5:1-4 the Lord used this same metaphor concerning Israel saying, “*Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes.* So Isaiah described Israel as a transplanted vine from Egypt where the Vinedresser took great care in transplanting it so that it would produce fruit and instead it only produced wild grapes. Jeremiah 2:21 the Lord said “*I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine*?” Friends it is so easy for you and me to over evaluate our importance and under value you the Lord. In contrast to this Jesus describes Himself as the “*True Vine*” He is the original and everything else is at best are branches that get life from being connected to the true vine. Jesus calls Himself the “*True Vine*” in contrast to Judaism and tells them that you won’t find God in religion you will only find God in a relationship with the Son. Our union with our Lord is a living one that ought to have the characteristic of the vine and carry out the purpose of the vine to bear much fruit.
2. Vs. 2 **The branches**: A branch by its self is week and useless, it has no abilities to function apart from it connection to the vine. Most all of the analogies that are given in scripture dealing with the relationship between the believer and Jesus carry the idea of union and communion. There is a necessity for you and me to realize that we are only branches and not the vine as we will see our security, identity, value and purpose all in our abiding union with Jesus and never apart from Him. Abiding means that we allow nothing in our lives that would crimp or cut our connection to Him. 10 times in the first 11 verses Jesus describes this connection as “*abiding*” the word describes a relationship that “*keeps in fellowship with Christ so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit*.” How can one tell if they are abiding?
	1. Vs. 2a Well for one thing they will do what branches do that are connected to the true vine, they will produce fruit.
	2. Vs. 2b Second you will experience the Lords lifting up and pruning.
	3. Vs. 7 You will see you prayer answered
	4. Vs. 11 You will experience joy
	5. Vs. 12 You will have a growing love for the Lord and each other
3. Vs. 1a-2 **The Vinedresser**: Jesus says that the vinedresser is the Father and it is His responsibility to care for the vine and its branches. The goal of this is to make it more fruit full by pruning, lifting up and clean the branches. There are two types of branches fruitful ones and fruitless ones. Those that aren’t producing fruit Jesus says He lifts up and those that are producing fruit He prunes so that it would bear more fruit. So times it is necessary to cut away and remove a vine that isn’t producing fruit as it sucks the life away from the branches that are so the vinedresser will cut away the sucker shoots. Other times a branch won’t produce much fruit because it is lying on the ground and isn’t getting enough sun light so that branch needs to be lifted up off the ground and brought under direct sun light. John described them this way in 1 John 2:19 saying, “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us*.” So there are two works of the vinedresser with regards to the vineyard one is **lifting off** the other is **cutting back** and both ensure that the vine will produce maximum fruit. You drive through any vineyard and at certain times all you will see is miles of ugly stumps that have been pruned as only the first year branches will bear fruit. The instrument that the Lord uses to do this is the word of God as He cleanses us from all that which is dead in our lives. **Jesus paints a picture of the Father lifting you up not cutting you off, of cleaning you up not casting you away**! “*I lift up the waited down branch, I wash off the contaminated fruit through my word*”, Jesus tells them. Our God’s not a butcher He is a Vinedresser! Hey friends the Lord is never closer to you then when He is pruning you to bear much fruit so pray for more fruitfulness and enjoy the process. God is not interested in our works He is interested in our fruit and fruit is produce not by the effort of the vine but rather by its connection to the true vine. The natural result of abiding in Christ is that we will bear much fruit. You never hear an apple tree grunting do you apples come upon the branches with out effort just because they are connect to the tree. It is the responsibility of the Father the vinedresser to make sure that He prunes us and lefts us up from the world in order that we might be more fruitful.
4. Vs. 2c, 5-6 **The fruit**: Notice that the by product of this is fruit not results, as fruit is what happens through a relationship and results are what machines do. Branches don’t eat fruit they produce it to serve others so our fruit is the for the benefit of others not ourselves. Then Jesus says “*stay close to me, keep connected*”. Fruit is produced by abiding not striving or struggling just by keeping connected to the vine. The branch just hangs connected to the vine growing and fruit happens without any effort of the branches part. They knew nothing of John 20:22 where we are told that “*He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit*”, nor of acts chapter two. So to illustrate this He took up the vines in the vineyard and said, “*You have to stay connected to me, in the past people thought they stayed connected to God by being connected with religion but I’m the true vine*!” Friends it’s not a connection to an institution that will produce fruit in our lives it’s a connection to God that does that. In this sense, we can say that fruit represents Christian character as seen in Galatians 5:22-23 where we are told what the fruit of the Spirit is, “*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*” The secret is here brought forth in verse 5 “*He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*” Paul stated it another way in Philip. 4:13 saying, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*.”

**III. Vs. 7-11 Evidence of fruitfulness**

Vs. 7-11 Obedience and fruitfulness are the evidence of our Love for Jesus and our receiving His love for us. Our love for Jesus is not a mystical, nor an emotional manifestation it’s intensely practical just as Jesus’ love manifested to us is immensely practical seen in His death upon the cross. Further more the lack of joy can be traced to our not abiding in His love. Ah but our abiding in His love will bring the fullness of joy. Friend, there is nothing more miserable in this world than a Christian who is not abiding in God’s love as he will have to much of Christ to be happy in this world and to much of the world to be happy in Christ. He does not love sin enough to enjoy its pleasures, and does not love Christ enough to relish in His holiness. The joy of Jesus speaks of here is a far cry from how the world defines is in the pleasures of a life of ease. The joy He speaks of is to be found in the exhilaration of being right with God, and the conscious walking in His love and care. In these verses we see **four evidences of a fruitful life**:

1. Vs. 7 **Prayer**: Abiding in the Lord where His words dwells in us well be a constant time of prayer and answered prayer as we trust Him at His word. Prayer is not a way of getting God to do what you want him to do, it is asking him to do what he has promised to do. So when we pray we are doing so in accord to His promises and if we want to make our prayers effective all we need to do is to read and study His promises in His word.
2. Vs. 8 **Witness**: When we abide in the Lord and He in us people notice the difference in our lives, we aren’t trying to do so we just are because we are in constant contact with the true vine.
3. Vs. 9-10 **Love**: Notice once again the order of love and that is first coming from so that our keeping His commandments springs from abiding in His love. It is as Jude said in Jude 1:21 “*keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*.” The sense of worthlessness that many people have and mask by bragging and boasting is to cover up their insecurity. Friend as long as you try to feel significant based upon something coming from you it will always lead to insecurity. Why not realize that you are special because of God’s love, you belong to him. Some one put it into a rhyme that goes like this:
* **To live above with those you love: Undiluted glory.**
* **To live below with those you know: Quite another story**.
1. Vs. 11 **Joy**: The last evidence of a fruitful life is joy of living the life in God’s plan and purposes. I can tell you that the joy I believe that Jesus is speaking of here comes when we place substance over style when we desire to count not merely counted.

**IV. Vs. 12-17 Love defined**

Vs. 12-17 The final analogy the Lord employs is that of friendship. Which is harder, loving people whom you do not like, or loving people who do not like you? The first thing that changes when we abide in Christ is us as we display the fruit of the Spirit. We become more gentle, more gracious, more loving, more easy to live with, more able to cope, more panic-proof. We begin to handle life the way we were intended to do. That is what it means to become Christ like. Jesus is not speaking of a feeling here many folks wait until they have a feeling of affection towards someone but that is not what Jesus is speaking of He is speaking of being so full of His love that we take the initiative to love even if our feeling aren’t there. It is best understood in Jesus’ words “as I have loved you” which means though it is not a feeling neither is it a duty, a job that must get done. It is a love that is called out not upon the person but upon His love that has been shed abroad in our hearts. This kind of love flows from an overwhelming sense of His love towards us. So when you find it difficult to love someone, you just don’t feel in love with them and you could just grin and bear it but it wouldn’t be truthful then you need to simple recall His love towards you, you need to have His love for you replenished. That is what Paul spoke of in Romans 5:5 when he said “*Now hope does not disappoint, because* ***the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us****.*” Jesus also tells us how we will know that it is His love operating through us:

1. Vs. 13 **Love with out limits**: It will go all the way, even to the point of death. This kind of love will never stop half way it will go the distance and exhaust its self before it will stop loving. This kind of love doesn’t stop when expectations are not immediately met; it continues to sacrifice surrendering and laying down its rights in order to love.
2. Vs. 14-15 **Love without labels**: The second way this kind of love will be manifested is with out labels as it will always elevate the person who is being loved beyond what the world may see them our even how they may see themselves. Jesus describes an intimate nature with them that goes way beyond duty to friendship that shares secrets and binds together. Every year here we see the Canadian geese fly over in their familiar “V” pattern there are three remarkable things about these flocks as it relates to the above principal:
	1. There is always a leader who sacrifices himself for the betterment of the flock. He sets the direction and pace.
	2. Second it is never the same leader, they seem to rotate in that position but always with the same goal.
	3. The third thing is that the leader doesn’t honk it is the rest of the birds who do so and it has been suggested that what the other geese are saying is, “*Keep it up! You’re doing great! That's the way to go*!” honks of encouragement.

Friends that is the way we ought to be with each other don’t you think?

Vs. 16 **Love with light**: Finally we see that our love out to be seen with the potential of what people can be and not just what they are. This is first realized when we see that Jesus says, “*You didn’t choose Me, but I chose you*”. So we too need to love as a choice based upon what God can and will do in their life through His love. Ah but the second part of this is equally important as Jesus goes on to say, “*that you should bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain*”. Love that works in such a way that does not just see potential but works in order that they might obtain their purpose as well. And how can these two things be achieved? Well in a word PRAYER by which we ask the Father to grant us.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**b. 14:16-16:33 Promises (seventh truth 15:5 abiding promise)**

**John 15:18 – 16:4**

**“A love, hate relationship”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 18-20 Truths to counteract the worlds hate**

**III. Vs. 21-25 Hating His love**

**IV. Vs. 26-4 Reminded of His goodness**

**I. Intro.**

We often fail to realize that we are to bear witness of Jesus not ourselves or win some theological argument, it is the presence of Jesus is our words and works that draws people to surrender their lives to Him. Therefore the most effective way to evangelize people is to be consistently changed by the Holy Spirit working through the word of God in our own life. Oh unfortunate that what many folks reject as being Christianity is well meaning efforts but done in the energy of the flesh that aren’t consistent with the character of Christ. Steve Brown in his book, “**What was I Thinking**?” said “*Theology (no matter how orthodox), a belief statement (no matter how Biblical), and propositions (no matter how exact and correct) are all useless if they don’t lead us to the reality which is God and to the astonishment that ought to be a regular occurrence in the believer’s life*.” A.W. Towzer made this observation, “*I have reason to suspect that many people are trying to give leadership in Christian churches today without ever having yielded to the wise and effective leading of the Holy Spirit. He truly is the Spirit of wisdom, understanding and counsel. He alone can bring the gracious presence of the living God into our lives and ministries. You may think it out of place for me to say so, but in our churches today we are leaning too heavily upon human talents and educated abilities. We forget that the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God is a necessity, not only in our ministerial preparation, but in the administrative and leadership functions of our churches. We need an infusion of the Spirit of God! We sorely need more of His wisdom, His counsel, His power, His knowledge. We need to reverence and fear the Almighty God.* ***If we knew the full provision and the spiritual anointing that Jesus promised through the Holy Spirit, we would be far less dependent on so many other things.... I have said it before, and I say it now: We need the Holy Spirit more and more, and we need human helps less and less!***” It is to this that Jesus addresses His disciples in these verses.

**II. Vs. 18-20 Truths to counteract the worlds hate**

Vs. 18-20 The Church was born during a time of Roman rule in which the known world was under their authority. Now the Romans for the most part tolerated the religion form the countries they defeated but as time went on they worshipped Caesar as a God and in fact consider Christians to be atheists for the refusal to worship him. People saw the power and authority of Caesar and thought that he must be a god because of it and every year every Roman citizen had to come and make an offering to Caesar and say “*Caesar is Lord*” but the Christians wouldn’t say that as they knew “*Jesus is Lord*”. I rather think the world still struggles with this as it tends to believe that power, popularity and pomp are indications that someone is to be put up on a pedestal. But Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-28 “*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you let him be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*.” So we are to treat the world as Jesus treated them speaking the truth in the constant demonstration of His love and be prepared that even in doing this many if not most with hate us, without cause.

One only needs to remember the reaction most of us got form unsaved family and friends when we told them about our new relationship with Jesus. Prior when we told them of our accomplishments our joys they were proud and rejoiced with us but suddenly when we told them of Jesus love at best we got placated “*oh that’s so nice*” and worst we got hammered with instant resistance. Jesus says three things with regards to this:

1. Vs. 18 **Don’t take it personal**: “*I know what you’re going through*”, Jesus tells them. Back in the 7th chapter of John we are told of His brothers not believing in Him. Then of coarse there was the constant clash between Him and the religious leaders of the day. They called him the son of satan, a blasphemer, a drunkard and an arrogant man. All of that was directed at Jesus personally where the attacks that come our way are directed at Jesus in us not at us personally. I find that a little easier don’t you? I mean when someone attacks us because of Jesus we don’t have to take it personally as it isn’t aimed at us. We can say, “*Wow, they really don’t like Jesus*!”
2. Vs. 19 **It’s a compliment**: If they are hostel towards you because they can see a change in you this is a great thing as it mean’s you’re not the same person you use to be. Well praise God, when the world doesn’t like you any more as it means you are no longer fit for this world. Even though you can’t see any physical changes the world can apparently see the difference and they are letting you know, “*Hey, you’re not one of those Jesus freaks are you*?” Now the world will try to get you to go back to doing the things they are doing, the things you use to do because if you have been changed that means that they can as well and they loved the darkness more than the light. Listen to how Peter spoke of this in the NLT 1 Peter 4:3-5 “*You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. Of course, your former friends are very surprised when you no longer join them in the wicked things they do, and they say evil things about you. But just remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead.*” There was a young Christian being harassed by his friends who were complaing that he could no longer party with them and he said, “*Hey you’re wrong I can still do all the things I use to, it’s not that I can’t it’s that I don’t want too*!” That’s a good word as you see the Lord has changed us so much that He has changed our wants, He doesn’t just say you can’t. That’s not to say that our flesh isn’t tempted, it still has the same appetites it used to but God has given us a new heart which has new wants and all we need to do is realize that our hearts need to rule over our flesh.
3. Vs. 20a **Par for the course**: Finally Jesus reminds them that this is part of His promises. Part of His promises? Yeh you know the promise of John 16:33 where Jesus promises you that “*In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*.” This is a great word from Jesus to His disciples because rejection and per pressure tends to cause us to conform and compromise in order to fit in. There is a basic human need for social contact and we all want to be liked so Jesus reminds them not to seek to conform but rather to continue to be transformed. Hey Christian you are in good company because those who make their home in the dark hated Jesus love and light before us. Our responsibility is to abide in Jesus’ love and reach out to folks but that doesn’t always mean that the world will respond back with love and acceptance. Our over popularity with those in the world ought to cause us to ask, “*Has the world become more Christian or has the Christian become more worldly*?” Friend’s our identity and security is in being called the friend of Jesus not the friend of the world. We aren’t going to get a pass on this as we aren’t greater than our master so we might as well expect that **there will be some who won’t like the new you because they are in love with the old them**! Brother Andrew once quoted Psalm 18:29 to those folks in countries where they are being persecuted, “*By my God I can run through a troop; by Him I can leap over a wall*”. He asks them, “*What do you think it takes to run through a troop and to leap over a wall?*” The answer he gets is usually something about faith. Then he says, “*No, what it takes is a troop and a wall. How are you going to run through a troop if there is no troop? How are you going to leap over a wall if there is no wall?*” There must be opposition, persecution, pressure and resistance or you wouldn’t ever know that you have been equipped by God to run and leap over obstacles. Ah but read the rest of verse 20 and you see that opposition and obstacles doesn’t mean defeat it means victory and hearts will be transformed along the way. A.W. Towzer once made this observation, “*He who God uses mightily He must wound deeply*”. It seems to me that there is a correlation to fruitfulness and plowing up the ground that the seed may take hold.

**III. Vs. 21-25 Hating His love**

Vs. 21-25 Next thing Jesus does is reveal the reason for the world’s hatred and it is to be found in its love for sin. There is a disobedience that is based upon ignorance, like speeding when we didn’t see or know that the speed limit changed now we are still guilty as the oft quoted Roman law reminds us that ignorance of the law is no excuse. But when someone knows the truth yet chooses to disobey they are doing so not based upon ignorance but upon willfulness, you see with knowledge comes responsibility to act according to that knowledge. The primary reason for the world’s hatred and that is the word of God. Friend we have no right to alter the word’s meaning or change its practice in our lives especially not to avoid then world’s distain and wrath.

The folks who are engaged in hate us are outside of God’s love for them and are prisoners of the things they equate freedom with. You see with the world they see the definition of “*freedom*” as **free *to* do anything we want without any conscientious or outside restraint**. Ah but you and I define “*freedom*” as **free *from* anything that keep us from the conscience presence of the love of God**. What’s even more remarkable is that Jesus will say in 16:2 that those who hate us are often quite religious. Friend religion has always been and always will be the enemy of relationship. Paul spoke of this in 1 Tim. 1:12-14 saying, “*How thankful I am to Christ Jesus our Lord for considering me trustworthy and appointing me to serve him, even though I used to scoff at the name of Christ. I hunted down his people, harming them in every way I could. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. Oh, how kind and gracious the Lord was! He filled me completely with faith and the love of Christ Jesus*.” Amazing how those who spend their entire life studying about God can be so ignorant of Him and His ways. But God knew it was going to happen that the religious people would hate Jesus without cause and here Jesus quotes Psalm 35:19 and 69:4 which speak of this. I remember years ago a man and a woman who were living together came into my office saying that the gal’s grown son who was not a believer was persecuting them for their faith in Christ. But when I heard them retell his complaint that they were always preaching to him about his need for Jesus he came back with “*well why aren’t you living it yourself*”. I’m afraid at times people hate me with cause far more than they hate me without cause.

**IV. Vs. 26-4 Reminded of His goodness**

Vs. 26-4 But Jesus goes on to say that He has given us what is necessary to deal with this kind of hatred from the world and that is the Holy Spirit and He goes on to tell them of **four things the Holy Spirit provides us**.

1. Vs. 26 **Bear witness to us**: The first thing Jesus says is that the Holy Spirit will bear witness to ***us***. There is an often mistranslation of this passage which suggests that the Holy Spirit will bear witness to the world and indirectly that is true but only because He first bears witness to us. That is what these two verses say, verse 26 “*whom I shall send to you, He will testify of Me*” Jesus says then in verse 27 through the Holy Spirit testifying to us we will intern “*also bear witness*”. You see the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us reminding us constantly of the goodness of God, the love of God and the continual presence of Jesus in the midst of the world hating us. There is no greater illustration of this then in Acts 7:55-56 where we are told that “*Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily upward into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand. And he told them, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand*!” Friends all we to endure the worlds’ hatred of us is the Holy Spirit constantly revealing to us Jesus presence, those who have the constant presence of Jesus in their lives by means Holy Spirit never have any problem being Jesus’ witness because His presence is constantly visible to us and those in the world as we are told of Stephen’s case in Acts 6:15 where “*everyone in the council stared at Stephen because his face became as bright as an angel's*.” We don’t need the mechanics of witnessing we need the reality of Jesus given us by the Holy Spirit.
2. Vs. 27-1 **Reminds us of what Jesus has done and is doing for us**: The 2nd thing the Holy Spirit will do for us living in a world that hates is continually remind us of what Jesus has done for us and is doing in us. That is understood by the words “*You will also bear witness*” (present tense) “*because you have been with Me from the beginning*” (past tense). Friends that is really what witnessing for Jesus is all about it is simply us telling folks of what Jesus has done and is doing in our lives. There is something about the continual reminder of the presence of Jesus in our lives and what He has done and is doing that will keep us from being made to stumble Jesus says.
3. Vs. 2 -3 **He will stand by you and keep you steady**: The third thing the Holy Spirit will do for us living in a world that hates us is keep us strong in the face of the opposition. He does He do this? Well reminding you that you are a child of the King of King’s and the best friend of the Lord of Lord’s. Paul wrote of just such a time in 2 Tim. 4:17 when he stood before the Caesar Nero saying, “*the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*” Friend the Holy Spirit causes us to be bold and courageous in the face of the world’s hatred. A third of the gospel of John is taken up with this one evening as Jesus is telling it like it is and speaking to them ahead of time so that they can reflect back and say, “*Oh this is what Jesus was talking about that night, now I understand.*” There are some things we Christian’s can expect and the first one was that was don’t expect the world to like you just because you love them. Don’t be surprised when those that hate you the most will those that are very religious who think snuffing you out is doing God a favor. Paul spoke of what he had done prior to knowing Jesus to King Agrippa in Acts 26:9-11 Saying, “*I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities*.” Paul clearly thought he was doing God a service but wiping out Christians.
4. Vs. 4 **He reminds us that we are in a war and we winning side**: No matter how much the world hates us we have read the end of the book and we already know how it turns out Jesus wins and we are on His team. Hear what God told Joshua in 1:9 “*Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go*.” **The battle is inevitable but the victory is certain march on**! This ought to cause us to live as one martyred missionary uttered in his final words “***No reserve; no retreat; no regrets***.”

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**b. 14:16-16:33 Promises (seventh truth 15:5 abiding promise)**

**John 16:5-33**

**“The Masters plan”**

1. **Intro.**
2. **Vs. 5-11 Transformation**
3. **Vs. 12-15 Communication**
4. **Vs. 16-24 Clarification**
5. **Vs. 25-27 Connection**
6. **Vs. 28-33 Restoration**

**I. Intro.**

There some 60 churches listed in the “*Yellow Pages*” in Ravalli county but when we consider the fact that there were only a handful Christians and not even one church yet in 70 years the gospel had spread throughout the known world one wonders what they had that we don’t? If we sixty something Churches were like the Christian’s in the book of Acts would there be any difference in our county? Consider the fact that without our communication and transportation advantages within 25 years of Pentecost Paul had already reached the outskirts of the Roman Empire coming to Thessalonica. And based upon Acts 17:6 their impact was well known enough that those in Thessalonica said those who have “*turned the world upside down have come here also*”. Why are churches in general today so weak and ineffectual, having little impact upon society? **Why is society degenerating while churches are increasing in number and in size?** I believe the reason for the change is: We have changed the strategy of the church. We no longer are operating as the Lord of the church instructed at the beginning.

Vs. 5-11 Jesus was outlining His plan to reach the world and it included His departure which as difficult as it was to grasp was essential for the success of His plan. Friends there will many things that our Lord allows to come across our lives that bring us sorrow but we can be confident that they will be to our advantage. “Nevertheless” is one of the many great words in the bible as it means despite everything you may think or feel the truth is it’s to your advantage.

 The church has filed away the original strategy and come up with one of its own which seems to be much more suitable for our day, trying to adapt its methods to reach an ever changing world. That is why the church is steadily decreasing in power and influence. Along the road to the garden Jesus, the Founder of the church, described to the original disciples His strategy to reach the world. Jesus came to give them five reasons why His departure was better for them and part of His plan. There are **five remarkable things that are part of this strategy:**

**Transformation: Not mere information**

1. First Jesus says in verses 4b-11, “**Everything is going to start with inwardly transformed people**”. That is the first point of Jesus’ strategy. It is easy to miss this when you read this paragraph as most read the sentence in verse 8, “*When he comes he will convict the world of sin, and righteousness and of judgment*” as though this will be a ministry that the Holy Spirit will directly perform upon the unbelieving society. But that is not what Jesus is saying. Though the context of this paragraph is how the Holy Spirit convicts the world in verse 7 Jesus is very clear that the Holy Spirit does not come to the world but to the believer. You may recall His words in 14:17 where Jesus said, “*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.*” Jesus points out that when the Holy Spirit comes, He comes not to the world but to the church. He says twice in Verse 7 “*If I do not go away, the* ***Helper will not come******to you****, but if I depart, I will send* ***Him to you***.” Therefore **what the Holy Spirit does to the church is what is going to impress the world.** That is the first point in the strategy of God. But just what is the Holy Spirit going to do to the church that will affect the world? Well Jesus says that the Holy Spirits presence in the Church **will convince the world of three things through what He has done in our lives**: “*Sin is the truth about man, righteousness is the truth about God, and judgment is the inevitable combination of these two truths*.”

