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Lord's Day Morning
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#119

"The Testimony Complete" John 21:24-25

Introduction

Not quite four years ago we set out on a quest together to study the Gospel of John. 119 sermons later we reach the end. In that first sermon we noted the uniqueness of John's gospel. *In John's writing (we discovered) there is no recording of the birth of Jesus; no telling of his baptism, no specific account of the Lord's Supper, nothing about the ascension and no parables. But also in this book we (found) stories that no other gospel writer recorded. We (discovered) the story of Jesus' first miracle of turning the water into wine at the wedding of Cana. We learn(ed) the phrase 'born again' and were told about Nicodemus. Here (we learned of) the amazing interaction between Jesus and the woman at the well of Samaria. The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead is found only in the Gospel of John. And this book alone gives us the treasured accounts of Jesus' final discourses, including that magnificent high priestly prayer.*

The thing that makes this book so loved is the clarity with which it presents Jesus Christ as Lord, God and Savior. John's purpose for writing is clear throughout the book. He wants people to see Jesus for who He truly is so that they might believe in Him. John's passion for writing comes from His love for Jesus and his desire to see men and women set free. At the conclusion of the book he states his reason most clearly. John 20:31 "but these have been

written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

The truth is, without God's grace our faith will not grow. This book was written to give and strengthen our faith.

[John 21:24, 25]

As we conclude our study today, let's start with a couple of general observations from these last two verses.

1. Everything in this book is true. (Read vs 24) If John's objective is that faith would be born in the hearts of his hearers and that their faith would grow, then it is essential that they trust the book. Why should we believe what is written here.

a. It is the testimony of an eyewitness.

John was not only one of the twelve apostles but one of the three Jesus often drew aside from the others. He never mentions his own name in this book, but refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was uniquely qualified to write this intimate account of the life of Jesus, because as he said in his own words in his first letter, *what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life . . . we proclaim to you.* You see, John knew Jesus perhaps better than any other man on earth.

b. He wrote down his testimony.

This is significant because some modern day critics of the Bible suggest that the gospels are simply a compilation of oral stories and traditions about Jesus that have no reliable grounding in historic fact. So John makes it clear the he carefully recorded his testimony for all to read.

- c. His testimony is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

John's writing is actually a fulfillment of what Jesus prophesied. In John 14:26 Jesus said *the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

As we well know, all Scripture is inspired by God. Therefore we trust it. We know it is true.

- 2. Not everything Jesus did is written in this book. (Read vs. 25)

How are we to understand this? How can it be that the world cannot contain all the books that would be written if everything were recorded?

- a. John was selective is what he wrote. The other gospel writers recorded other things and other details and different perspectives on the same events. So, John's writings were limited. We know Jesus did many, many other things similar to what he recorded in these 21 chapters.
- b. Jesus did things before John became a witness. And so it was that John began his gospel with the words, *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.* Jesus is eternal. He created. He made Old Testament appearances. *Before Abraham was born, I am.* So the stories of Jesus' works, if they were all written down would go back into eternity.
- c. Jesus is still doing things today. He is building His church. He is bringing His kingdom. He is living in us.

What John did was write enough down, as Calvin said, *for regulating faith and obtaining salvation.* In

other words, John wrote his gospel so that we could know Jesus and believe in Him.

As we have studied this gospel, we have seen three main areas to which John has mainly testified.

He has testified about the ***Identity of Christ***.
 He has testified about the ***Benefits of Christ***.
 He has testified about the ***Work of Christ***.

I. The Identity of Christ

When all is said and done, what do you suppose John wanted us to know about the identity of Jesus? Isn't it fair to say that John works hard to help us see the divinity of Jesus? From the beginning pages where Jesus is revealed as the Word who first created and brought all things into being and then became flesh and dwelt among us – to the statements of Jesus Himself where He declares that He and the Father are One; that He is the great I AM – to the professions of others like Thomas who gloriously exclaimed *My Lord and my God!*, this book shows us that Jesus is God.

Time and again John lays out his testimony, as though he were in a court of law, building a case for the Lordship and divinity of Jesus. And of course every one of His miracles was designed to add evidence to that premise.

