

## Sermon- Why was John written?

Scripture: John 20:30-31

Sunday, February 28, 2021

Last week we looked at Jesus' second encounter with the disciples, all the remaining 11 of them including Thomas. We also looked at the coming to faith of Apostle Thomas who has the reputation of being a "realist". He wanted to see and understand for himself and not assume things or believe something blindly because others were believing it. He wanted to process the information carefully and thoroughly. And when he did, there was no going back for him. He declared Jesus as His Lord and His God. And we know that he went to the ends of the earth preaching the Good News and we even believe He was martyred in India. Jesus then gives a doxology "blessed are those who will believe without seeing". I explained that Jesus was not saying, blessed are those who will believe without investigating. And then the book ends.

After this, we get a tightly worded note from the author. ***"The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may continue to believe<sup>d</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name."***

So the author is saying, whatever was recorded in this book has been recorded so that you will continue to believe who Jesus is and in believing you will have life by the power of His name. So there are three big sections here that I want to address. The first is "what has been recorded in this book". The second is what does he mean by "continue to believe" and thirdly, what is the life impact for those who believe.

Let's start at the beginning. These are recorded. Well in the 20 chapters of John we have gone through quite a journey. Our journey through the Gospel of John started on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, 6 years ago, believe it or not! A little less than a year later in June of 2017, I felt no longer able to continue the John series and had to pause it and go to other passages and I did a number of mini-series. I restarted John then in the beginning of 2019. And today we are coming to the end.

Since I don't expect you to remember everything I shared in our 6 year journey through the Gospel of John, I don't expect you to remember what it means when the "beloved disciple" says, "these things were written". So let me give you a quick summary.

The book opened with the prologue in poetry form describing God and Jesus. It starts by describing God and His Word as both separate and unified. And then it goes on to say that the Word became a person and dwelt among his people. And that person was Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ was the Son of God. And that meant that the One true God that the Jews always believed in consists of a Father and a Son. Then John the Baptist, identifies the Son, Jesus as the Lamb of God who was to come to take away the sins of the world. With that he baptizes Jesus. Then Jesus is ready to start his ministry. And the first thing he does is he chooses his disciples. Now in the process of choosing his disciples, these disciples call him my different titles, Son of God, Rabbi, Son of Man, Messiah, King of Israel. When you count the titles, you find that there are 7 in all.

Then Jesus goes on to do many signs, but each sign included is very strategically chosen like every other element in this Gospel by the "beloved disciple".

First he teaches something about himself using four important Jewish institutions. He turns water into wine, at the wedding at Cana, redefining Jewish marriage. Then the temple cleansing, where he redefines the true temple as His body, then the meeting with the Rabbi, where he becomes a teacher to the Rabbis, and finally the Samaritan

women at the sacred well where he presents himself as the “living water” that can give eternal life.

After tackling the Jewish institutions, the beloved disciple describes what Jesus does during four of the most important Jewish festivals. He heals the paralytic on the Sabbath, communicating that he is one with the Father and the Lord of the Sabbath. Then he feeds the 12000 at Passover, communicating that he is the Bread of life, After that he uses the festival of Tabernacles to communicate that he is the Light of the World and finally he uses the festival of the Hannukah, to proclaim that the Father and he are One.

Then he does one big sign, raising his friend Lazarus from death but in doing so, he becomes too big to ignore and it gets him a death warrant from Paul. That got us to chapter 11.

Chapter 12-19 are considered an extended passion narrative. It starts with teaching his disciples at the last supper where he washes their feet and then reveals the Great Commandment, “Love one another as I have loved you”.

The next four chapters he talks about his going away but how his going away was a required step before His Father and He could send the Holy Spirit, who will empower his followers to carry out the mission He gave them. In chap 16 He also warns them of the opposition that will come from the spirit of this world. The silver lining is found though in verse 33 where he says, “take heart, because I have overcome the world”.

Now by the time Jesus gets to the cross, Jesus has presented 7, I AM sayings. Along with that you also get 7 instances where Jesus uses, I AM in his speaking. Incidentally, no Jew would use the phrase, “I am” in their regular speaking because they knew that I AM was the name of God as revealed to Moses in the burning bush.

By the time you get to Jesus' resurrection, it is also the 7<sup>th</sup> sign miracle that Jesus has done.

That brings us all the way to chapter 20 with the three resurrection appearances, first to Mary, then to the 10 and finally the 11 including Thomas.

This is the most carefully and thoughtfully curated account of the things that Jesus did. It started with 7 titles given to him by his disciples at the beginning of their walk with Him, followed by 4 teaching segments using 4 Jewish institutions, then another 4 teaching segments using 4 Jewish festivals, then 7 I AM sayings, 7 instances of Jesus using the phrase "I AM", and in the midst of that are woven 7 sign miracles culminating in the grandest sign miracle of all, His own resurrection from the grave. 20 chapters of material, 90% of it found in no other Gospel. But all of it chosen in divinely inspired meaning segments put together for one purpose. These are the things that were written and only God could have inspired such writing.

Why, were they written? It says so that you may continue to believe who Jesus is. Do you know of any instance where people believe and then get shaky on their belief along the way? It happens to all of us isn't it? Kind of like this. You believe that God is the savior and Lord on day 1 of your journey. Jesus' disciples gave him 7 titles when they started following him. But the journey takes many unexpected turns. And the thousands who were following Jesus dwindled to the 11 men and the core group of women. When your faith in Christ collides with the tests thrown at you, be it health or finances or the difficult people and you think that if God is there or is worth following when you think your prayers are not being answered or you think that Christ does not care then the belief that you once had could be shaken.

Now there is no one in the world you have not seen all the ups and downs that a disciple goes through then the beloved disciple. You know why? Because all of them except him because every single one of them died following Jesus. He was the only one kept alive

for one purpose only. To write this account. So the beloved disciple is hoping that when you and I go through moments of wondering and wavering, that we will dive into this Gospel and continue to believe.

One more thing. When you ponder the things that Jesus did and who He is and the meaning that comes through just by the way the account is written this Gospel says, not only will you be able to continue believing, but you will experience a power in your life that comes to you through the name of Jesus. Guess what? Apostle Paul said the same thing in Ephesians chapter one. There in verse 19 and 20 says this, ***“I also pray that you will understand the incredible power of God for us who believe. This is the same power that rose Christ from the grave and seated him at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly realms”***.

He goes on to say, ***“And now he is above all rulers, and authorities and powers and leaders and anything else in this world and in the world to come. At the right time God put all things under Christ, He made Christ head of all things for the benefit of the church. The church is his body, it is made full and complete by Christ who fills all things everywhere with Himself”***.

If that my friends is the power of Christ, and is all the apostles have been praying that the followers who will come after them will recognize, and realize and then utilize this power of Christ’s name, there must be something to it don’t you thing so? That is why the entire Gospel of John will all its beautiful construction comes down to this one thing. And in the end, its readers would recognize the power of the name of Jesus.

I hope each of us, in the rough moments and low moments of our life will remember to go to this Gospel and walk as the first disciples did with Jesus and renew your love for Him, strengthen your faith and be empowered to fulfill the tasks he has given to each one of us no matter where in life we are. Let us pray.