1. **Of sin**: “*because they believe not on me*”. The unbelieving world, the secular system of our day does not believe in Jesus nor does it have any deep sense of its sin. The business of the church is not to convince the world of its sins but of its basic, fundamental sin. ***Sin is the destructive force that wrecks and ruins the possibility and potential beauty of humanity as God intended it to be.*** So what does the world learn from watching transformed people in the church? Well for starters they learn the reason for their dysfunction, their broken hearts and ruined lives, something isn’t right. When they see people who they have known that were just as dysfunctional and messed up as they were but now have been transformed they become curious to what as brought peace and joy from ruin and frustration. **So for the first time they come to grips with the destruction of sin and the antidote found in the transforming power of the love of God**. Notice that the word sin is singular not plural what “sin” is Jesus speaking of? Well He answers the “*Sin, of not believing on Him*.” What destroys human life is not taking of the only antidote to that which destroys them and it is the only sin that will not be forgiven.
2. **Of righteousness**: “*because I go to My Father and you see Me no more*”. The second thing the world will learn, Jesus says, is the source of the gift of righteousness. In the Old Testament this word means “*holiness*” and the idea is ***wholeness***. That is the end product of the Lord’s transforming work “wholeness” or balance in our lives before the transformation we were out of balanced not whole. We use the phrase “*Man that person really has it together*” to describe this. That is what Jesus does to us through His transformation He puts us back together as Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:17 where he says, “*Therefore,* ***if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*.**” Everyone is born into the world *disassembled* (some more than others) there are some pieces of the puzzle missing and we are in a constant search to find them. We think they are found in pleasure, drugs, careers, possessions or people but all these things do is temporarily fell the void or numb it. Solomon wrote of his quest for the missing piece in his book of Ecclesiastes where he had the means and the time to look for the missing piece in popularity, pleasure, accomplishments but in the end he concluded that the missing pieces could only be found in a relationship with God. Some folks are on a constant quest to “*get ourselves together*” but there is a lot of truth in that old nursery rhyme that Humpty Dumpty found. Remember that “*Humpty Dumpty had a great fall and all the King's horses and all the king’s men couldn't put old poor Humpty back together again*!” So the world will learn from our transformation that **it’s not the kings men or horses that will put us back again,** in fact God has no intension of putting us back again instead the King is going to make us NEW. The only way to “***wholeness***” is the KING of KINGS Jesus! How is this accomplished? Well Jesus alludes to this by saying that He is going to the Father and they will see Him no more and that He is sending the Holy Spirit and it is His job to make us whole. We don’t put ourselves together again, we don’t earn wholeness; no our wholeness is the end product of our trusting in Jesus to put us together. People in the world recognize they are broken and try to hide their dysfunction but listen to what Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:7 “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us*.” The world will see common ordinary clay pots but they will see not us decorated with things to hide or dysfunction instead they will the glory of God in the face of Jesus shining thru.
3. **And of judgment**: “*because the ruler of this world is judged*”. Finally Jesus says that the believer’s transformation will convince the world of judgment. Now the judgment of which Jesus speaks of here is defined for us by His words “*because the ruler of this world is judged*” which tells us that Jesus is not speaking of the judgment day where the world will have to give an account. No, this is the judgment that will happen at the cross and resurrection where satan the one behind the dysfunctional philosophy of this world that keeps people enslaved to their brokenness is judged. Jesus is saying that the transformed Christian life will be a constant reminder that we can be free from the things that enslave us because the one that is behind them has been defeated. We have not only been set free from the penalty of sin we have been set free from the power of sin.

Vs. 12-15 Now here Jesus reveals the second part of His strategy to reach the world. What is even more remarkable to me is the timing of these words which are just hours before the cross where He will face physical agony, emotional upheaval and spiritual separation and He is concerned that His followers can’t endure to much more.

**Communication: Without limitation**

2. Second Jesus says in verses 12-15 “*I still have many things to say to you, but you can’t bear them now*”. **The second part of Jesus strategy to reach the world involves how He will continue to communicate to His followers and through them to the world**. Notice that Jesus speaks of a future time when “*He, the Spirit of truth has come*” that suggests that the Holy Spirit had not come in a manor that would guide them into “*all truth*” which is defined as “*what He hears He will speak*”. When will that time be? Well I believe that Jesus is making a reference to about 50 days from this time at the time of Pentecost. What Jesus is saying is that the Holy Spirit will continue His work through His people in the world. Jesus strategy is to continue to speak and work in the lives of those who have trust in Him. That is why Jesus said in Acts 1:8 that we “*shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall BE witnesses to ME*”. Jesus’ strategy involves “***being***” because of the work of the Holy Spirit and not doing in our own strength. When you compare John 14:26 with 16:13, you see the wonderful way that God arranged for the writing of the New Testament Scriptures:

* 14:26 The Spirit would “*remind them of what Jesus had taught them*”; this gives us the four Gospels.
* Vs. 13a The Spirit would also “*guide*” them into all truth; and this would result in the epistles.
* Vs. 13b “*He will show you things to come*” refers to the prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation.

Jesus indicates **three things that The Holy Spirit’s communication will be to those He indwells**.

1. Vs. 13b**Authoritive**: “*He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come*.” We will be able to test what the Holy Spirit is saying to us as it will always be consistent and never contradict what the Father and the Son has said. Paul spoke of this in 1 Cor. 2:10 where He said “*But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God*.” We will have no concern on what the Holy Spirit is telling us as He is always going to speak what He hears. So many today will tell you that the Holy Spirit told them something but when they tell you what it is it is inconsistent to the rest of what God has already said therefore we know that it is of God.
2. Vs. 13c **Predictive**: “*He will tell you things to come*.” The Holy Spirit will reveal us things to come giving us insights into the times and seasons will live and how they relate to the word of God. In Hebrews 10:23-25 the author exhorts his readers by saying “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*.”
3. Vs. 14 **Christ centered**: “*He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you*”. The Holy Spirit will continue to make known to us the person words and works of Christ that is the theme of all the scripture. In Colossians 2:3 Paul wrote “*In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*”.
4. Vs. 15 **Applicable**: “*He will take of Mine and declare it to you*” Twice in tow verses Jesus says the same thing and it speaks of the truth that the Holy Spirit will cause the word of God to be practical and relevant to our lives today. Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 3:16 that “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*”

Vs. 16-24 Now we come to the third strategy to reach the world as Jesus summed it up verse 16 saying “*A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father*.” To which the disciples were quite obviously confused in verses 17-19a. The just of their puzzlement seems to be how He was going to disappear to be never seen again only to reaper so they would be able to see Him. Then in verse 20-24 Jesus gives them the answer by way of an illustration to which they apparently understand in verse 29-30.

**Clarification: Instead of confusion**

3. **The third** **part of Jesus strategy to reach the world involves our understanding as clearly Jesus demonstrates clarification instead of confusion.**  It is very apparent that Jesus knew His disciples well as His words illustrated how prone they were to confusion. Many folks have the same response when it comes to Jesus words “We don’t know what He is saying” based upon Jesus illustration that is brought on by our being in this world where we can only comprehend things based upon our limited understanding of what we are going through now. The error is not in what we are reading but in our understanding and Jesus encourages us to ask. A clear example of this is verse 16 where Jesus says that “*A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father*.” From the disciples perspective it made no sense but from our perspective we understand that Jesus was speaking of the cross. The Holy Spirit offers us a perspective that transcends our experiences and because of this gives a view of reality that we would not be able to see. **God brings joy to our lives, not by substitution, but by transformation.** We cannot mature emotionally or spiritually if somebody is always replacing our broken toys. In Deut 23:5 we read that “*the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you*.” His illustration of the woman giving birth makes this clear. Now this works out in the world when people in the world see us living beyond our situations and circumstances as Paul said in Romans 5:5 “*Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*.” A woman in labor has sorrow but once the baby is born she has joy, so what the Holy Spirit works through the word of God is clarity in and during confusing times. What caused the mother anguish and the mother joy was the same thing the baby and the difference was perspective. Notice the promise in verse 20 “*your sorrow will be turned into joy*” and that will come by way of the Holy Spirit changing our comprehension. God’s work was not to replace their sorrow with joy, but to turn sorrow into joy. Peter wrote of this as a witness in 1 Peter 3:15 where he said, “*sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*”. “*Why are you full of joy, why do you have so much hope in your situation*”, the world wants to know and the answer is because the Holy Spirit has granted us clarity beyond our present situation. What activates this perspective is our communication with the Lord as Paul spoke of this in Philip. 4:6-7 saying, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*.” It’s not the circumstances that will change but rather our understanding of them. God does not create joy by new surrounding He creates new surrounding by joy and the world will take notice of that.

Vs. 25-27 Again Jesus refers to a yet future time when the Holy Spirit will be in and upon them when the need of figurative language won’t be necessary a time when (and listen carefully) “*I will tell you plainly about the Father*” defined further by Jesus when He says, “*I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you…*”

**Connection: Through relationship not religion**

4. Vs. 25-27 The fourth **part of Jesus strategy to reach the world is brought in these verses and it is the constant reminder of God’s love for us.** Jesus is very careful to speak of this security by means of our relationship with God and not just through some religious exercise. The world will see security and confidence in the life of the believer that will be attractive to them as the world knows nothing of such security. Paul spoke of this in Romans 8:37-39 saying, “*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” There is an ever growing sense of the grace and love of God that is evident on our lives that attracts others to Him.

Vs. 28-33 The final thing we see is found in verses 28-33 where Jesus clearly states His identity and the disciples respond by saying, “*Now we are sure…By this we believe that you came forth from God*” But Jesus questions them in verse 32 saying “*Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.*”

**Restoration: Not expulsion**

5. Vs, 28-33 The fifth **part of Jesus strategy to reach the world**  is seen in this exchange between Jesus and His disciples where they felt secure in their knowledge and Jesus was just as certain of their soon failure. Yet Jesus tells them in verse “*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*.” The fifth thing that the world will see in Jesus strategy is His goodness and greatness and not ours. There will be evident to the world that we are just like them but with a great God who works faithful in us and through us. It is clear that Jesus loved these fellows with full knowledge of their failures and complete confidence of their transformation. God does not chose the qualified He qualifies the chosen my friends and that means that the world will see what God can and does through common ordinary clay pots not though special people. Out of weakness, we become strong, out of mistakes and failures we become aware of the fact Friends remember peace is offered to us, but tribulation is promised! He has a way of correcting our mistakes, and making us look good. **The reality my friend God does not need us He wants us and that is what ministers to the world**. So God’s strategy to reach the world is:

* **Transformation: Not mere information**
* **Communication: Without limitation**
* **Clarification: Instead of confusion**
* **Connection: Through relationship not religion**
* **Restoration: Not expulsion**

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**c. 17:1-26 Prayers**

**John 17:1-6**

**“The definition of success”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-3 Things given up**

**III. Vs. 4-6 Things given back**

**I. Intro.**

In the upper room and along the road to the garden of Gethsemane Jesus spoke of the Father to His followers now as they arrived at the garden He talks to His Father about His followers. This prayer is what I call the “Lord’s prayer” and it comes after the Upper Room Discourse as Jesus talk along the road to Gethsemane and just before His betrayal and arrest. Here we get a glimpse into what we are told of in Romans 8:34 where Paul said that “*It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us*”, that is why Jesus is our great High Priest!

Now although we can find other prayers of Jesus this is by far the longest recorded prayer of His in the Bible, there are other times where we are told that He went up to a mountain to pray and was there for many hours but we don’t have any thing recorded. What we see in this prayer specifically in this section is His inner thoughts with regards to His fellowship with the Father. This prayer is also the longest with regards to far reaching as we will see in verse 20 Jesus says, “*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word*”. Saint’s that’s you and me that Jesus is praying for! It was a full moon the night our Lord prayed for us as He looked up into heaven and into the Father’s face He spoke of us. Ever wonder if Jesus mentioned your name? Well He has many times and here we see that we were included in His prayer over 2000 years ago. Along with His prayer is His evaluation as to how the last three years have gone, His definition of success if you will as we see Jesus prays for three things:

1. Vs. 1-6 **That He would be glorified**
2. Vs. 7-19 **That His disciples would be sanctified**
3. Vs. 20-26 **That His future followers would be unified**

**II. Vs. 1-3 Things given up**

Vs. 1 Three times in this prayer we hear our Lord say “*I pray*” or “*do not pray*”, how wonderful it is to read this of Jesus. Allow me to make **five general observations we regards to this prayer**:

* 1. The word John uses for prayer here is used else where in the New Testament but only John uses it for prayer and he only uses it for Jesus’ prayers. Perhaps we get the closet understand to the meaning of this word in verse 24 where the same word Jesus used of the word “*pray*” is rendered “*I desire*” which suggests a desire spoken in perfect fellowship with whom one speaks. Friends, prayer is not just a monolog it is a dialog. Jesus was not asking for a favor or even making a request He was expressing His heart with One in whom shared His very Heart, the Father. Of further interest is that this word also carries with it a resolve, thus some render the word “*I will*” or “*am determined*”.
	2. This prayer states emphatically that Jesus was no victim but rather a victor! “*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*”, He said in verse 33 now He prays as a victor not as a victim. The word “*world*” is recorded 19 times in this chapter as clearly Jesus prays as an overcomer and through Him the Bible declare in 1 John 5:4 “*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*”
	3. Next notice that the deepest passion of His heart was not the salvation of man but the glorification of the Father and then because of that the saving of man. On the eve of the cross Jesus was praying for the cross that it would accomplish that which it was designed to do Glorify the Father. How about it do you pray that what God has placed before you would accomplish that which it is designed for?
	4. Notice as well the posture of this prayer as we tend to think of the posture of prayer as closing ones eyes and bowing our heads but we read here that Jesus “*Lifted up His eyes to heaven*”. Clearly the posture of prayer is not nearly as important as the posture of the heart of the one praying. Though Jesus starts this prayer with praying for Himself it is anything but selfish as His concern is the glory of His death that this would glorify the Father. The acceptance of Jesus’ sacrificed was what would bring the Father glory and it is this that Jesus prays for. That which the world would identify as failure and complete humility was the very path to the Glory of God. How about it friend are you willing to fail in the worlds eyes that God will receive His glory through your humility?
	5. Another fascinating aspect of this chapter is we get a glimpse into Jesus prayer life and by that we can learn a lot about what our prayer life ought to be. For instance notice Jesus prayer for Himself in verse 1 “*Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You*”. “*What ever it takes for me to glorify You, even it means the cross*”, Jesus says. Before there is ever a crown my friend there will always be a cross. Here we learn the most important aspect of prayer:
* **It is not means of getting God to do what you want Him to do**
* **It is the means by which He gets us to do what He wants us to do**

“*Prayer*”, the signs reads, “*changes things*”! But it should read “***Prayer, changes me***”!

Hey folks I think we can see in Jesus actions a lot about how to communicate, **we ought to be always talking about the goodness and greatness of our Father to each other and we need to be continually talking to the Father about each other, it’s the only kind of gossip God allows**.

The first thing Jesus prays for with regard to Himself is that the cross (His sacrifice as the Lamb of God) would be acceptable and bring the Father glory. In Hebrews 10:5-7 we are given a preexistent conversation between Jesus and the Father in which Jesus says to the Father, “*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come-- In the volume of the book it is written of Me-- To do Your will, O God*.” So the cross of Jesus is not only the visible demonstration of God’s love for fallen mankind it is all an instrument of glory. Paul wrote to the Galatians in 6:14 saying, “*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*”

Vs. 2 Jesus prays concerning the authority that the Father had given Him over all flesh and that Jesus would grant eternal life to all the Father gave Him. Ten times in the 17th chapter Jesus mentions in this prayer thing’s that the Father has given Him. Friends Jesus prayer is full of recognizing the gifts of the Father and one of those gifts is us as we are His bride. Now these words to some have been a dividing point between Divine election and man’s free will. And all I can say on this is ***from God’s vantage point He has given us to the Son and from our vantage point we have agreed with His choice***! I do not wish to argue this what I do want to do is worship the Lord and marvel at His selection of me. In Ephes. 1:4 Paul elaborates on this further saying that, “*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*”. In that verse we learn that the choice was prior to our earthly existence with full understanding of who we are and may I say “***aren’t***”. But that this choice was never going to be apart from Jesus and that this choice included our transformation as we should be holy and without blame before Him and basis of God seeing us that way is His LOVE which was made visible on Jesus sacrifice for us on the cross.

Vs. 3 This is exactly the emphasis in Jesus prayer in verse 3 that eternal life is in continually knowing God experientially not just intellectually and this is done this only done by knowing Jesus. Friends **God is not a name it is a designation** and what ever we allow to govern our lives has that designation. There are many folks who allow a bottle or some pills to have the designation of god in their lives. There are others like the Governor of N.Y. that has allowed sex and pleasure to have that title in His life. Some make their jobs or families a god but friend there is only One worthy to occupy that place in our lives and that is the One who created us and loved us enough to send His only Son to redeem us.

It is a great thing to pray “*Bless me Lord*” but only if you finish that sentence with the words “*that I may be a blessing to You and to my fellow man*”. I’m afraid that to many Christians have confused the **King of Kings** with *Burger King* as they bark orders at Him saying “*Hold the pickles, hold the onions*” I want it my way! Who do you want making decisions as to what is best for you someone who can’t see what is going to happen 10 minutes from now or someone who knows the beginning from the end?

**III. Vs. 4-6 Things given back**

Vs. 4 Notice that Jesus sees the work as finished before the cross as He had already committed to obedience. It is the same way that God sees us perfect before we are as He has already committed to finishing what He started. The phrase of verse 5 “*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was*” makes no sense unless Jesus is preexisting further more Isaiah 48:11 He says, “*I will not give My glory to another*.” Therefore sense Jesus is preexistent and He has shared glory with the Father than who other can Jesus be except God. Back in John 4:34 Jesus told His disciples who had gone to get food while He spoke to the women at the well, “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*”

Jesus is always about finishing what He started and aren’t thrilled with that? I mean what would have happened if when they mocked Him in Matthew 27:40 saying, “*You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross*.” Jesus said, “*You’re right*!” and just came down off the cross; well all of mankind would have remained dead and eternally separated from the love of God. Or what if the words of Paul in Philip. 1:6 where he writes that we can be “*confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*”. Now what if Jesus said, “*Awe that’s good enough, I’ll just leave old Dale have finished.*” You know what the house painter says, “*Can’t see it from my house!*” So what If Jesus just said, “*Well Dale’s not finished but I can’t see Him from My house!*” Friend’s aren’t you thankful Jesus always finishes the work?

Have you ever stopped to realize that Jesus started that work before the creation of the world? And that He continued that work after the fall by covering Adam and Eve with the skin of an innocent animal. He then continued the work through Abraham and Noah and then David, He spoke about it through the Psalms and the Prophets and finally it became a reality at Jesus birth. Then finally 3 ½ years earlier on the banks of the Jordan as John was baptizing he looked across the river and said, “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*”. And only a few hours from this very prayer Jesus would finish that work that began before time with the words of John 19:30 “***It is finished***!”

Vs. 5 Next Jesus prays for the preexisting glory to be restored that which He had lain aside when according to Philip. 2:5-8 where Paul tells us that “*Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*.” Twice Jesus asks to be glorified, in verse 1 where He speaks of the cross and again in verse 5 where He speaks of the glory that was His before the incarnation.

But just what does glorify mean anyway? The word means **to make visible the treasure that isn’t immediately recognizable**. That is what John has already said in John 1:14 where he declares that “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*.” That which John and the disciples didn’t immediately recognize with regards to Jesus character they later beheld and saw that He was filled to overflowing in grace and truth.

There are **fourfold definition of success found in these verses**:

1. The first definition of success is found in Jesus’ words where He says in verse 4 “*I have glorified You on the earth.*” We can be a philanthropist going around spending money doing good; we can have great talents and gifts that are beneficial to others, we can use all our time for public service and as good as these things are if they have not “*Glorified God on the earth*” then they have been for our own glory and reputation. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven*.” Hey saint’s it is not just what we do it is the way in which we do it. What way? Well the Baptist way! You know what John the Baptist said in John 3:30 “*He must increase, but I must decrease*.” What makes what we do successful isn’t that the world recognizes it and praises our contribution to making the world a better place. No what **makes what we do successful is who receives the praise for our works**!
2. Vs. 4b The second definition of success is found in the words, “*I have finished the work.*” Jesus didn’t say “*I started the work*” or “*I got most of what you wanted Me to do done*”. No He said I have “*finished the work which You have given Me to do*”. So **Jesus definition of success isn’t to be found in partial obedience or good intentions it is only to be found in finishing that which He has given us to do**. There is a great illustration of this in 1 Samuel 15:3 where the Lord told Samuel to “*Go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.*” But in 1 Samuel 15:9 we are told that “*Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*” As far as the Amalekites were concerned Saul was obedient 99.99% as he only left the King Agag alive as a trophy. Fast forward 25 years as Saul is on Mount Gilboa fighting the Philistines when he is mortally wounded and he calls to his armory barer to kill but he refuses and on the scene comes and Amalekite who cuts off Saul’s head. Hey wait a minute where did that Amalekite come from? Well apparently Saul gagged on old Agag and 25 years later it cost him his life as one of Agag’s relatives kills him. Friends we can’t rest upon partial obedience even if it is 99.99% as it will inevitably be that one thing that we didn’t put under the Lord that will come back and get us.
3. Vs. 4c Next Jesus says that His finishing was specific in that it was that, “*which You have given Me to do*”. **Jesus’ definition of success isn’t to be found in activity or business, running around doing everything it is to be found specifically in doing those things that God has given us to do.** Much of our Christian life will be found in us determining what the Lord has called us to do and not worrying about what everyone else thinks we should be doing. A lot of the time we will find out that what everyone thinks we should be doing is the opposite of what God had called us to do. Success isn’t necessarily determined by committee it is to be found in hearing what God has called to do and finishing that. One other point on this based upon Jesus words in Matthew 11:30 that His “*Yoke is easy and His burden is light*” and think that is a good test to determine if what you are doing is from God our just the tyranny of the urgent. Other wise you will end up being a man pleaser instead of a God pleaser.
4. Vs. 5-6 Jesus prayed, “*I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world*.” Here we have yet another way in which **Jesus defined success and that is through demonstration not proclamation**. In the first chapter of John the apostle proclaimed of Jesus that the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst them. Jesus put flesh upon the nature and character of God as He lived out by demonstration who God is. Jesus didn’t deal in the realm of theory or ideology He dealt in the realm practical life and living demonstration of what he taught. He should that what He said was true not by passing an examine but by living it daily. There are those that try to argue into a specific theological position, taking you to scripture after scripture to support their point of view but often in doing so the manor in which they convince you convinces you that what ever their position is you don’t want it if it makes them the way they are. **Friends the best way to convince someone that your theological position is the right one is to demonstrate the benefits of it in your life**. Anything that makes God greater and me less is something that I’m interesting in.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**c. 17:1-26 Prayers**

**John 17:7-19**

**“Given, kept and sent”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 7-10 Provision**

**III. Vs. 11-13 Preservation**

**IV. Vs. 14-19 Protection**

**I. Intro.**

As we have seen the first part of Jesus’ prayer was a response to what He had done with what the Father had given Him which is summed up in the words of verse 6 where Jesus said, “***I have manifested Your name*** *to the men whom You have given Me out of the world.*” What an interesting statement with regards to Jesus’ mission. He didn’t come with a new theology or philosophy, nor did He come with a political agenda. No what the **world needed was a demonstration of the character and nature of God**. Consider the words of Paul in Romans 1:20 where he says, “*For since the creation of the world* ***His invisible attributes are clearly seen****, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*”. Then combine those words with Paul words in Col. 1:15 saying that Jesus “***Is the image of the invisible God***”. The false god’s that the world worshipped all had images associated with them but the true God was known through His actions which demonstrated His character and nature. When the Israelites were hungry God provided manna from heaven but in Jesus they saw first hand the manna from heaven He is the image of the invisible God, He demonstrated what mercy, truth, justice, grace, holiness looks like.