And always the motivation was the same – *you must know that Jesus is Lord and God **so that** you will believe in Him.*

Remember the encounter with the woman at the well? Or the man born blind? Or the raising of Lazarus? In each case the revelation of Jesus' identity led to men and women believing in Him.

One of the reasons the Gospel of John is so often used in evangelistic Bible studies is because it so clearly identifies who Jesus is. If your faith is

wavering, if you begin to wonder about the power of Christ to deliver you, come again to the Gospel of John.

The second area of testimony:

II. The Benefits of Christ.

John's writings are much beloved, not only because we can see the identity of Jesus, but it's loved by God's people because we see in these words how much Jesus loves us and how much He has done for us.

This is the Gospel of metaphors. John gives us word pictures to help us understand the rich benefits we have in Jesus. What do these have in common: bread, light, doors, shepherds, life, truth and vines? They each teach us something unique about the benefits we have in Christ. The seven *I am's* of John's gospel all invite us to come to Him in faith. If you are **hungry** Jesus will fill you. If you are in the **dark**, Jesus will show you the way. If you are **lost**, He is a door to safety. If you are **wandering, if you're thirsty, if you have a whole bunch of needs**, Jesus is your shepherd. Not only do you need to listen to His voice and follow Him, but He will come and find you. He'll make you lie down in green pasture. He'll restore your soul. If you are **dead**, He will give you life. He is the resurrection and the life. If you are **deceived**, He will show you truth. He's the way, and the truth and the life. If you are **purposeless**, He will make you fruitful. He's the vine. If you abide in Him, you will bear fruit.

John wants us to see the sufficiency of Jesus. What do you need? Where do you hurt? What is your problem? Where are you going? In Jesus Christ we find our all in all.

Here's a great discussion question for you to ask sometime when you're with a group of Christian friends. *What is one of the greatest things Jesus*

has ever done for you? And when you answer it, be specific. Don't just say, *He forgave all my sins*; or *He gave me eternal life*. Be specific. What sins did He deliver you from? How did He deliver you out of death into life?

We read and sang Psalm 107 this morning. Isn't that the question the Psalmist answers there? He sings about what Christ has done for Him. And He concludes, *O give thanks to the Lord for He is good*.

John's gospel celebrates the joy and wonder of our salvation. It rejoices in the love and compassion and mercy of Jesus to us. And it gives us hope when things are dark. It shows us that all is not lost. It beckons us to live in union with Jesus so that we will receive all that He has for us.

1. The Identity of Christ
2. The Benefits of Christ

The third area of testimony:

III. The Work of Christ.

Everything ultimately leads to the cross. One third of this gospel takes place within a week of Jesus' death. John, in the middle of testifying about the identity of Jesus and the benefits of Jesus is all the time looking to the great work of Christ on the cross.

As much as John wants men to embrace who Jesus is and what He offers, he knows that apart from the atonement, there is no salvation.

And there are shades of the cross in every chapter.

- Behold the lamb of God – 1
- Destroy this temple – 3 days – 2
- Son of Man lifted up – 3
- An hour is coming, won't worship on this mountain or Jerusalem – 4

- An hour is coming all those in tombs will hear His voice – 5
- Eat my flesh and drink my blood – 6
- I go to the Father – 7
- When you lift Me up – 8
- We must work the works of God while it is still day – 9
- I lay down my life for sheep – 10
- I am resurrection and life – 11
- Caiaphas - “it is expedient for you that one man lay down his life for the nation -11
- I came for this hour – 12
- Chapters 13 to end – details of his death and resurrection.

Why spend so much time on the His death?

Because apart from Jesus dying in your place, to take your judgment, there is no forgiveness of sins, no new life in Christ, no benefits of Christianity and no reason for you to be here today.

But because Jesus did die and because He was raised from the dead, if you believe, you have life. And this Jesus is worth you giving up everything to follow.

The testimony of the Gospel of John is true. Even though we are done with our study, don't ever quit coming back to this book. In it you will find your life.