We now move to the Lord’s prayer for these 11 followers and it seems that Jesus had three areas that were on His with regards to them and all of them deal with the word of God and the effect it had upon them in the world.

1. Vs. 7-10 **Belong to the word not the world**: The first thing Jesus does is pray with regards to them belonging to the Father and the Son.
2. Vs. 11-13 **Kept in the word from the world**: Next He prays that they would be kept from the world and it is the Word of God that will do so.
3. Vs. 14-19 **Set apart in the word to be sent into the world**: Finally, Jesus prays that the word would sanctify for use in the world.

**II. Vs. 7-10 Provision**

There are two things that seem to have motivated this prayer of Jesus on behalf of His disciples:

* 1. Vs. 6 **LOVE** First because they are a gift from the Father: Jesus spent 3 ½ years with them and He loved them, they were precious to Him. Every morning Donna and I pray together and we always pray for the ones we love, so too with Jesus. That is why He says in verse 9 that He does not pray for the world and by that I believe He means what John would call the world in 1 John 2:16 where we are told that “*all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world*.” I don’t believe that this speaks of the unsaved in the world as we have already seen God’s heart towards them in Jesus’ words to Nicodemus where He proclaimed that “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”
	2. Vs. 11 **LEAVING** Second, it appears that He prayed this because of His departure: In only a few moments Jesus knew He would be leaving them and this motivated Him to pray all the more for them. In so doing He commends them to the Father’s care. Several years ago as I traveled for the first time out of the country to Russia knowing that I was going to be gone for three weeks with little or no contact I took the teenage kids aside and told them to take care of their mother for me while I was gone and I told them that I loved them and that I would be praying that the Lord would watch over them. Some where over the ocean I was thinking about the conversation when I realized that whether I was with them or not it was always the Lord that was watching over them.

There are three areas in which Jesus brings before the Father with regards to His disciples:

1. Vs. 8-10 ***Provision***: **Given them the word**: Jesus will use two different words for “word” **rhema** and **logos** and His prayer centers upon giving the right word at the right time to the right person which will produce faith and unity and the written word which transforms us.
2. Vs.11-13 ***Preservation***: **Kept them in Your name**: Which Jesus will define not only on the bases of security (not losing us) but also upon what that security will produce in us joy as Jesus experienced it.
3. Vs. 14-19 ***Protection***: **Sent them into the world**: Jesus’ prayer is not that we should be taken from the world but rather that we would be kept from the influence of the world. As such His prayer is that our sending would be purposeful as we would be set apart by truth.

***Provision***: **Given them the word**

Vs. 8 Jesus again shares what He has done with what the Father had given Him and in this case Jesus speaks of the “words” which was given Him. The use of the word rhema speaks of the right words at the right time to the right person. Friends when the word is spoken this way it will have a greater impact, the truth is sometimes what people reject isn’t the truth of the word but rather the manor in which it is delivered. Jesus words matched not only the content of the Fathers they matched the heart of the Father as well. As such Jesus declares that His words had threefold progressive impact upon the disciples:

a. “*They have received them*”: The word here means to take a hold of, to grasp and it speaks of an intellectual knowledge. Else where in the word this is rendered “*to be amazed, accept or to weigh*”, in other words the right words at the right time to the right person caused these fellows to be amazed and weigh the words taking hold of them.

b. “*Have known surely that I have come from the Father*”: This led to them experiencing personally the truth that Jesus is God the Son.

c. “*They have believed that You have sent Me*”: Finally these words spoken to the right person at the right time led these disciples trusting in Jesus mission as the redeemer.

Vs. 9 Because Jesus’ words were the right words at the right time to the right people He isn’t making a request to change the world system He is requesting to change people taking them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

Hey friends, **Jesus isn’t a radical reformer He is a radical transformer**. Were in an election year with much at stake for our country and as citizens of this great country we should vote our conscience but with that said I find it wonderful that Jesus didn’t come to change the political landscape, He didn’t run a political campaign. **No His method isn’t in changing the system His plan is to change the citizen**!!! Change the system and for a season you may be able to force some of the citizens to follow but change the citizen and no matter what the system it doesn’t stand a chance. Now with that said one day once Jesus as finished changing the citizen He will place them all into a new system where as Paul said in Philip. 3:20 “***our citizenship is in heaven****, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*”.

Vs. 10 How confident is our Lord in this transformation? Well enough to say we are part of the family and that in spite of our failures and shortcomings with great confidence Jesus can say, “*I am glorified in them*”, not will be one day, but am right now, AMAZING! Anyone can say to God the Father all mine are Yours but only Jesus could say and Yours are Mine.

 Friends it is for this reason we need to be listening to God’s words to us regularly as His word continues to work in our lives so that He is glorified in us. There are many things that theologically I have a hard time wrapping my mind around practically and this is one of them, “*How the Lord can be glorified in me*”. Only Jesus should be glorified in our lives not our denomination or our theology only Jesus.

**III. Vs. 11-13 Preservation**

***Preservation***: **Kept them in Your name**

Vs. 11-13 Now we move to the second part of His prayer and this deals with being kept in the Father’s name. The fact that Jesus prays that He has kept us and now requests that the Father keeps us presupposes that we are the type of people who need to be kept because left to our own means it would very easy for us to become lost. Jesus’ prayer was in front of them so that in hearing His prayer they would have His joy. According to Jesus words in the 10th chapter in the 29th verse we are in the Father’s hand and no one is able to snatch us from Him. The necessity of this request is brought in the simple truth that Jesus proclaims “*Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You*.” Friends it is of a great comfort to realize that our “*keeping*” is not left up to us and our character but to Jesus’ prayer and His character. As I see it I have three things that continually pull at me and try to get me out of the Fathers hand:

* **Satan**
* **The world system**
* **The old flesh**

Any one of which would be able to rip me off but combined could over power me but Jesus is keeping me safe in His hand, “*Oh, Holy Father, keep them*”.

**There are two things this keeping ministers to me**:

1. Vs. 11 “*Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are*.” The first is a keeping of both **identity and security** as it is in the nature and character of God and will produce “oneness”. What I find interesting in this request of Jesus is that “unity” is an equal combination of identity and security. There is a great picture of this in the Old Testament in Exodus 28:28 where Moses is instructed to construct a breastplate with 12 different stones each one having a name of the 12 tribes of Israel. There was to be a gold braided chain so that Aaron, the high priest, could bear the people on his shoulders and carry them on his heart. Jesus is our great High Priest who with joy carries us upon His shoulders and with love bears us upon His heart.
2. Vs. 13 “*But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves*.” There keeping and care will continue to produce Jesus joy fulfilled in their lives. Friends what causes me joy is to realize that Jesus is faithful and His work in my life is not determined upon my faithfulness but His. Try as I might, rely on the Spirit as I should, pray and read my Bible as often as I can I’m still going to blow it but wait a minute I’m kept by Jesus now worries then! Friends is it not a great comfort to realize that all of the Father’s resources are employed in our “*keeping*” which implies that nothing that comes our way has bypassed His will. The thing to realize is that **Jesus’ prayer is not just what we are kept from but what we are kept too**:
* We are kept to **unity** in verse 11: Jesus prays that they would be kept by the Father’s authority and activity to be one with them.
* We are kept in **security** in verse 12: Jesus continues with this idea by saying that while He was in this world He lost none except Judas who fulfilled scripture. The son of perdition is a phrase that suggests a total abandonment of character, one who is utterly lost and given over to evil.
* We are kept in **joy** in verse 13: God’s design for our lives is multiplication of joy in our lives how different the world views Christianity as taking away joy but that’s not the case.
* It isn’t until the 15th verse that we are told that we are kept from “**the evil one**”!

I tend to agree with Jon Courson when he said that there is a real danger of demon possession and demon oppression but the greatest danger to Christians may be the danger of demon obsession. We tend to think that are keeping is first and foremost a keeping from and not a keeping too!

**IV. Vs. 14-19 Protection**

***Protection***: **Sent them into the world**

Vs. 14 Finally Jesus says I’ve given them Your word and here the word Jesus uses is logo. That’s the written word; it is the same word used in the first chapter where John declares in the beginning was the “*logos*” the very thought and expression of God we have that in the scriptures don’t we. Further more Jesus says that the word of God runs completely contrary to the world system there for the world will hate us as it hated Jesus. **The Bible is a three volume set**:

* The scriptures a book we can learn from
* Jesus the son who manifests truth and love
* The Holy Spirit who empowers us

Notice Jesus says concerning these disciples that they are not of the world, isn’t that wonderful that our Lord sees perfect even though we aren’t? I pray that we all realize that we are not of this world; we just don’t belong here do we. I’m afraid that far too many Christians are far too comfortable in there surroundings and I wonder if it isn’t the Lord’s doing sometimes to shake up our surroundings to cause us to realize that we aren’t to be of this world.

Vs. 15-16 It is for this reason Jesus can say with great confidence that He sends us into the world, set apart for that very purpose, unique separate transformed people proclaiming the truth in love. Jesus says, “*Father I’m not asking that you take them out of the world, I’m asking that you continually take the world out of them*!” There is always a part of us that would like to get away from all the things in this world, join a monastery to avoid evil but my monastery would need to be devoid of mirrors or anything else that would reflect my image as that’s the one person who gives me the hardest time. Friends we are in the world we are just not to be of the world.

Notice that Jesus’ request isn’t that we would be taken from the world only kept from the enemy’s influence. Paul spoke of this influence in Ephes. 2:2 saying that we “*once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience*”.

Vs. 17-19 Because they are kept they are to be sent as sanctified instruments into the world they are called out of. Again notice that in Jesus’ prayer He didn’t leave them to sanctify themselves He prayed for it and this also implies that it is a process as we are being changed from glory to glory as we are told in 2 Cor. 3:18 by the Spirit of the Lord. Sanctification is by the Spirit through the application of the truth of God’s Word. And though we are in this process our Lord is confident enough in His work in us that He sends us out into the world.

Hey isn’t that interesting they we are first called out of the world then the Lord calls to injected back into the world. Sort of like a vaccine where that which is a viruses has been altered by antibodies and not becomes that which can cure what ails the world? We are called not to be of the world but in the world and sometimes Christians can become isolationists to the point that they have no dealings with anyone that isn’t a Christian but here Jesus prays for these fellows to be set apart in order to be sent out.

Jesus prays for the provision, preservation and the protection of His disciples.

* Vs. 7-10 **Provision**: Is through the word, which calls is out of the world and separates us from the world by which He is glorified in and through our lives.
* Vs. 11-13 **Preservation**: That they would be kept by the Father as they were kept by the Son, kept to God, kept from ourselves, kept to His joy.
* Vs. 14-19 **Protection**: Protection from the world system, protection from the evil one, protection from themselves, protection with a purpose that they can be sent into the world.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**III. 13:1-17:26 Private photos**

**c. 17:1-26 Prayers**

**John 17:20-26**

**“That they all may be one”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 20-23 Unity**

**III. Vs. 24 Destiny**

**IV. Vs. 25-26 Intimacy**

**I. Intro.**

We now move to the final part of the Lord’s prayer and this section deals specifically with you and me. So on the evening of Jesus arrest and hours before His trial and crucifixion Jesus was looking past the immediate circumstances to what would be accomplished through His death namely our salvation. At once we are struck by the reality that Jesus is praying for us who live today, having already generally prayed for our provision, preservation and protection He now speaks in His prayer of what this will produce in our lives namely unity, destiny and intimacy. Friends we may belong to different fellowships but we all belong to the same fellowship with the Lord and therefore with each other. How unfortunate that far to often what has characterized the body of Christ has been:

* **Competition instead of cooperation**
* **Selfishness instead of selflessness**
* **Division instead of diversity**

In the words an old Puritan preacher “*For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another, is unnatural and monstrous*.” The lost world cannot see God, but they can see Christians; and what they see in us is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love. If they see hatred and division, they will reject the message of the Gospel.

**II. Vs. 20-23 Unity**

In the last section of his prayer Jesus prays in words which reach out to the whole of the church, and encompass all believers of all time, including us here this morning. This section is also in three divisions:

1. The unity of the church
2. The destiny of the church
3. The intimacy of the church

It is interesting to note that as we saw last week Jesus prayed for:

* + The provision
	+ The preservation
	+ The protection

Of the church these three things week are the natural outcomes of this prayer in our lives.

Vs. 20 The first thing that jumps off the page at us is the ***inclusive*** nature of Jesus’ words, “*I do not pray for* ***these*** *alone*” He says, “*but also for* ***those*** *who will believe in Me through their word*”. These words of Jesus stretch back from this moment to when they were first uttered including people who as far as the world was concerned will never see their names written in a history book but they will read them in the Lambs book. Now look at how Jesus words this as He looks at those who would follow Him as He mentions two distinct groups that are called to be one. He call them, “*these*” (the 11 disciples) and “*those*” (those that through time would believe their words). Then in the 21st verse Jesus’ prayer is that the “*these*” and “*those*” would add up to the “*ALL*” that would be “*ONE*”.

There are several groups that teach “***apostolic succession***” which claims that their authority has been passed down from the original 11 through popes, bishops or apostles making them the only true authority and true church. Now I want to tell you that I believe in *apostolic succession* but just not the way that the Catholics and Mormons teach it (*and in the case of the Mormons they have a different gospel then did the original 11*). You see the problem with that position is that it sets up a hierarchy that is far to limited as clearly we can see that in Jesus prayer there is an *apostolic succession* but it isn’t passed down to only to a select few but to all “***those*** *who will believe in Me through their word*” (verse 20) and suggesting other wise hinders these and those all becoming one. Now since we are one through believing the word of the apostles we don’t need new apostles to give us new words do we? We share a spiritual unity with each other that goes all the way back to those 11 fellows that makes us all brothers and sisters linked in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

It is apparent that Jesus knew that these 11 fellows failure wasn’t going to be permanent as He includes the fruit of their words, you and me in this prayer. I find this very comforting don’t you? At times we are prone to think that our failures, faults and frailties are permanent and that we are going to be bound up in them. Remember Jesus words to Peter in Luke 22:31-32 when Jesus said, “*Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you; that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren*.” It wasn’t “*if you return*” but a “*when you return to Me, strengthen your brethren*”.

Vs. 21 Looking forward through time of all the things Jesus could of prayed for with regards to His Church He prayed for unity not to be confused with uniformity where everything is the same but unity. Unity biblically is the horizontal relationship being made possible because of the vertical relationship. The oneness or unity that Jesus prays for is not academic theology it is instead on that is based upon love. Five times in these concluding verses Jesus mentions the word “one” which is the basis of His prayer on our behalf. No parent likes to see their children fight and bicker with each other and neither does our big brother Jesus or our Heavenly Father. Now this doesn’t mean that we are going to agree on every thing but does mean that we as the body of Christ are to get along with each other. Paul told the Christians in Rome “*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men*.” (Romans 12:18) There is room for diversity but our diversity should never be the catalyst to divisiveness and there is nothing wrong with linking together with those who enjoy things the same way but there ought to be civility between brothers and sisters who differ with us.

May I just say that there no perfect Church, no perfect pastor or person we are all in a state of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. I had a fellow come up to me and say, “*Pastor I don’t come to this church because of you I come because Jesus has called me here and I know that I’m going to hear the whole council of the word of God.*” So I looked at him and said, “*So what you’re telling me is that you don’t come here because of me but rather in spite of me*.” To which we both said amen! When true biblical unity exists in the body of Christ there will be a glory of the presence of Jesus among believers which is the bases of our unity. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 12:12 “*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ*.” Therefore as Paul shared in Ephes. 4:4 “*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling*”. How will that glory be seen? Well it will be like the glory visible in Jesus humble, meek, suffering servant who ultimately laid down His life.

Vs. 22-23 Notice the words in verse 22, “*that they MAY be as one just as We are one*” which implies that this is a process that will continue until it is realized when we are together with our Lord. We have all experienced apart of this as we travel around and meet someone who in the world we would have nothing in common and as we start to talk with them we find that they are a relative of ours because we have the same “Big Brother” in Jesus and the same “Father”. This is the unity that Jesus prays for that fellowship with one another regardless of denominational affiliations Jesus isn’t talking about some ecumenical movement where we all blend everything together. There will always be diversity with in the body of Christ but there should never division and divisiveness. We don’t have to agree with each other on everything but we do need to love one another as Christ has loved us. We do need to esteem each other more highly then we do ourselves. Friends, that is what Jesus is speaking of when He prays for unity, when we meet together, regardless of what our local label may be, we belong to one another because we share the same life together and that is the life the world will recognize as true. And visible part of the glory that the world will see found in the phrase of verse 23 where Jesus prays, “*that the world may know that you have sent Me, AND* (pay attention) *have loved them as You have loved Me.*” Simple put the glory Jesus speaks of in verse 22 which the Father gave Him was LOVE and that is what the world will see when we are one they will see the glory of His LOVE. “*The glory which you gave Me I have given them*”, Jesus says.

**What a different place if you and I could look at one another with Jesus’ eyes not on what we aren’t but rather on what we will be**. What we aren’t is temporary, what we will be is permanent. Some say that love is blind but biblical love isn’t blind it sees “*perfectly*” and because loves sees perfectly its gaze looks beyond what we are to what we will be! There is a curious verse in Hebrews 10:14 which says, “*For by one offering He* ***has*** *perfected forever those who are* ***being*** *sanctified*.” Obviously this is speaking of Jesus work on the cross and its effect of perfecting us but the author of Hebrews goes on to say to those that are in the process of “*being sanctified*”. **So we are positionaly perfected while we are practically being sanctified**. The trick is for us to see each other the way this is stated here in Hebrews. Our Father like to see us get along and play well with each other sense we are His children and brothers and sisters. That is what the psalmist wrote in a song as they went up into the temple they would sing, Psalm 133:1 “*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*”

If these words of Jesus “*Have loved them as You have loved Me*” were not in the Bible I would not believe it. Have you considered the truth of these words? That the Father loves you with the same depth of love as He has loved Jesus! **There is according to the words of Jesus no difference in the Father’s affection for the Children of faith as there is for His only Son.**

“*So near, so very near to God, nearer I could not be; for in the person of His Son, I am as near as He. So dear, so very dear to God, dearer I could not be; the love wherewith He loved His Son, such is His love to me*.”

John would write of this in 1 John 4:17 saying, “*Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because* ***as He is****,* ***so are we in this world****.*”

**III. Vs. 24 Destiny**

Vs. 24 Here Jesus’ prayer is that the church, (*the make up of these and those)* will be all together with Him. That is what Paul would pray in 1 Thes. 4:16-17 where he said, “*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord*.” Saints’ that’s our destiny, that’s what we are heading towards, Jesus promises and He can’t break a promise it’s not in His nature to do so. The purpose of being caught up together is described for us by Jesus when He proclaims “*That they may behold My glory*”, did you catch that? Jesus had prayer that the *these* and *those* would all be one and look at what He says in verse 24 with regards to this as He calls us “***THEY***”. Do you get it? **The prayer for unity in verse 20-23 is already answered in verse 24**! That’s our fate brother’s and sister’s, that our Lord’s plan and promise to be with Him and behold His glory where *these* and *those* will be forever transformed into “***THEM***”. The unity Jesus speaks of here is one of common love and shared identity the consummation of this unity will be ultimately fulfilled in our eternal togetherness with our Lord and each other. Jesus prayer therefore is that His followers would be kept, set apart and united as one body and that ought to be our desire as well.

What an amazing request, that those whom the Father has given Jesus may be with Jesus where (and notice this) “*where I am*”. The request is that those whom the Father has given will one day be able to join Jesus. Ah but when Jesus said this prayer He was on earth only moments before His death. My point is that **Jesus viewed the cross through the crown not the crown through the cross**. The author of Hebrews puts it this way in Hebrews 12:2 “*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*.” My friends may I suggest that we have a practical guide to how to handle life’s crosses, and that is always do so from the vantage point of the crown. There was absolute certainty of victory and thus we too can be absolutely certain that we will behold His glory. We have seen that in verse 6 that Jesus ***demonstrated*** God’s character and nature and finally here we see that Jesus also ***declared*** God’s character and nature.

**IV. Vs. 25-26 Intimacy**

Vs. 25-26 The prayer concludes with the secret of Christian living “*That the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them*”. Jesus and His love indwelling us which reveals that bases of our unity is Jesus. Intimacy begins with relationship, you can not have intimacy without it. Thus Jesus says, “*The world has not know you*” and by implication is devoid of intimacy not by God’s choice but by man’s. I’m saddened as I read Jesus’ words only hours before the cross, “*I’m dying that they may have the opportunity*” Jesus is saying. Life without intimacy is called death by Paul in Ephes. 2:1

When he says, “*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins*” but it need not be so friend, Jesus has demonstrated and declared and will continue to declare God character and nature to the you. Now the cool thing to me is that His love for us is something that we just can’t contain it spills out every where to every one. Hey isn’t amazing to stop and realize that we are loved by God? I mean look at us, and He love us and dwell is us.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

**John 18:1-14**

**“In the garden of glory”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-6 Whom are you seeking?**

**III. Vs. 7-11 Ears to hear**

**IV. Vs. 12-14 Arrested and bound**

**I. Intro.**

Chapter’s 13-14 happen while Jesus is in the upper room and chapter’s 15-17 happen some where along the road to the Garden and we know this as in the 18th chapter Jesus is at the Garden. You can not read chapters 18-19 of John’s account without noticing how he specifically selects the events that he writes about. For instance all the other accounts give us the story of Gethsemane the garden of Jesus’ pressing and yet it was John who with Peter and Andrew went further into the garden then the other writers. He witnessed the agony yet he chooses not to speak of the agony only of the glory.

It is in the garden of glory where man will do his worst and Jesus will respond by doing His best as we are told by Paul in Rom. 5:20 “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*”. There are several things in the story before us that stand out to me but they are objects rather than people and when laid next to each other they reveal a series of contrasts between the world and the Word of God.

**II. Vs. 1-6 Whom are you seeking?**

Vs. 1 John describes the journey from the upper room to the garden saying that they passed over the book called Kidron. Now this brook was almost always dry except when it rained and during the Passover when the blood of the sacrifices ran like a stream from below the eastern wall of the temple. The name Kidron has two meaning “*the brook of cedars*” and *“to become black*” and by implication “*sad*”. Now 100’s of years earlier during the time of David he sinned by numbering the people to ascertain the strength of the nation when their true strength was not in numbers but in the Lord. So when the Romans wanted to know how many people were in Jerusalem the priests told them they could count the sheep of the sacrifice instead. During one Passover Josephus tells us that they sacrificed 256,000 lambs. It was so bad that the Roman’s built three aqueducts to wash the blood down from the brook Kidron but it would turn black and stink. Across this same brook David the king left the city after being betrayed by his son Absalom and like Jesus his close adviser Ahithophel hanged himself.

My point in bring this up is as Jesus crossed over this brook called “*darkness*” or sadness under His feet was a river of a ¼ of a million sacrificed lambs for the sin of the nation. So there walked the Lamb of God ready to be sacrificed crossing over the blood of sacrificed lambs. It was this same brook that during the time when Hezekiah was king that he cleansed the temple and all the debris that was found was carried to this brook to be disposed of. Both of which picture the sacrifice Jesus was about to under go as the Lamb of God.

And having crossed over Jesus and his disciples came to a private garden where the wealthy planted things because it was against the law to spread manure in the city. Gethsemane means “*oil press*” where the olives would be crushed to extract their oil. Today this garden is a part of the Catholic Church that is there and you can walk through this garden and apparently this was a favorite spot for Jesus to go with His disciples for prayer and fellowship right out side of the city. You may recall that human history began in a garden called Eden and it was man’s rebellion that caused our fall but Jesus entered a garden in obedience to deliver man from his fall. Revelation 21-22 speak of yet another garden where there is a pure river of water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb where each tree will yield its fruit every month and leaves of the tree will be for the healing of the nations and there will be no more curse.

Hum, interesting Jesus went into a garden where the world’s manure was, a place where crushing took place, where great drops of blood according to Luke 22:44 was extracted from Him. At once we are reminded that in the beginning there was Adam in a garden and satan came into that garden to rip man kind off. And this time we see the second Adam come into a garden to restore that which was lost.

Consider further the two Adams:

* In a garden the first Adam rebelled against God, in a garden the second Adam submitted to God.
* In a garden the first Adam hid from God, I a garden the second Adam went forward for God.
* In a garden the first Adam man was driven out because of Sin, in a garden the second Adam came to be prepared to be a sin offering.

That which was lost in a garden called Eden was reclaimed in a garden called Gethsemane.

Vs. 2 Judas knew the favorite location of Jesus and His disciples to pray at night when they were in Jerusalem and he used that knowledge to betray our Lord. Judas had lived by the Lord’s side for over three years had listened to His words, observed His works yet never knew Him. How is this possible you ask? Well it is when what we are looking for is something from a person rather than just than the person. About the only thing we can recall of Judas with regards to obedience to the words of Jesus is to be found in his response to Jesus words in the upper room in 13:27 “*What you do, do quickly*”.

Is it not interesting that Judas knew right where to find Jesus during a time of need, a place of prayer. When the world is stressed out, overwhelmed by the events of the day they head over to the place where “*everybody knows there name*” but will forget it by the next day. Ah but when a Christian is wiped out by the day he heads to a the throne where the Father will always know His name. **How sad it is that unredeemed man finds obedience to the world of rebellion that leads to death easier than obedience to the word of love that leads to life**!

Vs. 3 The word “*detachment*” is a word in Greek that can mean as few as 600 and as many as 1200 men. So even if we take the smaller number of 600 with lanterns and torches we get the picture that they meant business and had everything necessary for the man hunt but what they didn’t expect was that He would be in the first place they looked right out in the open. The world comes crashing into the garden with lanterns, torches and weapons. Even more interesting to me is that I believe that finding Jesus here in the garden was no surprise for Judas, which ought to have caused him to reexamine his betrayal.

Apparently Judas drew near and identified Jesus with a kiss this caused the disciples to ask, “*Lord, shall we strike with the sword*” and Peter not waiting for Jesus to reply took his sword and cut off the High priests servant’s ear, (Jesus touched and restored him). Disciples of rabbis would kiss their rabbi as a sign of devotion and obedience and Judas stood with the world and against the Word of God at this very moment. Finally Jesus asked the chief priests and the captains of the temple, “*Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs*?” “*When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness*.” Consider this from two perspectives:

1. From the perspective to whom they claimed Jesus was just a Galilean peasant, so why bring out an army against an unarmed man who had made no threats?
2. Ah but from the perspective of Jesus being the Son of God what army could possible subdue Him?

Vs. 4-6 John records for us this important commentary, “*Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward*”. In other words John is telling us that this was no surprise attack, no situation by which Jesus was some how caught of guard but a voluntary surrender. Jesus didn’t act as a wanted man; He wasn’t hiding in some cave as they had prepared for. And instead of running He comes foreword and asks “*Whom are you seeking*?” Judas was a man of wasted opportunities and despised privileges and in the end he brought 600 men armed to capture a Lamb who went willing out of love for the very one who betrayed Him. The soldiers were ready for confrontation and conflict and instead they saw calmness and control as the word brought them to the ground. David wrote in Psalm 27:1-3 “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?* ***When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell****. Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war should rise against me, In this I will be confident.*”

Friend I rather think Jesus still is asking those who are out to put and end to Him the same question. There are a great many of folks who pretend to be devoted to the Lord and obey His word but in reality choose to stand with the world against the very One they verbally pledge allegiance too and in reality are behaving like Judas. The world has little problem with a man named Jesus, they will put him in the category of a lot of historic folks, some will even admire him. Ah but the moment He is God the Son well them come out to destroy Him.

Jesus said unto them in verse 5, “Ego Eimi” and as you will notice the “***HE***” is in italics which mean’s that it was inserted by the translators. So what Jesus really said was “***I am***” and that is a direct reference to His deity no wonder they drew back and fell to the ground. And at the words of “*I am*” those who came to arrest Him fell to the ground just a small demonstration of what could have His arresting army’s destruction at His mere word. As Paul said in Romans 14:11 “*Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*” To those who had come expecting confrontation they were halted in their attempt by what can only be understood as the glory of the Son of God.

**III. Vs. 7-11 Ears to hear**

Vs. 7-11 And with 600 men laying on the ground clamoring to gather their swords as well as themselves He asked them again whom they sought. I wonder if this time they whispered His name afraid of the same reaction. “*I have told you That I am He*”, Jesus said. “*If you seek Me, let these go their way*” and all but Peter and John ran off. Friends even at His wrongful arrest Jesus concern was for others and not Himself.

It was Thomas in 11:16 who said to Jesus that he was ready to die for Jesus but it was Peter who demonstrated in misguided zeal his willingness to do so. Just prior to this Jesus had told His disciples that were ready to defend Him in Matt. 26:53 “*do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels*?” You may recall in the other gospel accounts that while Jesus was praying three times that this cup (the cross) might pass but nevertheless the Father’s will be done Peter was asleep. Consider the fact that Jesus upon His second inquiry of whom they sought could have just simply said I am He and walked away and there was nothing they could do about it, but instead He willing went and only requested that His followers be allowed to go their way. That in a nut shell my friends is the gospel, He was arrested that the captives may be set free.

Peter makes the mistake oft repeated by those professing faith in Jesus “*Trying to prove his faith by the sword, while he could not do so by his tongue*.” The servant’s name “Malchus” means king and it will be a relative of his who in verse 26 will be the second to question Peter with regards to being a follower of Jesus. I bet it was a bit difficult for Peter to witness to Malchus after this don’t you, I mean how are we to share our faith if we go our whacking off the people we are trying to reach with the word? Judas action is rebellion against the WORD of God while Peter’s action is rebellion against the WILL of God and many of us have taking out our sword from its sheath to fight against the will of God in our lives. He fought the wrong enemy, used the wrong weapon, had the wrong motive, and accomplished the wrong result! He was openly resisting the will of God and hindering the work that Jesus came to accomplish! While we admire his courage and sincerity, it was certainly a demonstration of zeal without knowledge. His failure can be traced to the fact that he was arguing when he should have been listening, sleeping when he should have been praying.

Friends, we don’t have to hack people up to get God’s work down. We are told in 1 Kings 19:35 that one angel of the Lord killed 185,000 soldiers in one night and Jesus told Peter in Matt. 26:53 that 12 legions of angels were ready to take on those who came, and a legion is 6,000 which = 72,000. Now do the math 1 angel = 185,000 soldiers multiply that by 72,000 angels each who could take out 185,000 soldiers and then means they could have in one night taken out over 13 billion which is double the worlds present population. In other words He doesn’t need our help! G. Campbell Morgan observes, “*When a man unsheathes his sword, and aims at a man’s head but only gets an ear, it is a poor aim*.” I can imagine Jesus looking at Peter with that look that says, “*I have 72,000 angels ready to come here and defend Me and I need you cutting of a servants ear? I need that like….well a whole in the head*!” In 50 days Peter would unsheathe his sword by the Spirit of God but his aim was the heart of man and 3000 would be brought to life. It was the grace of God that picked up the ear and healed Malchus as it probably kept the authorities from adding a forth cross to put Peter on. Jesus’ words here are good to remember “*put the sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given Me*?” Oh how better served our Lord would be if we regularly took up the cup in His blood and lay down the sword. What’s in you hand the cup of humility or the sword of self protection?

Hey saint’s we need to be careful when we whip out the sword of the word in zeal to defend our Lord as we may be whacking off the ability of those we are trying to reach. The word of God is not a sword to swing as much as it is a scalpel to be handled with compassion and care. The last recorded miracle of Jesus’ life is this incident found in Luke 22:51 where we are told that Jesus bent down picked up Malchus’ ear and healed him. In Exodus 29:20 we are told that when the High Priest was installed they were take the blood of “*the ram, and put it on the tip of the right ear* ” to signify that the High priest should always have his ear open to the Lord. Friends, I find it interesting that the last miracle of Jesus was the restoration of the damage done by one of His followers on His behalf. There in lies a great lesson for us the Word of God is not to be used to take away the hearing of truth but to restore it so we need to ask ourselves, “*Does the use of the Word of God in this situation going to take away a persons ability to hear the truth or restore*?” It is interesting to note that many of the trophies that are awarded the winners of contests are shaped like a cup to symbolize that sacrifices made to win the contest. John does not record Jesus prayer in the garden which happen prior to His arrest in Matthew 26:39 where Jesus repeated this three times saying, “*Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. nevertheless, not My will but Thy will be done*”. “*Father, if man can be saved some other way then I won’t go to the cross but if there is no other way then I’ll go*.” Peter was attempting to make it some other way but the fact is Peter’s good intentions aside there is no other way that we can be saved. Thus Jesus words in verse 11 to Peter “*Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given M*e?”

**IV. Vs. 12-14 Arrested and bound**

Vs. 12-14 They bound Him, how humorous these words are and yet how familiar they are as many today would in their own way attempt to bind the Son God. 600 men bound a savior, the Lamb of God who needed no human rope to get Him to the cross as His love for the Father and His love for us was what was driving Him there, not the cords of human rebellion but the cords of divine love. It is here that the words of Paul in Romans 8:38-39 come to mind where he writes, “*I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” So the very ones that bound Him didn’t realize that He’s willingness to be bound was in order to liberate them from the bondage of sin.

He was brought before Annas for arraignment and then rebound to be brought before Caiaphas. The word of God had ordained that one man serve as High Priest for His entire life but Annas was so corrupt that he had be disposed but put his sons and finally his son in law in the office. Annas was the high priest for 9 years, a Sadducee and as such a materialist who became extremely wealthy by setting up little booths in the temple area called the court of the Gentiles where he sold certified sacrifices at a high rate and it was by these sales that he had purchased his priesthood. Twice in Jesus ministry he had made a cord ad drove out the extortion from the House of the Lord and no doubt Annas was quite pleased to see Jesus arrested and brought before him. He had fallen out of favor with the Romans so he was bared by them but he just put in one of his five sons in that position and finally his son in law. It was Caiaphas who only a few month earlier after the resurrection of Lazarus said in John 11:49-50 that it was “*expedient…that one man should die for the people*”. So while Peter was in the courtyard denying Peter Jesus was before the court protecting Peter.

Consider these paradoxical truths with regards to Jesus:

* + He was born as a humble baby, yet heralded by angels.
	+ He was laid in a manger, yet announced by a star.
	+ He submitted to baptism, and then heard the Divine voice of approval.
	+ He slept when He was exhausted, but awoke to calm the storm.
	+ He wept at a grave, and then called the dead to life.
	+ He submits to arresting troops, then declares His majesty and knocks them over.
	+ He died on a cross, but in it He overcame sin and death and Satan.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

**John 18:15-27**

**“Christ in the court of public opinion”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 15-18 The promise of restoration**

**III. Vs. 19-24 Truth in the court lies**

**IV. Vs. 25-27 The process of denial**

**I. Intro.**

Peter’s failure started in the 13th chapter:

* **With pride and self assurance**
* **Was seen in rejecting the will of God in the garden**
* **Moved to following Jesus at a distance**
* **Then seen in standing outside the gate of fellowship**
* **Which led to warming himself by the fires of the world**
* **Then to sitting in fellowship with those who appose Christ**
* **And finally to denial**

I’m amazed at the ways in which our Lord can strip us of our self sufficiency and pride His methods of love always include restoration but the process includes self realization which usually will break our hearts. Oh how I wish that I was less stubborn and more open to respond to the “still small voice” that is speaking to my insecurity, I can’t help but lament over the countless wasted hours at my refusal to submit to His loving discipline. Backsliding is never in a moment rather it is always in a series of small insignificant decisions that on their own seem harmless and even at times wise; of further interest to me personally that any backsliding is always a denial of our Lord’s goodness.

**II. Vs. 15-18 The promise of restoration**

Vs. 15 John’s first impressions are not Jesus trial before the high priest but Peter’s trial before three servants. In Matthews account we are told that Peter followed Jesus from a distance. Now I suppose when compared with the other 9 that we can say that at least Peter followed Jesus. But listen up my friend as I believe that we always invite trouble when we follow Jesus from a distance. You will never hear someone say, “*I know when all my problems started, it was right when I became more devoted to Jesus and decided to follow Him closer without compromise*!” The fact is denial never happens up close it always happens from a distance! Contrast this with John and there are some things we can glean from. There is a sense of devotion that always accompanies John where he wants to be with Jesus, near Jesus even during the difficult times as we shall see in the 19th chapter where he is at the foot of the cross next to the Mary’s and Jesus say’s “*Woman, behold your son*!” and to John He said, “*Behold your mother*!”. With regards to John running into the tomb I believe it was because he could look and see Jesus wasn’t there so there was no need to come in. Friends, I’m afraid that at times we can allow our hearts to grow cold in our devotion as our relationship with Jesus can become mechanical and we just go through the motions.

Now before we are too hard on Peter is in not great to realize that He will always defend us even when we don’t return the favor? The first failure John records happened after John went to the gate keeper to gain him entrance and the gate keeper apparently knew of John’s association with Jesus and simply asked Peter if he too was one of His followers. Peter had no reason to fear at this point as clearly John had not been mistreated and was able to move about with out any harassment. He had no reason to not openly acknowledge his affiliation but yet he did. It was Peter’s association with John that made her question if he was a follower and had he said yes he would have been with John during the whole proceedings and never would have denied Jesus. There once was this little Christian boy who his mother caught him in a lie so she asked him what the Bible had to say about lies and the poor fellow got some bible verses mixed up as he said “*A lie is an abomination to the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble*!” I rather think Peter knew that same verse and I’m afraid that we have it memorized that way as well some times.

 There is an interesting insertion by John here with regards to the other “*disciple*” that followed Jesus as John adds that he “*was known by the high priest*”. Now it is believed that this description is a literary one by which John is referring to himself, but just what was his connection with the high priest? John knew the name of the high priests servant Malchus as well as the person who kept the door, and that the servant of the high priest was a relative of Malchus in verse 26 are all further indicators that John was very familiar with this family. Well it seems that the Son’s of Zebedee had a thriving fish market, in fact on our trip to Israel we spent an afternoon in Capernaum where the son’s of Zebedee were from along with Peter. As we walked through the ruins that were along side the Synagogue the tour guide was describing articles that they had found in the area. Just then we stop in front of a marble plaque advertising the Zebedee’s fish stand. According to history their business was quite successful and their salted fish were considered a delicacy in Jerusalem but could only be afforded by the wealthy and because of this John and his family became acquainted with Annas and his family.

Vs. 16-18 Jesus had only hours earlier predicted that Peter would deny Him three times but in Luke’s account of this there is a very interesting order that many don’t realize. You see according to Dr. Luke’s account in 22:31-34 Jesus predicted Peter’s return before He predicted his denial.

Hey friends, **is that not wonderful to realize that Jesus is more into promising our restoration then He is stating our failure**? And I can tell you from the human standpoint the greater prophetic probability was Peter’s denial not his return and restoration but remember Jesus said “*But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail.*” “*Falter yes, doubts certainly but fail, no way because I’ve got a hold on you Peter.*”

It appears that John was suspicious with regards to Peter’s safety as he left Jesus and went to check upon Peter who was still outside the gate. John tells us as well that it was cold that night, now for me to tell you that would be cold at night here in the Bitterroot would raise no questions but Israel at this time of year is not normally cold in fact it’s usually very pleasant outside this was very unusual for this time of year. Ill regardless friend it is never a good idea to seek warmth around the fires of the enemies of Jesus as you will never fit in and you will eventually get burned!

It is also interesting in verse 17 that the first servant girl asked, “*You are not* ***ALSO*** *one of this Man’s disciple’s are you*?” which seems to indicate that she was aware of John’s commitment to Christ but not sure of Peter’s. Hey friends which is worse do you think that Peter denied knowing the Lord or that he wasn’t immediately associated with Him in the first place? And in light of that what Peter dose is to deny the association which she wasn’t sure that he had in the first place. Now based upon that allow me to draw this application if someone is shocked that you aren’t living up to your profession a least they have at first made the association that you are a follower of Christ.

Peter followed from a distance, warmed himself by the fires of the world and Luke 22:55 tells us that he finally sat in the courtyard of the ungodly. Psalm 1:1 shows the same order when we are told that, “*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful*”. Judas wept the tears of remorse but Peter cried the tears of repentance, remorse simple means that the outcome of our action didn’t turn out as we intended them to. Ah but repentance means the what we lament is not the outcome but the action in the first place as true biblical repentance means a change in what we think, feel and act. Consider the contrast between Judas and Peter.

* Judas regret and remorse led to death but Peter’s repentance led to life and restoration.
* Peter was guilty of rejecting God’s will; Judas was guilty of rejecting God’s Word.

Now before you get on me about stretching this a bit I realize we are just given Peter’s journey but I can’t help be see far to many professing Christians spiritual journey which directly parallels Peters. Peter’s distance from the Lord led him to feel a bit cold but instead of drawing near the Lord he sought the warmth and comforts the world offers which just got him burned in the end. Ah friends it would be good to learn this lesson from Peter’s travel from the “*garden of grace*” to the “*court of public opinion*” will always in denial if we chose to stay at a distance from our Lord. James wrote in 4:8 that if we “***Draw near to God and He will draw near to you***.” Then James exhorts, “*Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*” Are being wiped out, going through some real tough times don’t retreat advance and you will find a fellowship closer to Jesus then you ever imagined possible!

**III. Vs. 19-24 Truth in the court lies**

Vs. 19-24 Now John takes us in to Jesus trial before Annas and we see how differently Jesus acted then Peter. Peter was asked a fair question one that had no adverse immediate consequences and he responded with a lie. Annas questioned Jesus about two things but Jesus only responds to one of the inquires and does not answer anything with regards to His disciples protecting them at all costs. In Rev. 12:10 satan is described as the “*the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night*” what a comfort it is to realize that as much as the enemy may want to come after us but we are told in Hebrews 7:25 that Jesus is “*able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*” There was no formal charge until witness could be brought in and that hadn’t done so. Annas’ responsibility was to make sure that the basic legal protection under Jewish law was applied to the accused but he didn’t. Jesus however was asked leading and illegal questions Jesus responded truthfully without risking innocent lives He was treated with a stern slap across the face.

In Matt. 5:39 Jesus spoke about turning the other cheek and her we get a practical example of how Jesus apply this, you see He stood up to the truth by saying, “What you guys are doing is wrong” and that got the slap on the face He again stood up again and said “*On what basis are you hitting Me, if I’m not following the law and truth prove it, but if I am then why are you hitting me*?” There was no retaliation no name calling just stating the facts and I believe that is a great example of turning the other cheek, stand on your rights without any name calling or slander towards the one doing wrong to you. Apparently this worked as Annas realizes he can’t get any where and sends him across the court yard to his son in law Caiaphas.

What Anas did here was completely illegal as Jewish law stated that it was against the law to ask an accused anything that might implicate him. It is what happens when a person is arrested they say, “*You have the right to remain silent and to have a lawyer present with you during questioning, should you speak anything you say can and will be used against you*.” Now Jesus just reminds them of the law by saying, “*Hey, gather your witness I didn’t ever say anything that wasn’t public, don’t ask Me as it is against the law to do so*.” It is clear that Annas understood Jesus words that he was conducting an illegal interrogation as one of the officers struck Jesus. The other gospel accounts reveal to us that it was in this court yard that Jesus beatings began as they covered his head and began hitting Jesus in the face while mocking Him by asking Him who it was who struck Him. The covering of the head made it impossible for Jesus to roll with the punch and as such He took the full force of the blow upon His face. They asked Jesus to prophesy as to who hit Him and little did they realize that they were fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 52:14 where we are told that “*His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men*”.

The time before Annas was very brief and it appears that his hope was to get Jesus to incriminate Himself by stating things that could be used against Him and His followers later. Jesus would have none of that and refused to answer on grounds that the questions were illegal to ask and that if they truly wanted the answers all they needed to do was call those who had heard His teaching which wouldn’t have been hard to do. Annas was not looking for reasons to believe but rather looking for reason to rid himself and the nation of Jesus. Friends there are a lot of folks today that pose themselves as skeptics and seekers but they are not searching for truth rather then are looking for excuses to continue in life styles that they are addicted too. Notice that Jesus uses the personal pronoun five times in two verses in His declaration before Annas:

1. “***I*** *spoke openly to the world*.”
2. “***I*** *always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet*”
3. “*and in secret* ***I*** *have said nothing*.”
4. “*Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what* ***I*** *said to them*.”
5. “*Indeed they know what* ***I*** *said*.”

They were the conspirators, they were the ones in back rooms and alleys whispering as they plotted His death yet they were accusing Him of doing so.

As Peter warmed himself by the fire with those who weren’t associated with Christ was refusing to indite His followers protecting them. They wanted to know from Jesus who His followers were and it should have been obvious as we are told by Jesus in John 13:35 “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*.” Jesus indicated that there was no conspiracy against them as He spoke openly and everyone had heard what He had said. Jesus is inciting what we call the 5th amendment which says that a prisoner can not be forced or coerced to testify against themselves.

**IV. Vs. 25-27 The process of denial**

Vs. 25-27 But is seems that John’s focus is back upon Peter and I don’t believe to pick on Peter but rather because we all are so much like Peter. John condenses what most likely took an hour or so and apparently Peter told John what had taken place as John was with Jesus before Annas. Based upon the other gospel accounts it seems that the first denial by Peter happens at the hand of a servant girl, she then apparently brings with her another girl and they question him again, which he denies his affiliation and finally a group come over, one of which was related to the Malchus who’s ear Peter had whacked off only an hour earlier and tell him that he is one of them as his accent has given him away. How tragic that the sound of his words indicated a relationship and not the content of them! And to counter this Peter’s cursing revealed that he had no relationship with Jesus as well as cutting off a servant ear. It is interesting to realize that Peter’s faith remind while his courage departed and but being reminded of Jesus’ words Peter wept bitterly because he truly loved the Lord he just over estimated it.

As Peter was warming himself by the fires of the world he was questioned for the third time concerning his relationship to Jesus in which he began to curse and swear that he didn’t know Jesus. Let me first acknowledge that I’m thankful that my relationship doesn’t hinge on my commitment to Him but rather upon His commitment to me.

Consider for a moment the testimony of the rooster as to the truth of this, what? You see chickens and specifically roosters weren’t allowed in Jerusalem during the Passover because they were a ***noisy mess*** so they would gather them up and put them outside the city. Apparently this rooster got overlooked and upon Peter’s third denial of Jesus he let one lose heralding what mess Peter had gotten himself into. Ah but you all know what roosters are known for? Why they signal the start of a new day, and here we have the reminder that even when we have made a mess of things and the world is crowing our mistakes that in Jesus it can be a start of a new day. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 5:17 “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*.” Need more proof of this look at the rest of the story of what the Lord did with Peter’s cursing and denying only 50 days later. Peter who followed at a distance, stood outside the door and warmed himself by the fires of the world stood up and proclaimed Jesus and 3000 gave their hearts to Jesus. Are you not amazed with our Lord can do with our messes? The world will continue to crow our mistakes but our Lord will continue to proclaim it’s a new day and restore us to fellowship and fruitfulness instead of reminding us of our failures. Hey saint’s what kind of rooster are you? **Do you signal person’s messes or proclaim to them it’s a start of a new day**? Paul told the Galatians in 6:1 that “*if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual* ***restore*** *such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted*.” Paul didn’t say remind, rebuke or reveal but restore.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

**John 18:28 – 19:3**

**“Contrasting kingdoms”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 28-32 Becoming our curse**

**III. Vs. 33-37 A new kingdom**

**IV. Vs. 38-3 God among the shadows**

**I. Intro.**

John does not tell us anything about Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas the son in law of Annas instead he focuses in on Jesus trial before Pilate. In the other gospel accounts we learn how Jesus was badly beaten while before Caiaphas as they blindfolded Him and hit Him on the face mocking Him by asking Him who it was that struck Him. The purpose of the trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin was to have official charges to be able to get the Roman’s to give Jesus the death penalty. Rome didn’t care about the religious concerns of the Jews what they cared about was insurrection and treason things like Jesus saying don’t pay taxes and over throw the Roman’s but Jesus had already said to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s. Jesus was no doubt showing the signs of having been beaten up by the time He came before Pilate, as blindfolded He would not been able to naturally roll with the punches. Well did Jesus say of these religious leaders in Matthew 23:24 calling them “*Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel*!”

**II. Vs. 28-32 Becoming our curse**

Vs. 28 Jesus’ trial as priest before the religious leaders is over now He comes to the Roman authority on trial for being king. Religion has decided to kill the High Priest the only mediator between fallen man and a holy God. Now Jesus comes before government and politics to a man who was the epitome of the Roman system a freed slave who had risen to a position of power by way of the influence of the emperor’s mother and wife. The other gospel accounts spend more time on Jesus trial before the Sanhedrin but John chooses to focus more on Jesus trial before the Roman authority, Pontius Pilate. It most likely around 4 or 5 AM when Jesus came to the Praetorium and the Jews did not come in so as to not defile themselves so they could keep the feast of unleavened bread as you may remember that Passover was earlier that night. They were more concerned with ceremonial defilement than they were moral guilt. The irony of this situation is amazing and yet another example of self righteousness and pride. Here these fellows were about to commit murder upon Jesus but they were concerned about defiling themselves by stepping on a Gentile area which would have disqualified them to participate in the Passover celebration. Let this serve as a warning, “*Any work, ritual, or religious exercise no matter how biblical, holy or sacrificial if it leads me to believe even for a moment that it is the act that I am practicing that makes me right before God has at that moment become a hindrance to me of entering into true fellowship with Him*.” In Titus 3:5 Paul wrote, “*not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*”.

Jesus was found guilty of being the Messiah and sense Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin didn’t agree they found Jesus guilty of blaspheme that was His official charge. By the time that John wrote his gospel Jerusalem had been destroyed, many the Jews were dispersed and the only authority in the world that mattered was Rome’s. Had the Jews executed Jesus they would have done what Rabbi Saul did to Steven in Acts and that is death by stoning but that would not have fulfilled the law in Deut. 21:23 where we are told “*he who is hanged is accursed of God*.” That is why Paul quotes this verse in Galatians 3:13 saying “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*)”. In Psalm 22 a 1000 years before this in Psalm 22:16 the psalmist wrote “*The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet*”. Then in Zech. 12:10 we are told by the prophet that in the future Israel “*will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*” Crucifixion was not a form of Jewish capital punishment but the Lord Himself had said in John 12:32 “*if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.*” If the Jews had put Jesus to death, He would have been stoned, instead of crucified, and His prophecy about His death would not have been fulfilled.

Vs. 29-32 We are introduced to Pontius Pilate for the first time and John records his reluctance to execute Jesus but at the same time his inability to stand up for what was right. For many years the Bible’s naming Pontius Pilate was a source of doubt and ridicule as there was no ancient record of such a man that governed in Israel. But in 1961 during an archeological dig of Caesarea by the Sea they uncovered a plaque near the steps to the amphitheater that bore his name. There is more to this story then most realize as Pilate had been given this position from Rome. After Herod the Great had died his three sons became Tetrarchs or rulers over three regions of Israel but they had done such a lousy job that the Jews asked Rome to send someone else. Rome did so in sending Pontius Pilate a former slave who through marriage and political maneuvering became overseer. Upon his arrival he came into Jerusalem carrying banners bearing the image of the emperor and as he neared the temple area a riot broke out and people were killed all because the religious leaders saw the image of the emperor as idolatry. Rome sent a warning to get it together or he would be replaced so to appease the Jews he undertook a building project to bring water into Jerusalem by way of an aqueduct but to finance the project he diverted funds from the temple treasury. This again brought a riot in which blood was again shed and Pilate was issued a second warning and he wasn’t sure he’d get another chance. So it appears that Pontius Pilate feared another outburst from the Jews so he gave them what they wanted even though he felt uneasy about it. It reminds me of the old Quaker Proverb, “*Of your unspoken words, you are the master; of your spoken words, the servant; of your written words, the slave*.”

The first thing Pilate wants’ to know is what the charges are against Jesus and they just tell Pilate to take their word for it He deserves death. But that wasn’t going to work with Pilate as he told them you judge Him according to you’re laws. The religious leaders weren’t interested in a trial they were interested in an execution and they had been banned for doing that. Years prior to this event the Romans took away the Jewish right for capital punishment, the rabbis put on sackcloth, threw dirt in the air and walked around Jerusalem crying out that God had abandoned them. Why? Well to them capital punishment was a sign of self rule and back in Genesis 49:10 they remembered that God’s word had said, “*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people*.” The word Shiloh means rest and was euphemism for the Messiah. The promises was that Judah would keep her scepter until the Messiah would come, she would keep her right to rule until the Messiah would come again the irony was that their Messiah had come and her on this day they were about to execute Him.

**III. Vs. 33-37 A new kingdom**

Vs. 33-35 Pilate looked at the batter face of Jesus and asked in wonderment, “*Are You the King of the Jews*” who would think of treating their King with such hostility? And Jesus could have just responded with a simple yes but instead he asks Pilate the reason for his inquiry are you asking Me this from the perspective of the Jew’s or the Roman’s? And by Pilate’s response in verse 35 we can tell that he is trying to find out what Jesus has done that has caused such hostility and Pilate knew of the hostilities of the religious leaders.

Jesus didn’t look like any revolutionary that Pontius Pilate had every seen before thus his question is filled with doubt. To the Romans the title “King” meant a political rival so Jesus tells him that “*His kingdom is not of this world*”. “*What kind of King do you think I am a political one or a spiritual one*”, Jesus asked Pilate. It is interesting that Pilate calls Jesus king four times during His trial; he even insisted I have a plaque placed over the cross with the words attesting to that fact written three languages. Jesus said that He’s reign didn’t come from the authority of the world but rather from the authority of the Word. The advancement of His Kingdom Jesus said didn’t depend upon politics to advance it depended upon transformation do to truth in a heart to advance.

Vs. 36-37 Jesus says here four very interesting statements about His kingdom:

1. Vs. 36 **Location**: “*My kingdom is not of this world*” and because of this His kingdom is permanent and will never perish, it can not be attacked or overthrown it is impervious to all the things that come upon every other kingdom.
2. Vs. 36 **Foundation**: “*If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here*.” The foundation of Jesus’ kingdom is peace as He is the prince of peace. In Matthew 16 Jesus said that upon Peter’s statement that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” that Jesus would build His church and “*the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*” Earthly kingdoms are based upon force, pride, the love of human praise, the desire for domination, and self interest, all of which was displayed by Pilate and the Roman Empire.
3. “*For this cause I was Born*”: Which speaks of His humanity and that His authority is derived from a birth right.
4. “*For this cause I have come into this world*”: Which peaks of His divinity and that His authority comes for a greater source then mere human power.

Though God has established human kingdoms to restrain wickedness and ensure justice in the end they become like that which they fight against. But that is not the case of Jesus kingdom. In Rev. 11:15 we are told that the John hears a proclamation in heaven declare that, “*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever*!” so one day their will only be His kingdom, can’t wait for that day. The pillars of Jesus kingdom are all principals of the cross seen in love, sacrifice, humility, and righteousness. In Jesus’ kingdom “*If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all*.” Mark 9:35 what a contrast to the lording over people we see in all the kingdoms of this world. The key to Jesus’ kingdom is not ruling over people it is rather they we are a people ruled over by the Lord. And that is what we saw back in Genesis 32:28 where God changed Jacob’s name to Israel or if you will from “*man rules*” to “*God rules*”. Charles Colson wrote in his book “**Kingdoms In Conflict**” that, “*While human politics is based on the premise that society must be changed in order to change people, in the politics of the Kingdom of God it is people who must be changed in order to change society*.” It is clear that at this time the Jews looked to political intervention to change their present circumstances and things have not changed much have they?

Time has proven which of the two kingdoms is ore powerful as Rome is gone, Napoleon is gone, Hitler is gone the walls have fallen down but the kingdom of our Lord continues to conquer hearts and change countless lives. And try as people might such as some this week who claim that Jesus was the offspring of rape and was never betrayed by Judas, they still can’t stop the continual work of the kingdom of God. You see what Jesus is saying here is a fundamental difference as to how the world conquers and controls humanity and Jesus is saying that His kingdom changes people from the inside He conquers the hearts of men and wins their souls. I came forth and was born into this kingdom to bring forth My kingdom and those that are a part of My kingdom hear truth. Not only does Jesus confirm that He is indeed a king He outlines for Pilate what the purpose of a king is by saying, “*For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.*” That is what the true purpose of a King to establish truth for His voice.

**IV. Vs. 38-3 God among the shadows**

Vs. 38-40 History tells us that Barabbas first name was Jesus and his last name means “*son of the father*” so when Pilate asked the crowd who they wanted released Barabbas in Matthew’s account in the 27th chapter Barabbas was most likely in ear shot of the whole crowd and heard the words of Pilate when he asked, “*Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas or Jesus who is called the christ*?” And as the crowd was whipped into frenzy all Barabbas could hear were the shouts of Jesus and Barabbas being associated with “*crucify him*”. So the true Son of the Father took the place of Jesus Barabbas and he became the first person to realize that Jesus died for him. Do you realize that Jesus took your place on a cross that was meant for you? Do you know that because of this you have been released from the bounds of sin?

 “*Truth, truth, what is truth*”, spoken from a cynical man who had long witnessed the injustices of the politics of the empire. Born a slave married to become free play the game of politics to become governor, “*What is truth*!” And with one brush of justice Pilate acquits Jesus of any crime but then plays the game of politics again saying, “*You have a custom that I should release to you someone…do you want me to release to you the King or the trouble maker*?” The people choose the terrorist over the truth giver, the taker of life instead of the giver of life. Oh how many times this scene has been played out sense that day in human hearts. “*Give me my life style full of lies, the momentary sensation of the things that ruin and run my life*!” According to Matthew 27:19 it was at this point a message arrived from Pilate's wife warning him, “*Have nothing to do with that just man. I have suffered many things in a dream about him*”. As a result of these words Pilate shipped Jesus off to Herod where Herod tried to question Jesus but Jesus wouldn’t say a word. Herod then returned the favor by sending Jesus back to Pilate and in a desperate attempt to get Jesus off the death penalty he scourged Jesus hoping that this would satisfy the Jews.

Vs. 1-3 And for a good while they tortured and terrorized our Lord while letting of a terrorist. The terrible Roman scourging as pieces of metal and bone were embedded in the leather whips that stripped all the skin off his back, leaving him bloody and torn; a crown of thorns was pressed upon his head, and the soldiers mocked and taunting him. Then after the beating was over Pilate presented this grotesque figure of a person who looked more like road kill then He did a man by this time. And nothing proved Jesus words before Pilate more than this, “*I am a King*”. Pilate chose compromise and ended up a murderer of an innocent man. The crowd chose Barabbas and ended up crucifying the Son of God. Jesus chose the cross and ended up King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

At that very moment Pontius Pilate consented to not only putting Jesus Christ on the cross he placed his conscience there as well. Perhaps he was hoping that the 39 stripes would have been enough to spare Jesus’ life but even that didn’t satisfy the religious leaders. On the cross provision was forever made for our salvation and at the scourging we are told in Isaiah 53:5 “*by His stripes we are healed*” so provision was made for healing in our bodies.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

**John 19:4-24**

**“Gotta serve someone”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 4-7 Behold the Man**

**III. Vs. 8-15 Behold your King**

**IV. Vs. 16-24 From Gabbatha to Golgotha**

**I. Intro.**

In Chapter 19 of his gospel, John takes us from Gabbatha (*the pavement*) to Golgotha, (*the hill of Calvary*), and finally to the tomb in which Jesus was laid. The first scene in this chapter is that of Pilate bringing Jesus before the multitude. Our Lord is bloodied and torn by the scourging he has suffered. He is still wearing his crown of thorns and the purple robe with which the soldiers had dressed him and repeatedly mocked Jesus but He with all this around Him He stands in regal majesty.

And of His judge and jury? Well they bowed their heads to Caesar in order to murder the King of Kings Jesus. God had done what He had promised He would do and that is raise up a king for the Jews and for all humanity and as the Jews rejected their King placing Him on a cross to be put to death by gentile hands at that very moment without notice from all that were there their King also became their redeemer.

**II. Vs. 4-7 Behold the Man**

Vs. 4 To scourge someone that you already declared not guilty was a huge miscarriage of justice but Pilate no doubt thought in doing this it would gain Jesus sympathy as the Romans mocked Jesus but it didn’t. Roman scourging had three main purposes:

1. First, it was used to beat the prisoner as a form of punishment.
2. Second, it was used to extract a confession from the prisoner. As a tool to extract a confession, the Roman solider would beat the victim harder and harder until they confessed their crime. Because Jesus had nothing to confess, the blows never lightened on His back.
3. Finally, in cases of crucifixion it was used to weaken the victim so he would die more quickly on the cross. Scourging was a preliminary to every Roman execution the only exceptions being women and Roman senators or soldiers. The goal of the scourging was to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse and death.

In Isaiah 50:6 we are given part of the prophecy with regards to the scourging as it says, “*I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting*.” Consider this:

* + In Matt. 27:4 Judas declared that Jesus was innocent
	+ When you put all the gospel accounts together you can see that ***seven times*** in the course of Jesus trial before Pilate he pronounced Jesus innocent
	+ Finally in Matt. 27:19 the thief next to Jesus that Jesus was innocent

Now I ask you 64,000 dollar question if **Jesus is innocent than who is guilty**? Paul wrote the truth in case you aren’t ware in Romans 3:10-12 where he says, “*There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.*” Ultimately what people are the most prejudice against is not religion or race but rule who is it that is in control of their lives.

Vs. 5-7 I’m afraid that at times because of the gruesome nature of the final moments of Jesus’ life we have a tendency to sanitize His torture. But as Isaiah the prophet foretold in 52:14 that “*many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men*”. Friends the unspeakable horrors our Lord endured was done all for you and me. He received upon Himself that which was due us for our sin, with every punch to the face and whip they lay upon His flesh, every nail that slammed into His body each and every one of them is a concert of His love for you! Jesus death serves as a reminder of two powerful truths:

1. ***God does not take sin lightly***
2. ***And God loves us all very deeply***

The mob was whipped up into frenzy as they cry out only the words “*Crucify, Crucify*” and Pilate went on official record that Jesus was an innocent man. Try as fallen man has they still have **not** been able to reverse Pilate’s official decision with regards to Jesus which is “*I find no fault in Him*”. There are still some who claim that Jesus never communicated that He was the Son of God but clearly Jesus’ adversaries thought that He did and it is the reason that they insisted upon His death.

Pilate’s words were meant to illicit pity from the crowd and not to mock Jesus but the religious leaders. Now as I read them in light of what this “*Man from Galilee*” has done for me I understand them to mean behold the “***Perfect Man***” the ideal of what all of man kind could have been and one day will be. Paul said in Romans 1:25 that fallen humanity “*exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever*.” Why? Because they would rather remain in their sin then embrace what God has for us. Pilate was constantly trying to find away to set Jesus free and when that didn’t work was trying find away to keep Jesus off the cross but in the end **when it came down to either Jesus dying on the cross or Pilate losing his way of life he choose to send an innocent man to death**. Friend’s people don’t mind taking a stand for Jesus until it costs them something then they look a lot more like Pilate.

The religious leaders now drop all pretense as to why they want Jesus dead as they plainly declare “*He made Himself the Son of God*”. Friends listen very carefully, no one can “***make*** *themselves the Son of God*” they can declare themselves as such but the fact is they either are or they aren’t. Now there have a lot of folks who have claimed to be something like a messiah and they have come and gone but Jesus is the only one who demonstrated it by rising from the dead.

**III. Vs. 8-15 Behold your King**

Vs.8-11 The fact that after having learned the true nature of the religious leaders charge against Jesus Pilate had even a greater phobia with regards to Jesus. Now what this tells us is that their words were supported by what Pilate had observed in his brief time with the battered Jesus. Upon not hearing response from Jesus concerning his inquiry as to where He was from Pilate tried to let Jesus know that it was in His best interest to answer as he had the power to release Jesus. But Jesus replies that the only power that Pilate has been granted him and that it was done so to fulfill God’s plan thus the ones who were making a willful choice were more responsible than was Pilate.

 These are Jesus’ final words to Pilate and they are reminding him who it is that is truly in power. I am so amazed by our Lord’s replies to Pilate and this one here is again glorious to see Him speak with such conviction and power. God is the source of all power all authority is on loan from God and as such all will be accountable before Him in how they exercised it. Oh at times it may seem as though we are a ship without an anchor but ship that is attached to a long mooring is still attached to an anchor.

Vs. 12-13 Someone has well said “*Great occasions do not make heroes or cowards, they simply unveil them to the eyes of men*.” Such was the case with Pilate. Every word and action of this account strips away the pretense behind which men seek to hide. Pilate sat down that day to judge a man and didn’t realize that it was he who was going to be judged based upon his decision. It appears that Pilate fully knew what was right but choose to do what was wrong for political gain. Folks it seems to me that there are again countless people who are in the same boat who know what is right with regards to Jesus but chose to do what is wrong for temporary gain, a spiritual nearsightedness if you will. **Pilate does not posses the courage of his convictions he would rather compromise and go against his own conscience then go without the comforts of this world**.

That scene has been played out countless times by individuals who seek to discredit and deny Jesus only to find out in the end that it will be their judgment of who He is that judges them. There are many people who think that if they just say, “*I don’t believe in Jesus*” that some how the moment they say this He ceases to exists. Friends Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and as we are told in Philip. 2:10 “*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth*”. We do know that, later, Pilate was dismissed as governor and summoned back to Rome to answer to Tiberius' charges against him. On his way there, Tiberius suddenly died. Pilate was freed from the charges and went on to southern France, then known as Gaul. There, according to tradition, he put himself to death.

 Underneath the buildings that presently occupy the north side of the temple mount in Jerusalem, archaeologists have uncovered a pavement stone that bears markings of an ancient game, rather like the game tick-tack-toe, which was played by soldiers of the Roman Empire. It has almost certainly been established that that is the actual pavement of the judgment seat of the Roman governors, the spot on which our Lord himself stood as he was condemned to death by Pilate. The pavement is called “*Gabbatha*” (pavement in Hebrew).

Vs. 14-15 Friends there is a lesson to learn from Israel and their history as they brought upon themselves needless destruction and heartaches throughout their history for the refusal to be ruled by God:

1. In 1 Samuel 8:6-7 the people cried out, “*Give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you;* ***for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.*”** So way back in the early stages of the nation the people rejected the Father’s rule choosing rather to be ruled by kings like the other nations around them.
2. Now here in John 19:15 at Pilate’s question, “*Shall I crucify your King*?” The chief priests answered, “***We have no king but Caesar***!” Here we see the people reject the Son desiring again to be ruled by earthly kings instead of the King of Kings.
3. Finally in Acts 7:51-53 at the trial of Stephen he charged them with “***always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you****. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.*” Lastly we see that the people rejected the Holy Spirit who continued to testify of the words and works of Jesus and chose again to be ruled earthly leaders instead of a heavenly Lord!

So whose it going to be folks, who is it that you are going to chose to rule over your hearts this day? Listen to the word’s of Joshua in Joshua 24:15 as he spoke to the nation saying, “*if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.* ***But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord***.” Or in words of the prophet Bob Dylan:

You may be a construction worker working on a home
You may be living in a mansion or you might live in a dome
You might own guns and you might even own tanks
You might be somebody's landlord you might even own banks.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

You may be a preacher with your spiritual pride
You may be a city councilman taking bribes on the side
You may be working in a barbershop, you may know how to cut hair
You may be somebody's mistress, may be somebody's heir.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

**IV. Vs. 16-24 From Gabbatha to Golgotha**

Vs. 16-18 John like all the other gospel writers spares us the gruesome details of Jesus’ actual crucifixion by just mentioning it as a fact. Yet as horrible as it was physically Paul gives us what is by far and away the worst part of Jesus crucifixion in 2 Cor. 5:21 where he reminds us that “*He* (the Father) *made Him* (Jesus) *who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*.”

In 1968, archeologists discovered the remains of a man crucified in Jesus’ era; in fact the skeletal remains are in the museum in Jerusalem. It is clear by the remains that the person being nailed to the cross was in a sitting position, both legs over sideways, with the nail penetrating the sides of both feet just below the heel. The arms were stretched out, each stabbed by a nail in the forearm. Dr. Hass an anatomy professor at Hebrew University observes that this was “*a difficult and unnatural posture*”, which would increase the agony of the sufferer. What is interesting about this archeological find is that corrects the traditional view of the crucifixion which has both palms nailed to the cross and the legs stretching straight down with a nail piercing the feet in the front.

There are several interesting facts to consider:

* 1. First is to realize that this hilled called Golgotha was the very spot in Genesis 22:8 where Abraham said to Isaac his only begotten son, “*God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.*” And just as Isaac had to bear the wood up the hill so too did God’s only Son.
	2. Second someone has well said that Jesus being placed between two thieves is a fitting place as He stole my heart and He wants to steal yours as well.

Vs. 19-22 Hebrew is a **theological language**, Greek is **philosophical language** and Latin is an **intellectual language** and as such Pilate placed the first gospel tract ever written above Jesus to declare the truth to the theological, philosophical and intellectual that Jesus is the true King of King’s. And as it was being nailed into place above Jesus head Pilate finally stood up to the religious leaders and said “*What I have written, I have written*.” But he is like a lot of folks who are very strict on minor things but very lack on major things. The religious leaders objected to Pilate’s gospel tract on the basis that they didn’t believe it even though Jesus proclaimed it. I’m afraid far too many people put way too much stock in what they believe instead of whether or not what they believe is true.

Vs. 23-24 In Exodus 28 we are told that the High Priests robe was to be made seamless and Jesus being the Great High Priest had such a garment and rather than dividing it which would have ruined they cast lots for it. A 1,000 years before this took place the palmist wrote in Psalm 22:18 “*They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots*.” So we see that even this was as John says a fulfillment of the scriptures.

It is here that we get a view of the degree of Jesus’ surrender on our behalf has he gave up His clothes. Is that not interesting as in the garden God sacrificed an innocent lamb to coven the nakedness of man’s sin and here at the cross what began in the garden was fulfilled on a hill called Calvary where the Father sacrificed His only begotten son to clothe us in His righteousness. Friends listen to the words of Paul Ephes. 2:7 as he declares concerning Jesus sacrifice was “*that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*.” It may seem as though all of this happen without control but here we are told that “*the scriptures might be fulfilled*”.

Friends there are far too many folks today who are at the foot of the cross playing games, rolling the dice to see what they can gain from being near Jesus without having to die to self.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

**John 19:25-30**

**“Hopelessly devoted to you”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 25-30 Words from the wood**

**I. Intro.**

There is something very interesting about today that deals with Mother’s day and that it is also Pentecost and you may recall that on this day Mary was in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came upon her so she received comfort from the comforter. Devotion is a difficult thing to measure but one thing is for certain it can’t be measured by words alone but by action. Consider the following truths:

1. When Jesus began His ministry with works and words the multitudes flocked around to the degree that he was endanger of being trampled.
2. When He began to speak of the cost of following Him the numbers declined to hundreds.
3. When He invited those to share in ministry proclaiming the truth in towns it shrunk to 70 (Luke 10:1)
4. When He spoke of His death and the cost of following Him there were only 12.
5. In the Garden of agony only three came forward and one of them (Peter) couldn’t stay awake.
6. And finally at the foot of the cross there was only one of His disciples left.

Ah but look closely at verse 25 and you will see that along with John there were four women who stood devotedly by Him. Now think of those four women looking up at the One they loved upon that cross watching Him die, hearing the insults being hurled at Him, watching the blood drip from His battered body; they didn’t shrink away they stayed there at His feet no matter how hard it was. Why, what caused them to remain when all but John had left? Because they loved Him!! There hope was not fixed upon His ideals, nor upon His promises (*which at this moment seemed as though they weren’t going to come to pass*), they weren’t thinking of what benefit might be gained to them with there affiliation with Him. No they simply followed Him even though they didn’t fully understand His words or His works they were there because they loved Him. Oh dear saint’s we have much to learn from John and these ladies about being devoted to our Lord no matter how difficult we find it to be at times.

**II. Vs. 25-30 Words from the wood**

Crucifixion originated from the Persians today known as the Iranians around 1000 years before Jesus and later taken over from the Greeks when they conquered Persia and when the Greeks were defeated by the Romans they adopted it as the form of capital punishment. The reason why the person was lifted of the ground was because the person being crucified usual began to curse their very lives and the Persians considered the ground sacred and didn’t want the curse to be applied to the ground so they lifted up the victim from the earth around 3 to 4 feet.

And remarkably Jesus made seven statements while He was on the cross; they are known as “*the seven words from the cross*.”

1. In the first three, He thought of others: those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34), the believing thief (Luke 23:39-43), and finally His mother (John 19:25-27).
2. The central word had to do with His relationship to the Father (Matt. 27:45-49).
3. The last three statements focused on Himself: His **body** (John 19:28-29), His **soul** (John 19:30; and see Isa. 53:10), and His **spirit** (Luke 23:46).

Vs. 25 It is an amazing thing to realize that Mary was standing by her Son witnessing the brutality being placed upon Him and then hearing the tender words of her Son for her care. All Mary had to do was say that all of Jesus’ claims were false but she didn’t. There probably is not a more appropriate Mother’s day passage in all the Bible then this one as clearly Jesus understands the emotional need of all mother’s something that we would do well to appreciate more than just one day a year.

The gospel accounts differ a bit with regards to these gals around the cross. For instance only John reveals for us that Jesus mother Mary was there, including her makes four women plus John. Most folks believe that Mary’s sister’s name is Salome and if that is true that means that James and John were cousins of Jesus. Then there was Mary the wife of Clopas also spelled Cleopas and according Luke 24:18 one of the fellows who met Jesus while on the road to Emmaus was named Cleopas so perhaps it was this fellow’s wife. Then there was Mary Magdalene and she was the one we are told in Luke 8:2 that Jesus had cast out seven demons from.

John’s mother being there brings to mind something very interesting. You may recall the story found in Matthew 20:20 where John’s and James’ mother came to Jesus with her sons, “*kneeling down and asking something from Him*”. He said to her, "*What do you wish*?" She then said to Jesus, “*Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom*.” And now three years later John’s mom looked up towards Jesus and saw who was placed on is right side and left side and remembered perhaps Jesus words, “*You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with*?”

Vs. 26 In the midst of His agony Jesus eyes met the eyes He first saw when He came into this world and He felt her agony as a sword was piercing her heart and He was at that very moment providing for the rest of every person who has ever been provided the rest for His mother. With regards to Jesus’ mom there is an interesting choice of a word that He uses in verse 26 as He calls her “*Woman*” it is a term of respect but not one of intimacy. Why did He use this word at the very moment that His mother was watching Him die? Well I suggest to you that the answer may lie with the 2nd chapter of John three ½ years earlier. It was the time right after the beginning of His earthly ministry when Jesus and His followers were invited to a wedding feast at Cana only three miles from the town Jesus grew up in. And Mary made her statement to her Son “*They have no wine*”; for 30 years she had treasured thing in her heart, 30 years she had waited for vindication as she had put up with all the disrespect and harsh words regarding her pregnancy, (*no doubt it had gotten worse after her husband Joseph had died*). She had waited for the time that Luke recorded in 1:48 when, “*He will regard the lowly state of His maidservant*” at time when “*all generations will call me blessed*.” That is what I believe she meant as she made her request that day in Cana. “*Do something that will show these people who You are, something that will show these folks that You were born by way of the Holy Spirit*”. And although He fulfilled her request for the wine He did so with out anyone realizing what He had done. Now Jesus upon the cross uses the same word “*woman*” instead of mother and I believe He did so to bring her back to those 3 ½ years earlier a way of saying “*Mom now is the time. During My shame and then My glory that you will finally be called blessed*”. As she stood there gazing up at her Son next to her we are told in Matthew 27:54 was a centurion who had witnessed “*the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "****Truly this was the Son of God****!*”

Thirty three years earlier as Mary and Joseph brought their first born Son into the temple Simeon a devote man had waited year after year for the Consolation of Israel and it had been revealed to him that he would not die until after he would see the Messiah. So on that day as these young parents came into the temple Simeon took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God saying, “*Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.*” Then Simeon turned to Mary and said, “*Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*” And at this moment Mary fully understood what Simeon had prophesied to here 33 years earlier.

I wonder as she heard that word “*woman*” and understood what He meant by it that she would have gladly taken a life time of shame for one more day with her Son? Oh what a good word that is for all of us who have at times been broken hearted by our children. Too all you mothers ought there today who have suffered shame and ridicule perhaps because of your children this is a great word for you today. This mother’s day you will be blessed as you seek your fulfillment not in motherhood but rather in the sacrifice and glory of your savior.

Notice that John again does not mention himself by name only referring to himself as the “disciple whom He loved”. Hey friends perhaps we ought to try this with regards to ourselves constantly calling into remembrance that no matter what the circumstance, no matter how vulnerable or insecure we may be we are the “*follower of Jesus whom He adores*”.

Vs. 27 There is one other curious thing that happened as our Lord looked down to Mary and John who stood next to her as He said to John, “*Behold your mother*”. You see based upon Matt. 13:55-56 we know that Jesus had at least four half brothers and several half sisters yet Jesus bypassed the earthly bloodline and turned instead to John to care for His mother. There is an interesting prophetic word with regards to this in Psalm 69:8 where the psalmist writes with regards to the Messiah, “*I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children*”. It is interesting to me that John adds this commentary that “*from that hour that disciple took her to his home*”. Which suggests to me that Mary remained with John until she was ushered into Jesus’ presence, even though we know that according to Acts 1:14 that Mary along with Jesus’ half brothers were gathered in the upper room at Pentecost. This is further supported by Paul’s testimony in 1 Cor. 15:7 where we are told that prior to Jesus ascension “*That He was seen by James*”. The 27th verse and the 28th verse are separated by 3 hours and I believe that John took Mary home sparing her the witness of the aftermath of Jesus death.

Folks this just goes to prove that there is something thicker then blood and it is the blood of Christ that courses through our veins because of His love for us. How fitting it is that Jesus in the final moments of His earthly life would unite the woman in whom He had rested upon her chest with the disciple had done so upon His. Families that are brought together at the foot of the cross are those that will always be a place of comfort and rest. Think of this a moment won’t you? It was on the cross where man was doing its worse to Jesus thrusting its spear of hatred and separation that Jesus looked down upon His mother and united her to one of His followers. Friend’s relationships can always come together at the cross no matter how much damage and misunderstanding at the cross Jesus can heal and bind together all in Him. Instead of focusing in on all the wrongs done it is at the cross where we see forgiveness and love.

Vs. 28-30 Here we are given the final earthly words of the very one that John had said in the first chapter was the Word of God. Just prior to this Jesus had quoted Psalm 22:1

“*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning*?” He then glanced over to one of the thief’s who was crucified next to Him and assured him that “*today you will be with Me in Paradise*”. And through all of this we need to remember that said I thirst, all His words and care were brought in the midst of the greatest of personal needs. His final words came as a lamb that had passed every inspection, “It is finished”! Every other religion adds something else after these words of our Lord. “*Oh it’s not finished, you must go out on a mission and give 10%*”. No, others say, “*You have to go door to door and hand out tracts then you will be able to inherit the world*”. Friends, nothing else remains to be done for our salvation it is finished all we do now is enjoy our relationship and bask in His abiding love.

In Luke 23:45-46 we are told that, “*the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last*.” Matthew in 27:51-53 tells us that when “*the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many*.” So we have the first rock concert and pardon the pun but it was live worship!! But what did all this mean? Well, in Rom. 8:22 we read that *“..the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now*.” As the crowds worshipped Jesus as He entered Jerusalem the religious leaders rebuked Jesus commanding Him to tell them to stop to which He replied in Luke 19:40 “*I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out*." Folks this was the true **Rolling Stones** rocking out declaring that the curse had been lifted! The earthquake had another effect as the stones that covered over the tombs were opened. So what happened was that the bodies of the some of the believers were made visible! Why this sign? Well if you go to 1 Cor. 15:55-58 you read, “*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*.” I believe that God was showing that death could not hold the saints in the grave. It says that these same believers came out of the graves after Jesus resurrection and that they went into Jerusalem and appeared too many. The word “*appear*” means to “***to exhibit (in person) or disclose (by words), declare (plainly), to inform***.” Now Paul tells us in Eph 4:8-9 that when Jesus “..*ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men. (Now this, "He ascended"; what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth*?” And Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:19 that Jesus “*preached to the spirits in prison*,” So it is my opinion that it is these O.T. saints that Jesus went to share the liberty that they had looked forward too. So they were out there sharing that only through Jesus could you be made perfect! Now I must admit that there is not much given on this whole seen, but it is interesting to think that King David would come up to you and start talking to you proclaiming the victory won you in Jesus alone! And remember all of this took place on the first Resurrection Sunday!

There was a man once who came up to an evangelist after a crusade when all the people had left and wanted to know what he could do to get saved even though he hadn’t responded to the invitation. The Evangelist just simply replied, “*It’s too late*!” The panicked fellow hadn’t anticipated the reply and said, “*What do you mean it’s too late, surely there must be something you can do*?” “*Nope nothing I can do either!*” Now beginning to weep the man again utter his request, “*Is there nothing I can do to be saved*?” At this the evangelist said, “*No there is nothing you can do to be saved because it has already been done all you can do is believe*!!!”

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**a. 18:1-19:42 The passion**

**John 19:31-42**

**“Preparation day”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 31-37 In the hands of the world**

**III. Vs. 38-42 In the hands of His worshippers**

**I. Intro.**

The darkest days in human history were the days that Jesus lay in the tomb, the temple of which Jesus spoke of in John 2:19 where He said, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” was **ruined yet not raised**. Now we know that Jesus was not idle during this time as we are told in1 Peter 3:19 “*He went and preached to the spirits in prison*”, that is to say the Old Testament saints but as far as we mortals were concerned **light** had been **extinguished**, **love eliminated**. And we witness is those gathering around a dead body nothing more than preparation for storage. Again from an earthly perspective life had ended with the seeming defeat of Jesus the world was cast into hopelessness the long winter if you will. Humanity was broke with God and we were cast out into darkness. **What the unbelieving heart has wanted for those days it received a world apart from the love and revelation of Jesus**. The passage fall naturally into two parts:

1. Verses 31-37 We see Jesus body in the hands of the world: Where it is poked and pierced as they want only to remove His body from view.
2. Verses 38-42 We see His body in the hands of His worshippers, where great care and cost is expended even in the midst of hopelessness and regret.

I’m reminded of the words of George Muller “*The natural mind is prone to reason when we ought to believe, to be at work when we ought to be quiet, or to go our own way when we ought to steadily walk in God's ways*”.

**II. Vs. 31-37 In the hands of the world**

Vs. 31-37 The first part of this is quite interesting as the world wants not too touch Jesus except to jab Him in the side with a pole. There were three requests for His body, the religious leaders, Joseph and Nicodemus and Mary Magdalene:

The **religious rulers** did so on the ground of their ritual. Tradition must be observed even if the law had been violated, as Deut. 21:22-23 said that an executed person must be buried before sundown. There request was only to satisfy their religion not for care of the dead, they had already proven with regards that they cared less. So when they went to Pilate they asked him for Jesus to fulfill their religion. The Romans would have kept Jesus on the cross until He began to rot and they would have flung him into the garbage dump. And according to Mark 15:44 Pilate was surprised at Jesus death so he sent out the guards to make sure and when they came to Jesus they didn’t break His legs and instead pierced His side. Something remarkable happened when they came to Jesus finding Him already dead and we know this by way of John’s commentary in verse 35 where he adds, “*And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe*.” What was it John is swearing to the accuracy of? Namely verse 34 that upon seeing the spear jab into the heart of Jesus that “*Immediately blood and water came out*”. One would expect blood it is the water that has many a medical examiner attention as they will all tell you that Jesus died with a raptured heart, a broken heart friends. Now pay attention here as we have already been told that in verse 30 that Jesus “*gave up His spirit*” which I insist means that He didn’t die **OF** a broken heart rather that He died **WITH** a broken heart that is John’s testimony. It wasn’t the spear that killed Him, neither was it the torture and crucifixion, no those things contributed to the physical state but He gave up His spirit no one or nothing took His life He laid it down but in laying it down we discover that His heart was broken it had ruptured. What caused that? Well no doubt physically we can attribute it to what had happened to him for over a day but I also think we can say that what caused it was His love for the Father and His love for you and me which were at conflict. How do we know they were in conflict? Well because in Luke 22:44 we are told that He, “*being in agony, prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*” Simply put His heart was being ripped in two, just as the temple veil was being ripped from top to bottom so also was His heart and the evidence tells us as much. Hey have you ever stop to realize that just as a bride was brought forth from the heart of Adam so to was a bride brought forth from the broken heart of our Lord.

All of this fulfilled the words of scripture that not a bone would be broken and that they would look upon Him whom they pierced. These two verse come from the Law Exodus 12:46 and also the prophets Zechariah 12:10. In Exodus the reference is to the Passover Lamb so we see that Jesus fulfilled that He alone is the Passover Lamb. The piecing with its mixed flow of blood and water remind us symbolically two things blood = redemption and water = regeneration. Friends that is what Jesus does with what the world does with Him, it is His answer to man kind’s sin to redeem and regenerate and it came at the price of a broken

**III. Vs. 38-42 In the hands of His worshippers**

Vs.38-40 Here we see Jesus’ body in the hands of His friends albeit secret ones, Joseph and Nicodemus. John tells us that two “undercover brothers” came forward and did in His death what they weren’t willing to do in His life and that was to be identified with Jesus. So what made these two fellows who had been content to be secret saint’s come out of the shadows and into the day light? Well friends it was when they personally recognized what Jesus had done for them on the cross!

We learn from the other accounts that Joseph was a wealthy member of the Sanhedrim yet he had not voted for Jesus death, which means that the vote of the ruling council of Caiaphas was not unanimous as Joseph and we assume Nicodemus both voted against putting Jesus to death. I must say I’m impressed by these two secret disciples who did not vote with the popular vote but voted with their conscience. Then there is Nicodemus who first came to Jesus at night heard His powerful truths believed but remained at a distance but in the end is brought out into the open. And in this hour of darkness these two who had remained in the shadows stepped boldly, courageously into the light, Joseph coming into the presence of Rome in Pilate and asking for Jesus’ body and Nicodemus bring with Him a 100 pounds of spices to prepare Jesus’ body for decay but those spices wouldn’t be needed.

There was another man named Joseph who 33 years earlier only a few miles from here wrapped a little lamb on strips of linen and laid Him in a stone manger. Every year on Yom Kippur (the day of atonement) the High Priest would take of his priestly garments and put on linen robes and go behind the veil into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat which was atop the Ark of the Covenant which held the stone tablets in which the 10 commandments were written. They would tie a rope around him just incase he was defiled and died. Folks would wait in the courtyard waiting anxiously to see if the blood of the innocent lamb’s sacrifice had been accepted and their sins covered for another year and when the High priest stepped out into the courtyard people would cheer and praise God. As they lay Jesus in the tomb wrapped in lined would His sacrifice work, would He emerge from the tomb? In Hebrews 9:12 we read that Jesus, “*Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption*.”

Vs. 41-42 John gives us three remarkably symbols surrounding the burial of Jesus:

1. **Buried in a garden**: The Bible records that sin began in a garden and John records that sin met its conqueror in a garden. Jesus entered into death so that he would conquer sin and loosed its hold upon our race.
2. **Placed in a tomb where no one had ever been placed before**: In the Garden of Eden man entered into an experience he had never been in before death. But here in this garden in Jerusalem was a **new tomb** where no one had ever been laid, no person had ever conquered death and in that new tomb death was conquered for the first time.
3. **The tomb was near the cross**: That beautiful garden, just a few yards from the cross, was this tomb where no one had ever lain, and there they put the body of Jesus. Friends when we have been to that cross, laid aside our pride, been broken of our self-sufficiency we will find ourselves broken crying out for help then now this the place of resurrection is just around the corner. You see when you are standing at a cross, the resurrection is just ahead if you walk with God.

Joseph gave up his garden tomb the place where he would one day lay to Jesus, it was **the greatest deal ever made my friends as Joseph traded his tomb for Jesus’ room in His Father’s house**. How about it friend are you willing to give up that which is death that you may step into that which is life? Then John adds this poetic commentary, In verse 41 “***Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden****, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid*.” You may wish to underline that verse as ***it is not only picturesque it is a promise***. Promise what promise? Well read with me Jesus words in Matthew 6:25-34 where He says “*Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*” In the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden where the birds of the air neither sowed or reaped yet their heavenly Father feeds them. In the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden where the lilies of the field neither toiled nor spun yet where more beautifully provided for then the earthly splendor of Solomon. Ah friend won’t you draw near the cross of Jesus for there is a garden!

 No matter how we wish to look at these two friends of Jesus they treated Him as dead. Further more they treated Him two things in view:

1. **Love**: They came and took Him because they loved Him, again it was His death that forced that in the open but they truly loved Him and His death didn’t separate that love.
2. **Faith**: They still believed in Him, oh not fully but enough to risk being disbarred from the Sanhedrim, they believed in Him more than they believed in the religious institution that they had dedicated their lives two.

But there was something missing, something they lacked that day that the words of John that we just read that in the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden should have spoken to this lack. What did they lack? **HOPE**! They were looking for answers and love and faith drove them to do what they had done that day but hope wasn’t present with them but it was all over that garden! The **world** believed that Jesus was dead and they were glad, the **worshippers** of Jesus thought He was dead and they were sad. Oh friend no matter what your circumstance to day read with me again “**the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden”.**

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**b. 20:1-31 The resurrection**

**John 20:1-18**

**“Taken with Jesus”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-10 The empty tomb**

**III. Vs. 11-18 The risen Lord**

**I. Intro.**

If this was a normal biography, there would be no chapter 20 or 21 all of them conclude with the death and burial of the subject, this is the only biography that I have ever read that includes a resurrection. In the 20th chapter the events recorded for us span 8 days. The first day covers verse 1-23 and the 2nd day to the 8th day are to be found in verses 24-31. This morning our central focus will be on two things and how they affected those that witnessed them.

* **Vs. 1-10 The empty tomb**
* **Vs. 11-18 The risen Lord**

If we piece together all the accounts we get a clearer picture of the chronological order of the events that morning: So early on Easter Sunday morning Mary started off with the other ladies for the tomb but in her eagerness to get there, she went ahead of the other ladies. Based upon the Matthew 28 passage before she got to the tomb there was a great earthquake and an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the door not to let Jesus out but to let others in which caused the guards to shake with fear. So when Mary came to the tomb she saw that the stone was rolled away, her immediate conclusion was that they had moved the body of Jesus so without waiting for the other ladies to get there, she ran to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus was moved. It is after Mary leaves that the other ladies then arrived and when they get there they see two angels who told them that Jesus had risen and to go tell the other disciples. In the meanwhile, Mary arrived to where Peter and John are staying and she tells them that Jesus’ body is missing (apparently it is this message that the two on the road to Emmaus hear). And as we shall see in this text Peter and John come to investigate running together until John out runs Peter and is seems that Mary decided to come back to the tomb as well. But by the time she got back to the tomb Peter and John had observed, studied and believed then they left. Mary then came back, not knowing that the other ladies had seen the angels, and at this time she looks into the tomb, sees the two angels and then meets Jesus and clings to Him. That about covers the chronological sequence of events now we move into the specific text as it relates to John’s account.

**II. Vs. 1-10 The empty tomb**

Vs. 1 There were according to the other gospel accounts perhaps as many as three other women that came with Mary Magdalene early that Sunday morning but Mary was the first to arrive and then ran back to tell Peter and John then came back with them. The first thing we realize in this story is that **Mary was not hopping for a resurrection she was looking for a body which she assumed had been stolen**. The word in the Greek translated “*early*” in verse 1 is a word that means “*4th watch*”. The Roman soldiers had set the night up into four watches:

1. The first watch went from six to nine
2. The 2nd watch went from nine to twelve
3. The 3rd watch went from twelve to three
4. And the fourth watch went from **three to six** in the morning

So Mary left while it was still dark and made her way to the tomb with the other ladies at sunrise. One wonders why Jesus didn’t first appear to Caesar or Caiaphas but He first appeared to Mary. The rabbis has a saying “*It is better that the words of the Law be burned, than be delivered to a woman.*” **The woman who was part of those that were last at the cross is now first at the tomb**. Of further prophetic significance is that this was the first day of the “*Feast of first fruits*” so Jesus became the first fruits of those who are to be raised from the dead.

Vs. 2-10 John again identifies himself as the “*disciple whom Jesus loved*” and it seems to me that John even 70 years after this time aware that Jesus loved Him like no other and that is how all of us should few His love towards us that **He loves me like no other**. I sometimes wonder if John is a bit competitive as he has to include that though they both started out running together he was faster then Peter. I find it interesting that John is with Peter who had denied Jesus in the courtyard and was not with him and the four women at the cross; I wonder if Peter would have come to the empty tomb if John had not sought him out after his failure. Saints that is what Jesus meant when in 13:34 He commanded that they love one another as He has loved us. **Peter, disgraced in the courtyard absent at the cross runs to the empty tomb because he was with John sometimes that is what it takes to get someone to the empty tomb just hang around them and as verse 4 says “run together with them” for awhile to ensure that they make it.**

 In verses 5-8 the word “***saw***” appears three times but what is interesting to me is that though **each time the word in English is “*saw*” the word in Greek is a different word**.

* 1. The first time in verse 5 the word in Greek means, “***to look, at to see visibly***” as John stopped at the entrance of the tomb and looked to see the linen clothes lying there.
	2. Then in verse 6 Peter comes crashing in and saw linen clothes lying there but here the word in Greek is where we get our word “***theory***” from which indicates that Peter studied the situation more intently then just observing it.
	3. Finally in verse 8 we are told that John also went into the tomb after Peter did and here we are told that “saw and believed” and the word used here in the Greek is where we get our word for “***idea***” which means “***I get it***”.

Do you see the progression friends? John started out making an observation, Peter moved from and observation to studying and come up with a theory, then finally John went from a theory to “***getting it***”. What they realized was that no one had moved the body but rather the body was gone and even though this hadn’t yet been linked with the scriptures which indicated His resurrection it was still enough evidence to for belief. What Peter observed was that it looked as though the body had vaporized leaving the linen strips in their original form only collapsed. Then John came in and believed what Peter observed. So far what we see is that they have proven an empty tomb but the disciples never spoke of an empty tomb they spoke a risen Lord.

Friends may I make this suggestion as it relates to your personal devotion that start out with making simple observations, keep studying your observations until you form a theory, then keep studying until you get it. These fellows didn’t get it at first and they didn’t get apart from hanging around each other, they persisted and built upon what the other person did. Hang in there folks as we are told in verse 9 “*as yet they did not know the Scripture*” either but they kept at it observing, studying until they got it.

In verses 5-7 the Greek wording makes it apparent that the linen burial wraps that were placed upon Jesus’ body by Joseph and Nicodemus were still there with the folds and spices only flattened. What this suggests is twofold:

1. The body was not tampered with by grave robbers as they would have just quickly removed the linen strips.
2. That the body was resurrected, taken through the wrappings.

Whatever happened to the grave clothes? Is the Shroud of Turin for real?

Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, states that “*The evidence thus far indicates the probable conclusions that the shroud is ancient (perhaps from the first century), that it does not contradict the NT accounts, and that the image is not a fake. It may well be the actual burial garment of Jesus.*” Results of the Shroud of Turin Research Project in October 1978 determined that the Shroud is not a painting or a forgery. They determined that its blood is real blood and the image seems to be some type of scorch, though they cannot account for how it was made. Further more based upon the evidence of the Shroud the image is of a crucified male, bearded, 5’11" in height, weighing about 175 pounds. His physique was muscular and well built, and he is an estimated age of 30-35 years. His long hair is tied into a pigtail and there is no evidence on decomposition on the cloth.

**III. Vs. 11-18 The risen Lord**

Vs. 11-14 I love Mary’s fixed devotion don’t you? She is outside the tomb over come with grief and she peeks into the tomb. Now John gives a very picturesque description for us saying that she observes “*two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain*.” Now as I read this account I’m taken back to Exodus 25:18-20 where Moses was instructed by God to “*make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat.*” All of this reminds us of the Mercy seat where the sacrifice of a lambs blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat.

Next we are told that Mary has a conversation with these two angels but is more interested in finding the Lord then hanging out talking with two angles. With all this supernatural things going on around Mary is bent on finding where “*They have taken away* ***MY*** *Lord*” that tells us that Jesus was personal to her. “*I’m not interested in talking with angels, I’m into finding MY Lord*”, oh what a great heart that is. So she turned away from the angels and in so doing saw Jesus even though she assumed He was the Gardner. He eyes filled tears, her heart broken she can’t recognize Jesus though He is right in front of her. That true with a lot of us at times as we are unable to see Jesus in the midst of our circumstances. “*I’ll bring Him back*” she say’s, she wasn’t looking for help she was looking for Jesus and even though this is misguided you have to appreciate her devotion.

When we are devoted to Jesus, indebted to Him because of what bondage and destruction He has delivered us from angels just aren’t enough as Mary turns her back on them is search for Jesus. The difference to me lies in the fact that Mary recognized that **she was already a beneficiary of Jesus love** and having “once” been set free from the demons of the past she was forever indebted and devoted. I’m afraid today there would be far more folks wanting to talk to angels get a few snapshots with them then they are wanting to cling to Jesus.

Vs. 15-18 One wonders if there isn’t a gentle rebuke in Jesus words to Mary in verse 15, “*Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking*?” Numerous times Jesus had told them that with His death would come His resurrection so why the tears, who are you seeking? Jesus is either who He claims to be or He isn’t and sense He is dry up the tear and begin to rejoice. I’m not trying discredit Mary as she is far to much like me; at times **I’m far to prone to evaluate the emptiness of circumstances as a disaster outside of the promises of God, instead of realizing that they will fulfill them**. I can’t help but wonder how many times you and I have been caught up in the moment running around weeping over a circumstance and missing Jesus who is right in front of us? Martin Luther once spent three days in a black depression over something that had gone wrong. On the third day his wife came downstairs dressed in mourning clothes. “*Who's dead*?” he asked her. “*God,*” she replied. Luther rebuked her, saying, “*What do you mean, God is dead? God cannot die.*” “*Well*,” she replied, “*the way you've been acting I was sure He had*!”

The Greek phrase of verse 17 “*means to stop an action already begun rather than to avoid starting it*.” What this indicates is that Mary was holding on to Jesus and did not want to let Him go. This verse is interesting as it reveals that the glorified body is not a phantom or ghost but has a real body with physical properties albeit quite different from our own. The courts would not recognize the testimony of a women but it is clear that Jesus did. This also argues for the historic truth of this account. If someone fabricated this story, They would not make the first witnesses to the resurrection a woman, who were unfairly regarded as unreliable witnesses.

 There is something about Mary Magdalene that challenges me, personally. Oh she doesn’t have all the right theology just as she set out while it was still dark she was still in the dark with regards to the resurrection. She came back to the tomb but not because Jesus had risen from the dead, she is still looking for the living among the dead. But she is determined to retrieve the body of Christ she is so focused that she doesn’t seemed at all interested in the angels, has a discussion with Jesus but thinks that He is a gardener and is willing to bring His body back all by herself.

 What speaks to my heart is that what drove her there that day was not right theology but rather ***indebtedness***. You see it was this Mary who had seven demons cast out of her and she never lost her devotion because she remained so grateful. Friends I’m afraid we Christian forget how many demons Jesus cast out of us and our ***indebtedness*** turns into ***entitlement***. I personally think that is what is wrong with Christians today, we have right theology but we have long ago forgot what Jesus has done for us, what our lives used to be like and how He saved us from the things tormenting us and destroying our lives. I’m suggesting that we need to get that we do what Jesus told the Church of Ephesus to do in Rev. 2:4-5 where He said, “*I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and* ***do the first works****, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.*” Mary Magdalene was in love and thankful and because of this she was determined to stay by Jesus even though her understanding was not right. One reason Mary need not cling to Jesus is because this was not going to be the last time she saw Him in fact one day she would never be apart from Him. Notice Jesus says something very interesting as it relates to being near Him, “*Go to My brethren and say to them*”, that is “*You will never be closer to Him then you are when you obey Him and serve Him*!” You say you aren’t feeling that close to Jesus, just aren’t experiencing His presence well then start obeying His word and His Father will become our Father. So Mary became the first missionary sent to proclaim the resurrection to others, a women in whose testimony was not accepted in court, so what gave her that honor? Well I believe it was her devotion and sense of indebtedness.

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**b. 20:1-31 The resurrection**

**John 20:19-31**

**“Life In His Name”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 19-23 Receive the Holy Spirit**

**III. Vs. 24-29 In plain sight**

**IV. Vs. 30-31 Believing you may have**

**I. Intro.**

Here in this section we conclude the final event on the first Easter Sunday and then finish with days 2-8 in verses 24-31. In light of the events of the last few days it seems quite amazing that Jesus’ first words to these fellows lockup in the upper room was “*Peace be with you*.” I mean I think if I were Jesus I might have shown up in the room and said, “*Where have you all been*?” Except for John you will recall that all of these disciples fled and only John came to the cross, so you might have expected a rebuke from Jesus when He meets up with them but instead He offers His peace. Remember what Jesus had told them in John 14:27 “*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*.” They were learning that Jesus was true to His words.

 Already on the first day of the resurrection four individual or groups have come forth having personally witnessed Jesus resurrection. Then word has gotten out that Peter has also seen the Lord when we find the ten in the upper room with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. I rather think that they were in the room discussing the testimonies that the five groups (including Peter) had witnessed with regards to Jesus, they probably were all talking about things all at once when Jesus stands in their midst.

**II. Vs. 19-23 Receive the Holy Spirit**

Vs. 19 Based upon Luke 24 it was evening when Jesus left the two disciples in Emmaus and here we see that the same evening He appears to the 10 disciples gathered together with the door lock for fear of the Jews seven miles away. The first reaction to this according to the other accounts was fear and when He should them that it was really Him their fear turned to gladness. Three times in this section Jesus greets the disciples with the customary greeting of “*Shalom*” is there anything more necessary in today world then this? This is the resurrection gift of Jesus to all those who place their continual trust in Him, PEACE. I’m so thankful that twice Jesus revealed His wounds to His disciples so that we know that this wasn’t some were hallucination that what they saw really was the risen Lord. His body still bore the marks of His sacrifice for our sin and for all eternity it will so that we will forever be reminded of His loving sacrifice on our behalf. Jesus can conquer our greatest enemy “death” and sense He can then surely He can handle everything else as well.

How did Jesus come into a room with closed doors without anyone noticing Him? Well we learn something about resurrection bodies and that is that though being physical they are not limited to the same obstacles that these bodies have. It seems to me that we can get some advantages of the resurrected body in comparison to our earth bound bodies and right off the travel seems to be made a lot easier no more waiting in lines and no more worries about leaving early.

Notice that they were gathering on the first day of the way a practice that we will notice in the book of Acts as well as it seems that the early church began to switch the day they would meet from Saturday to Sunday but here at Calvary we have both. The seventh day of the week Saturday is called the Sabbath, commemorates God’s finished work of Creation (Gen. 2:1-3). Ah but the Lord’s Day Sunday commemorates Christ’s finished work of redemption, the “*new creation*.” Someone has well noted that God the Father worked for six days and then rested and God the Son suffered on the cross for six hours and then rested.

Vs. 20-23 John tells us the main reason that He appeared to them that evening was **not** to comfort them but rather that they may receive the Holy Spirit and become **indwelt**, then in Acts they will be **immersed** in the Holy Spirit. Just before this Jesus gave them His mission for ministry:

1. ***Means*** “*As the Father has sent Me, I also send you*”: The question is, “*How did the Father send Jesus*”? Well, He sent Him but was always connected to Him so Jesus is promising just that to us. Jesus was sent into a lost world to touch the broken lives of people -- to heal, to recover, to open eyes and to set free -- so we are to go with the word of the gospel, doing the same work that Jesus was sent to do.
2. ***Method*** “*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained*.” We have the same message as He did as well the proclamation of forgiveness to all who want it. Our whole ministry is centered on setting folks free from the things that have ruined their lives. How glorious is this that we get to liberate fouls from guilt and shame?

They had heard the testimony on the women now they saw for themselves and were glad.

After offering them His peace, He reveals His presence to them, invites them to continue His mission and then breather life into them. This breathing on them was a work of recreation as Paul spoke 2 Cor. 5:17 saying “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*.” With the commission came authority to announce the good news that forgiveness is available to all who will receive Him. The flip side of that is to warn folks as did Stephen in Acts 7:51 not to “*always resist the Holy Spirit*” because in so doing people are shoving away the mercy and grace of God.

It is at this time that they received the 2nd of the threefold relationship with the Holy Spirit and that is the indwelling next in Acts they will receive the “*upon*” experience for empowerment to be His witnesses. In John 14:6 Jesus had said with regards to the Holy Spirit that He shall be “IN” them which suggests that He wasn’t at that time and here we see Him breathing on them saying to them “*Receive the Holy Spirit*”.

Now notice the curious words 21-22 as Jesus commissions them and then breathes on them and tells them to receive the Holy Spirit. These disciples were already following Jesus but they weren’t yet “*Born Again*” as He hadn’t before this died for their sins but here they become born again. Now this reminds us of the passage in Genesis 2:7 where we are told that “*the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*.” In fact this is the same word they used when they translated this passage from Hebrew to Greek. What makes this interesting is that in Acts 1:8 when Jesus said Acts 1:5 “*for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*.” So what were they baptized into? Well Jesus told them in Acts 1:8 when He declared that they would “*receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*.” The new relationship with Jesus by way of the Holy Spirit granted them the opportunity to proclaim the forgiveness to those that have repented and received Jesus.

**III. Vs. 24-29 In plain sight**

Vs. 24-26 Thomas says, “*Unless I see . . . I will not believe*” which makes him not a doubter, but an unbeliever who will not accept the valid testimony of others. Is it not interesting that John records for us Jesus victory over sickness, sin, evil men, death sorrow and now He conquers unbelief and it is the faith of Thomas that is the climax of the gospel. As much as folks malign Thomas remember that:

* He refused to say he understood when he didn’t
* He refused to pretend to believe when he didn’t
* And when he does understand and believe, he when he does believe he goes all the way by proclaiming Jesus to be both Lord and God.

Thomas is a very practical guy he is no nonsense all the way and he approaches things on that basis, I’m that way myself and so I rather appreciate it. When Thomas was faced with the possibility of death at following Jesus he said “*Alright then let’s go die with Him*”. When Jesus has said to the disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them but that they knew where He was going Thomas belted out “*No we don’t*!” Thomas won’t say he knows if he doesn’t, he won’t say he is willing to die if he isn’t and he won’t say he believes unless he does, he is a real straight shooter. Now practical, straight shooting Thomas lost seven days because he would trust Jesus at his word which is something we ought to remember if we are brought to this as I am. So for seven days 10 of the fellows was rejoicing praising God, victorious but Thomas was bummed acting as if all was lost, hopeless that’s always the price for doubt.

Why was Thomas not with the other disciples on resurrection day? What we know of him is that he was a courageous fellow. Perhaps he was out in the open while the others were hiding for fear of the Jews? At any rate when the others tell him that Jesus is alive he is persistent in his unbelief. Most call him “*Doubting Thomas*” but you will notice that Jesus doesn’t rebuke him for doubting, which suggest to us that he was not doubting instead Jesus speaks to him concerning his unbelief. The difference?

* Doubt is often an intellectual problem: We want to believe, but the faith is overwhelmed by problems and questions. Doubt says, “*I cannot believe! There are too many problems!*”
* Unbelief is a moral problem: We simply will not believe. Thomas would not believe the reports of the other Christians that Jesus Christ was alive. Verse 25 in the Greek says that they “*kept saying to him*” that they had seen the Lord Jesus Christ alive. Unbelief says, “*I will not believe unless you give me the evidence I ask for!*” In fact, in the Greek text, there is a double negative: “*I positively will not believe!*”

Thomas solution to this was to lay down conditions upon his belief and insisted Jesus prove Himself to him. He had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus, so why should he question our Lord’s own resurrection? And all of this happened to him because he was not there on the Lords day. Thomas has many twins in this I’m afraid and in fact I think we can all relate. But let’s give him credit for showing up the next week. The other ten men had told Thomas that they had seen the Lord’s hands and side so Thomas made that the test. How gracious our Lord is to stoop to our level of experience in order to lift us where we ought to be. There is no record that Thomas ever accepted the Lord’s invitation. When the time came to prove his faith, Thomas needed no more proof! Verse 29 indicates that Thomas’ testimony did not come from his touching Jesus, but from his seeing Jesus. When someone says, “*I will not believe unless*” they are already admitting that they don’t believe and what they believe is in the validity of the test or experiment which they have devised! So folks find it easier to believe in their test then the Lord so that their faith is already rooted in themselves. You see everyone has faith the only difference is what it is in.

Before we are to hard of Thomas about missing the meeting I’m afraid there are far too many Christians that don’t show up to the meeting and end up not seeing Jesus. Thomas missed church, he missed Sunday service and because of this he went through a week of doubt and despair while the others were glad. Thomas wanted the evidence to be what he wanted it to be and Jesus word was not enough.

The Jesus tells us in Matthew 18:20 that “where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” So in a real sense when we get together in Jesus name on Saturday’s, Sunday’s, Mondays and Wednesday’s to worship Him and open up His word to hear from Him He is right here with us. Folks can say well I can stay at home and worship Jesus but notice that Jesus didn’t show up where Thomas was as, no He made Thomas come back and gather together where the rest of the believers were together. Thomas has always had the rap of being called doubting Thomas but few realize that it was Thomas who said in John 11:16 “*Let us also go, that we may die with Him*.” Thomas was a fellow who was willing to go for it and while all the other fellows were huddled together in a room with locked doors “for fear of the Jews” (verse 19) Thomas was out in the open boldly walking around. Oh he may of wanted to make sure of the resurrection but don’t associate that with him of not being willing to stand up for Jesus. Isn’t it great that the other disciples went out and found Thomas to tell Him about seeing Jesus? Folks that is what evangelism is truly all about “*people who have regularly been in the presence of Jesus telling other who haven’t that they have seen and been with Jesus*”. All the more important that you and I spend time together hanging out in His name so that He will be in our midst. Thomas had shattered expectations the person who he followed was dead and he didn’t want to again trust as he was afraid that his hopes might be shattered again. Hey, friend’s does that sound a bit familiar too you? Have you pulled back afraid to dream any more because you don’t want to be disappointed? Don’t give up for Jesus sake remember what Paul wrote in Ephes. 3:20 “*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*” Seeing that it was 8 days later that Jesus appeared to them again and wonder if they drug Thomas around with them to make sure he didn’t miss seeing Jesus the next time He showed up. Saint’s sometimes that’s what it takes for us just keep hanging around those who are hurting and have lost hope and sooner or latter the Lord will show up and reveal Himself to them.

Vs. 27-29 Pay attention folks to what Jesus says here to Thomas in verse 27 “*Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side*.” Now go back a few verses to verse 25 and remember that Thomas said those words when he was with the other disciples but you may have noticed that there was no mention of Jesus being there when Thomas said them but here we see a powerful truth that Jesus was there all along. **Friends doubt and a lack of trust doesn’t keep Jesus from us it keeps us from seeing Jesus!** Thus Jesus’ word’s was to all of them, “*Do not be unbelieving, but believing.*” What a great word not only for the Thomas out there but for all of us gathered together in His name and that is that even when we don’t sense His presence, even during our times of doubt He is right next to us. Open your hearts to Him He is here, He is as close as your breath to you. Now notice Thomas’ conclusion as he said, “*My Lord and My God*!” I suggest to you that it was not only the physical evidence that caused that affirmation but rather when Thomas realized that when he had said those words Jesus was there. There are those who say that Jesus isn’t God and that He never accepted worship but you notice here that Jesus didn’t say, “Knock it off Thomas, I’m a man just like you, I’m an angel not God!” No he went on to admonish Thomas for coming to the right conclusions albeit through sight and not trusting His word.

Vs. 30-31 John concludes the book with a summery and then in chapter 21 he will give us an epilog. The first thing John admits is that his account is incomplete, he makes no statement that this was a full account of all Jesus did and said instead he asserts that it was incomplete deliberately so that it would fulfill his purpose. And that purpose is that the reader would believe and that in believing they would gain life in Jesus name. On my book shelves are many biographies and in them is all the information one can gather because when someone has died that is all that remains of them is the memories. Ah but when someone writes about a living person it is only to introduce one’s readers to Him and the rest will be discovered in a personal relationship with Jesus which will continue on throughout eternity.

 Finally along that same thought John reminds us that he has only given us a small taste of all the evidence that points to Jesus but what he gave us is ample proof that Jesus is who He claimed to be. Further more that the evidence if believed will lead to “*life in His name*”. So how about it are you ready for life, tired of walking around void of life unable to see that Jesus is right next to you hearing your every word knowing your every thought, desiring to carry your burdens? So why not right now this very moment “*believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God*”. John wrote those words 70 years after the events and nothing had changed his position, he gained no financial reward for this, he got no royalties from his book yet with this simple truth he let’s us in on the greatest opportunity any person will ever have and that is to become a child of God. Anybody who will believe it, and ask him to enter his life, will receive life:

* Life that masters sin
* Life that issues in peace
* Life that produces the beauty of holiness

**The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**c. 21:1-25 The commission**

**John 21:1-14**

**“Fishers of men”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-3 Fishermen**

**III. Vs. 4-9 My Boy’s**

**IV. Vs. 10-14 Full net ministry**

**I. Intro.**

We now move into what I call the epilogue to the gospel of John which by definition rounds out and concludes John’s gospel. John finished up the 20th chapter by saying, “*Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these 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*.” Which seems to be a natural place to end the book but John prompted by the Holy Spirit moves on to include one more story which took place off the shore of the Sea of Galilee. But why this story? I mean when you consider the other gospel accounts Matthew concludes with the “*Commission*” Luke with the “*Ascension*” and Mark includes both of these but John uses neither. John’s focus is not the on:

* Jesus’ “***ascension***”
* Nor upon the disciples’ “***commission***”
* But rather on the believers “***restoration***”.

It is important to realize that the epilogue was not written to prove the resurrection as John has already established this in the 20th chapter. I rather think that the 21st chapter was placed here to reveal the practical aspects that the resurrection has on saved individuals which is to continually restore us to usefulness in spite of our failures. And in this one story of an impromptu gathering at the Sea of Galilee which none of the other gospel’s records John gives us Jesus’ threefold restoration of these seven fellows to be:

1. Vs. 1-14 **Fishers of men**

2. Vs. 15-19 **Shepherds of the flock**

3. Vs. 20-25 **Followers of Christ**

John also seems to have two side aims:

1. That some how Peter had never been restored and this story reveals that Peter had very much been restored.
2. Second based upon verses 22-23 that some how John wouldn’t die until the Lord returned and being that at this writing John was in his 90’s there were some looking at John saying man the Lord is coming back in minute and John set’s the record straight.

**II. Vs. 1-3 Fishermen**

Vs. 1 The key to this chapter then is to be found in the very first verse where we are told by John that “*in this* ***way*** *He showed Himself*” or as some have put it “*Jesus shone forth*”.

Jesus wasn’t playing “***hide and go seek***” with these disciples He continually wanted to make Himself visible to them but in ways that would transform them. Friends that ought to be the desire of our hearts when ever we gather together, whenever we approach His throne of grace in prayer whenever we open His word, “*Lord show your self to me and if there be anything in my heart or life that would limit my vision of You remove it*”.

I’m very aware as a teacher of God’s Word that I could very easily be an obstruction rather than a window with regards to you seeing Jesus. Every time when someone tells me that the illustration was funny or the story was good I ask the Lord to forgive me because I blocked His view. Oh how wonderful that Jesus desires to show Himself to us again today right now at this very moment in your life.

Vs. 2 Apparently 7 of the 11 remaining disciples were fishermen one would think that Jesus would choose His followers from the ranks of academia or communicators so as to better present Him to a needy world but instead He chose fishermen.

* Those who by profession had to know how to navigate through difficult circumstances.
* Those who had to preserver through times of disappointment.
* Those who knew the value of team work and could take orders as well as give them.
* Those whose very profession required above everything else patience.

Come to think of it sounds like the perfect profession in which to gather folks to reach the world for Jesus.

But hold on a minute as true as those examples are we are told in Matthew 28:10 prior to this while still in Jerusalem Jesus had told them to“*Go and tell My brethren* ***to go to Galilee****, and there* ***they will see Me***.” Then in Matthew 28:16 we are told that “*the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to* ***the mountain*** *which Jesus had appointed for them*.” ***The Mountain not the beach,*** apparently 4 of them stayed where Jesus had told them while seven of them decided to kill some time by the Sea fishing. John records the identities of five of them but leave out the names of the other two and I kind of think that the Holy Spirit prompted John to do that so that we could see that at times we are like those two unnamed fellows who were suppose to be waiting on the mountain instead of fishing at the beach.

Have you ever noticed that the hardest thing to do in our Christian life is **WAIT**, to hang out where it is appointed for us? **Some folks are hanging out in a tough job, some are waiting through a difficult marriage, others have lingered through the height of despair do to illness but there they sit because Jesus has appointed the mountain for them to wait.** Listen carefully to Paul in 2 Cor. 12:9-10 where He said, “*Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong*.” How is that possible you ask? Well in this same verse Paul repeated the words of Jesus to his mountain top experience saying, “***My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*.**”

In Acts chapter one Jesus will again command them not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father. I wonder how many times because we refused to wait that we missed the promise of the Father. “*Oh Jesus*”, we say, “*I didn’t travel very far away I only went back and did what I knew to do*!” I rather think that these fellows learned their lesson as the next time Jesus said not to depart they didn’t even though He blessed them. One other observation before we get to far into the text, interesting to me that Jesus knew right where to find these seven and in fact already had breakfast waiting. Oh we may not much like waiting but aren’t you glad that our Lord is long suffering towards us?

Vs. 3 Back in Mark 1:16-18 as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea and He said to them, “*Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men*.” And we are told that “*They immediately left their nets and followed Him*.” Three years later they leave the Lord for their nets and go away from their calling to be “*fishers of men*” and go back to being just fishermen. These fellows were restless they didn’t know what the future would hold for them so Jesus is going to reveal to them Who holds the future.

Peter said, “*I am going fishing*.” And they said to him, “*We are going with you also*.” The problem with going off and doing your own thing is at times it can influence others as well. There are three things that are very picturesque to me in this story:

1. “*They went out and immediately got into the boat*”: I have always noticed that when I choose to go back and do my own thing instead of waiting on the mountain where the Lord told me that there will always be a “*boat immediately*” available to take me back. Sometimes we even think because there is something waiting for us to take us back it is a sign that we should disobey and not wait where the Lord told us.
2. “*And that night*”: Fishermen used torches to attract the fish to the boat and then netted them. But although they were expert fishermen, the disciples had labored throughout the night and had caught nothing. It is always a dark and unproductive time in our lives when we chose not to wait on the Lord and instead choose to go back to doing what we used to do.
3. *“They caught nothing*”: Finally, (*and this is important friends*), when we aren’t obedient even though we will find everything necessary to take us back to where we used to be we will never find it productive in our lives. These fellows haven’t been fishing for several years and you got to wonder what the long night might have brought them with regards to grumbling about not catching anything.

That must have been a rather unusual experience for them. Yet as this account makes clear, it was the Lord's intention that they catch nothing. Failure is often the only test by which the real worth and quality of a man or woman can be tried. It is in failure that a man begins to think, to wonder where his failure comes from, to look around and seek the reasons, to put into his work watchfulness as well as energy, and to look upwards to Him who can turn failure into a glorious achievement.

**III. Vs. 4-9 My Boy’s**

Vs. 4-5 You got to give it to Peter and the boys as they left at night and stayed until morning even though they caught nothing. Now one would have expected Jesus to cause a wave to come and tip the boat over just to show them that they were all wet for not staying and waiting. But that is not what we see instead we see Him on the shore lending encouragement, offering instruction, preparing a warm place to gather and food to eat. In fact in the 5th verse Jesus calls out to them from the shore but He doesn’t call out to them saying, “*Hey you bunch of losers, you dopes, who told you to go fishing*?” No instead the Greek word rendered “*Children*” is literally “***My Boy’s***”, these fellows who wouldn’t follow orders, couldn’t wait on a hill for Him to show up hear words of extreme devotion and security. Now when Jesus asks this question in versed 4 in the Greek it is, “*My, Boy’s you don’t have food do you*?” And you can bet that their answer in verse 5 was a frustrated fisherman’s NO, “*What’s it too you*, c*ame close, should of seen the one that got away, they were bighting all night, Peter was a bit rusty and didn’t guide us to the right spot*” kind of NO.

Hey friends pay attention, **Jesus doesn’t reward our disobedience but He does love those that disobey**. Even more amazing to me is the response of the Boy’s on the boat when asked if they caught anything, “**NO**” was their answer. I love the honesty from the fellows as **they didn’t attempt to justify their disobedience by miss stating the fruitfulness of their endeavor**.

Vs. 6 Even more remarkable than being honest about fishing and the lack of success is to take advice from someone one the shore who isn’t fishing. There are those that try to say that Jesus instruction here was a cultural thing seeing that He was only 300 feet from them that He was a fish spotter but their reaction does not indicate this.

Imagine being out on a stream fly fishing casting back and forth trying different fly’s and spots in the river but you haven’t caught anything all day not even a bite. And some fellow stands on the shore and tells you to cast with your left hand, what would you think? “*Oh, man I never thought of that, what difference does it make*?” That’s the picture here as they had been out all night tossing the net on this side then on that side hour after hour and not one fish in the net. Then you hear “Haven’t caught anything have you?” And now you wait for the EXPERT advice that no one wants to hear in the midst of failure **do again what you have been doing all night only this time from the right side of the boat,** “*Oh, really like we never thought of that!*”. Yet amazingly to me Jesus’ boys do just what He told them to do.

So why did Jesus say to cast the net on the right side of the boat? Well because any side Jesus tells you to cast the net is the right side of the boat. Do the same things you have been doing in the same place and “*You shall find some*”. Are we willing to listen to Jesus in the area we are most experienced in? Finally notice that it say’s that they “**were *not able*** *to draw it in*”, Oh mark this dear saints as this is a key phrase had they only realized this sooner before they went out that night fished they would have caught them earlier. Think about this the next time you’ve been out for a long time toiling, casting you’re net of this side and on that and you are coming to shore ready to quit when success was only a boat width away if you were only willing to obey the word of the Lord. How do you find success? It’s simple friend just do what the Lord has to say if He say’s wait on the mountain tell I meet you then wait on the mountain, if He say’s cast your net on the right side then cast it on the right side. Remember back in Luke 5:5 where the Lord told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his net and Peter replied, “*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net*.” Friend’s success is only three feet of obedience away remember that and when we obey we will be fishing from the right side of the boat. Now when these fellows fished all night in their own strength and understanding they were unfruitful but when they fished at the direction of the Lord they caught a boat load. Now what this suggests is that we can be involved in an activity in our wisdom and experience and see no fruit in it and do the same thing in obedience to the Lord and in the energy and power of the Spirit and see fruitfulness. Hey saint’s sometimes the lack of fruit is not in ***what*** and ***where*** we have been fishing but rather at **whose direction and whose power**!

Vs. 7 **Folks we can be sincerely believing that we are doing God’s will but if we serve without the direction from the Lord we cannot expect blessing from the Lord**. They had forgotten the Lord’s words of John 15:5 “*For without Me, ye can do nothing*”.

Isn’t it interesting that it was the fruitfulness of work that caused them to recognize the Lord was the One behind it. “*It’s the Lord*” cried John and Peter who had been stripped down to his underroos for work grabbed his clothes and jumped in. Isn’t that a great picture, Peter all dressed for work toiling working hard at it and nothing but when he obeys the word of the Lord in his life fruitfulness and he grabs his clothes to go hang out with the Lord. That is the key friends obey the Lord’s word and just hang out with Him and you will catch a boat load.

Vs. 8-9 All night long those seven were looking for fish all the while the Lord had some on the Barbie with fresh bread just waiting to bless them if they would only show up. They couldn’t wait for Him but there He was waiting for them, that’s just the kind of Lord Jesus is. When ever you see the nets so full that you can’t draw them in you know it was the Lord’s work and not your own. Again notice impetuous Peter who can’t wait to get the boat a shore and instead jumps into the sea to get to Jesus faster. Let me just add here that I think there is a big difference in Peter; **first he wasn’t willing to wait for the Lord and here he can’t wait to draw near the Lord**. Peter didn’t care about the catch of fish that the Lord gave them where as the other 6 wasn’t about to leave it behind. Obeying Jesus instructions tells us all that, “*You may have had a bad night and caught nothing but when you obey His word He can give you a blessed morning*.” If it was dead fish they wanted obeying Him would grant that and likewise if their aim was to catch dead men and see them come alive in Christ obeying Him would grant that as well.

**IV. Vs. 10-14 Full net ministry**

Vs. 10-11 The only other place where you will read the phrase “*fire of coals*” is in John 18:18 when Peter stood by the fire of coals of the world and warmed himself, so I rather think that the fish and the bread weren’t the only thing cooking that morning.

As some of the fish were roasting on the fire Jesus invites the boy’s to add to what He had already supplied. What is interesting is that in verse 6 there were so many fish in the net that the 7 of them couldn’t drag the net on board but Peter at the word of the Lord could do what the 7 of them couldn’t do combined and that is bring to shore the fish that had been caught. Amazing to realize that **what seven couldn’t do in their own strength one could do in the strength of the Lord**. There are two significant details in this story that John tells us:

1. **One hundred fifty three fish**: Not a hundred and fifty but the exact count 153 large fish. There are many differing opinion as to the significance of the count of 153 fish other than the fact that they counted. The most intriguing to me is that it was widely taught by the Greeks that there were only 153 species of fish, thus the idea that the gospel when directed and empowered by the Lord will catch all people in the net of His love and none will be lost. But what this speaks to me is that these fishermen counted the catch they knew what the Lord had done, this wasn’t just some fish story; no John lets us in on the fact that he counted those fish. And so does the Lord, He counts each of us that He has caught and you know what that means? Well it means that “***WE COUNT***”, some of the time we think that we are under the size limit that we don’t much measure up to the “***big fish***” but the truth is we are all apart of His catch and everything done in obedience to His name will be apart of the same catch.
2. **The net was not broken**: Back in that Luke passage I quoted above we are told in verse 6 that “*they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.*” But not here and I find this wonderful that those whom the Lord places in the net none will be lost all will come to shore.

Vs. 12-14 Three times in the John we read that Jesus word “come”:

* + John 1:39 where Jesus says, “*Come and see*”
	+ John 7:37 where Jesus says, “*Come to Me and drink*”
	+ John 21:12 where Jesus says, “*Come and eat*”

And I think that this sums up the ministry of the Word of God to people as first they just come to see to check it out. Then having done so they find that the Word quenches what their souls long for as nothing satisfies our hearts desire like His word. Finally we will desire more then an occasional drink to quench our thirst we will desire to feast upon the meal of the word of God on a daily basis, having a three coarse meal each and every time we open our Bibles.

 A fisherman catches living fish, but when he gets them, they die. A fisher of men catches “dead fish” (dead in their sins), and when they are caught they are made alive in Christ! The difference between and ***empty net*** ministry and a ***full net*** ministry is between **self sufficiency** and **Christ sufficiency**, the difference between **thinking we know what we are doing** and **knowing that He alone knows what He is doing**.

 **The Gospel of John**

**“The Portrait of Perfection”**

**IV. 18:1-21:25 Complete picture**

**c. 21:1-25 The commission**

**John 21:15-25**

**“Shepherds and Followers”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 15-19 My Sheep**

**III. Vs. 20-25 Follow Me**

**I. Intro.**

Last week we started this final chapter of John with a look at the first of the threefold division of this chapter verses 1-14 where Jesus restored Peter to being a **Fishers of men**. Now we move to the final two division’s verses 15-19 **Shepherds of the flock** and verses 20-25 **Followers of Christ**. Of primary focus is still Peter who’s favorite bumper sticker probable would have been “***Ready, fire, aim!***” as it always seems to take him three times to get it and I think I’m very much a Peter kind of guy myself.

The lesson of this section has to do not only our calling in life but our success in it. The value of the individual is never to be found the persons personality or his presence but rather in his relationships with others and Peter is about to hear that from the Lord. He had thought that his personality, his presence was superior then the other men who walked after Jesus but he found that his dynamic personality and fortitude was not enough to keep him form denying his relationship with the one who loved him. There is a great mystery that every person must face and that is only in self denial and obedience to Jesus do we really discover our true personality.

**II. Vs. 15-19 My Sheep**

Vs. 15 Now after breakfast Jesus questions Peter’s heart and specifically what he loves. There are four words for love in the Greek:

1. Storge: Which is the affection one feels for a puppy
2. Eros: Which is a sexual kind of affection
3. Phileo: Which is a brotherly kind of affection
4. Agape: Which is the kind of love that gives without ever expecting anything in return

The word Jesus uses here is the word “agapao” which unconditional love. The type of love Jesus of in verse 15 is defined for us in 1 Cor. 13:4-8 where Paul would write, “*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails*.” Paul further describes how this “*love*” operates in Galatians 5:22 saying that “*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness*”. So when Jesus said this to Peter this was what He was saying to Peter, “*Do you suffer long towards Me, Peter*?” “*Are you bearing all things*?” “*Is your love for Me Peter, visible in joy, patience, kindness, goodness and faithfulness*”? “*Or are there other things choking out this love in your life*?” The first commandment in Exodus 20:3 is “*You shall have no other gods before Me.*” Oh how many times we have broken that commandment and how many times the god we have placed before Him is none other than ourselves. In Matthew 22:37 Jesus quoted Deut 6:4-5 by saying, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*.”

So what are the “*these*” in your life what part of your life has been come a distraction to loving Him with all your hear, with all your soul, and all your mind? No wonder Peter’s response was I have a brotherly relationship towards you. “*I admire you Jesus, I look up too You Lord, I respect you and am very found of You.*” And as wonderful as those affirmations are towards Jesus it is not the same as 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5:22. If we love Jesus then we will love what He loves and what He loves is His flock, His brothers and sisters and therefore we won’t be first considering how something benefits us we will be thinking sacrificially on how it will bless our brothers and sisters. Notice that Jesus didn’t say take care of YOUR lambs but rather they are Jesus’ lambs. Apparently Peter caught this as in his letter in 1 Peter 5:1-4 he admonishes “*The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away*.”

Another question mark of the passage though is just what Jesus meant by the word **these**?

1. There are those who believe that Jesus is referencing the other disciples and this has some scriptural backing. Peter had always thought that his love was more pure than the other disciples. In Mark 14:29 just prior to his denial he said to Jesus, “*Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.*” So perhaps Jesus was asking, “*Do you still think that your love for me is perfect, better than everyone else’s*?” Friend’s this is a good word us not to find our security based upon our relationship to Jesus but rather upon His Love and devotion towards us. Simply put our security must not rest upon us never leaving or forsaking Him but rather upon the truth of Hebrews 13:5 “*He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.*”
2. The second possibility is that Jesus is referencing the 153 fish the boat and the net. If that is the case than Jesus is asking Peter what He is devoted more towards Him or his fishing career.

I believe both are appropriate questions to ask ourselves: What masters our heart, what’s the great passion of our lives? Do we recognize that what sets us apart isn’t what we do for God, it isn’t our works compared to others. I’m afraid that our flesh is always on a continual quest for significance, something that we can claim before others that makes us lovable. Either way we take Jesus’ question it is the same point, “*Do you still think that there is something qualitatively or quantitatively superior about you*?” “*Or is what makes you special centered in and rooted on that I love you*?”, Jesus asks. What you ask most folks if they believe in heaven they say yes and if you ask them if they are going to go to heaven they reply yes and the reason they say is that they are a good person, which makes their qualification based upon something within them.

 “*Are you devoted to me*”, twice Jesus asks Peter to which Peter replies Lord you know I’m found of you. Peter answers in the informative but what is interesting is that he changes the word for God’s love to brotherly love or friendship. In other words Peter says, “*You know I have a brotherly love but it obviously isn’t perfect love*.” To which Jesus replies “*Guide my little lambs to pasture*”. Interesting that with Peter’s honesty came a call to service to get involved guiding little ones to good grazing land, that’s the word Jesus uses for feed as it means to shepherd. Many folks don’t think themselves equipped enough to pastor a church but listen up parents you all ready are shepherds of your children.

Every week you hear us announce an opportunity to serve in children’s ministry but **I’m afraid that far to many folks hear that as a *need* and not an *opportunity***. You see if you want to grow closer to Jesus then be involved in guiding little ones into green pastures and you will grow along the way. Parents it’s the best way to instill Jesus into the lives of your children to volunteer once a month, once a week in their class. You think oh if I do I’ll miss out on the service my self, no you won’t because you will be digging into the study prepare to teach your children. Right now if you hear God tugging on your heart about this don’t let this opportunity go by it will change your life and the life of your child.

Vs. 16-17 Do you love Me more than these fish, more than these other men? I believe both of these have application in our lives. Friends we must not judge our relationship to the Lord upon other people but rather upon the condition of our own heart. Peter in his reply makes no reference to the others as he had prior. In the garden Peter felt that the best way to demonstrate his devotion was to assault Jesus enemies and here he learns the best way to demonstrate his devotion is to feed and care for the Lord’s sheep. Jesus will issue these challenges to Peter:

* Feed **My** lambs
* Shepherded **My** sheep
* Feed **My** sheep

The first thing that stands out is what each of these three challenges have in common and that is in each case what Peter is being challenged with is a stewardship not ownership, the task may change and the age of the sheep may differ but the ownership never does. The sheep, the lambs they belong to the “*Good Shepherd*” and we must never forget this as we shall give an account. Therefore the care of them must be in the same manor by which He cared for them and we are told them in John 10:15 “*As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and* ***I lay down My life for the sheep***.” “*Peter, this isn’t going to be about you any longer, it is going to be about you caring for those I’ve given you and as such you will lay down your life for My sheep as I have.*” It had been only a few years earlier when Jesus stood on a hill over looking this very spot as Mark records for us in 6:34 that “*Jesus saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*” Those that Jesus has taken in need to be cared for, guided, feed and loved no longer could Peter cast a net and haul in live fish and watch them die, it was he that was going to need to die to self that the sheep may flourish.

Three aspects of feeding are suggested here:

1. “*Feed my lambs*”: Teach the children. Do not wait for them to grow up. Teach children from the Word what life is all about.
2. “Shepherd my sheep”: The word means, watch over them, and guard them. In Peter's first letter he says to the elders to whom he is writing, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, watching out for them,” (1 Peter 5:2). Try to discern where they are at, apprehend the coming dangers, warn and guard them. That is the work of a shepherd.
3. “Feed my sheep, my grown-up ones”: The instrument of feeding, of course, is the teaching of the Word of God. Open their minds to the thoughts of God.

Someone has well said, “*People are not thinking the thoughts of God, not looking at life the way God sees it, but following blindly after the fantasies and the illusions of the world. What is necessary is the unfolding of the mind of God in obedience to the word of Jesus: "****Teach the word****." The weakness of the church flows from a famine of the Word of God*.”

The personal qualifications for such a stewardship is:

* “*Do you love Me*”: Asked three times which suggests “Devotion to the Good Shepherded”.
* “*Feed, tend, My lambs and sheep*”: Again repeated three times thought varying ways it suggests that there must be “Denial of self both towards others as well as interests”.
* “Follow Me”: And here we see that to do so is not just once in a while it will be a continue call and will require “Discipline to continue doing so to the very end”.

Vs. 18-19 Peter never lacked the conviction when he was young what he lacked was the commitment and as he grew in the grace and knowledge of Jesus his commitment grew to his conviction which lead Peter to the cross. When Peter was young in the Lord he was prone to being carried away, ah but as he grew in his relationship with Jesus he would be carried off because of his commitment. What John comments on is that Jesus words were a manual on how to tend and feed the sheep and that is that you are going to have to die to self. The Lord doesn’t tell us that once we give our lives to Him that everything is going to work out up to our expectations; no H says, “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*.” (Matthew 16:24) Job cried in Job 13:15 “*Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him*.” The word “Follow Me” can be rendered “Travel with Me” and in saying this Jesus is revealing to Peter and us that we are called to travel with Him not blaze a new trail. “*Peter, join Me on the journey that will take you to wonderful places where you will witness indescribable beauty in transformed people*”.

Eusebius, the church historian tells us that when Peter went to Rome at the close of his life he was finally imprisoned, his hands were bound and he was led out to the place of execution, and there he was crucified. At his own request he was crucified upside down because he did not feel he was worthy to share the manner of his Lord's death. Peter’s life that was once filled with ***self assurance*** would be characterized by ***self denial,*** which is best understood by Jesus’ words “***follow Me***”. It ought to serve as a contrast to what we are so prone to see in the Church today which seems to be geared around the members instead of around ministry of service to one another. Are we truly following Jesus if we aren’t walking the same direction that He did?

**III. Vs. 20-25 Follow Me**

Vs. 20-23 Here we have the problem of rivalry and competition in the church. Jesus says we do not have to worry about what others are doing, but to be faithful to what God has given us to do; he will put it all together. The church has followed the world in this regard, competing and struggling within itself, thereby diminishing its message, and often destroying its effectiveness. Yet with the call to adventure still in the ear of Peter he speaks out, “*But this one what*?” is the literal translation and it is apparent that Peter just didn’t get John they were so opposite. Jesus called Peter to travel with Him and Peter wants to know if John is going to be on the journey as well. What does it matter who travels along with us as long as we are going with You Jesus! We must not look at one another and ask, "*Lord, what do you want to do with him*?" Jesus' word is, "*That is none of your business. Follow me. I will put it all together.*" How simple, how beautiful that is! How effective the church would become if we would but return to it. I’m afraid that far too much of our focus is upon the Lord’s other servants and not enough upon ourselves.

I wonder how John thought of those words years later as he would face death many times before finally exiled. According to Iranius what was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John. We John stayed ministering for a season in Jerusalem then traveled through out the Roman empire finally landing in Rome where the enemies of the gospel tried to poison him but he survived. Caesar Nero then placed him into a cauldron of boiling oil and although his skin was badly burned he still didn’t die. So in frustration Nero sent him to the Island of Patmos a Greek Island which where they sent the worst prisoners and there he stayed for 18 months and right below the temple of Diana in a cave God gave him the further unveiling of Jesus. Peter says, “*What about him*” Jesus says, “*What’s that to you*?” and John looks back at that day and say’s “*Peter do you want to trade*?” We are all prone to thinking that we are getting the short end on the stick of life aren’t we? But the fact is John suffered far more for far longer in Christ than did Peter. For the most part we have no idea what it is to live in someone’s else’s world and what I have come to believe is that Jesus has placed me in the right place for He alone knows what is best for me. If you go back to Matthew chapter 4 and analyze Jesus’ call to follow Him to both John and Peter it is rather interesting:

* 1. Vs.18 Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee and saw Peter, “*casting a net into the sea*”. That is an apt description for Peter he is a net caster his heart is always towards gathering people for the kingdom, that’s evangelism isn’t it.
	2. Vs. 21 Then we read that Jesus saw the two sons of Zebedee, and John was “*in the boat mending their nets*” when He called them. Again what a great description of the heart of John as he seems to have heart to make sure that none that are caught fall through the holes in the net.

Why do I bring this up? Well only as a way of understanding why the Lord deals with His children differently, because we are different. You may thinking you are being **crucified** while the other person is **cruising** along but the truth is cruising may be far more difficult than we can imagine. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 10:13 “*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it*.” When we are before the throne of God we will discover that we all had our moments where life became unbearable and it was then that we realized that we can entrust our life to the One who has already bore our sins on Calvary. So remember that Jesus says, don’t compare just follow Me.

Vs. 24-25 Jesus words and works have no end and it is our privilege to see that they continue as we “follow” Him. John adds that the roomer that had circulated that Jesus words to Peter amounted to a prophecy that he wouldn’t die was not what Jesus was saying to Peter but rather Jesus was speak by way of illustration.