

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

JOHN LESSON 3 (Chapter 4-6)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24). Welcome to our study of the gospel of John. In John 4-6 Jesus is identified as the living bread and as the water of life that men must access if they are going to be right with God. The whole purpose of the Book of John is to prove that Jesus is God in the flesh. “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” (Jn. 20:30-31). Chapters 4-6 support this theme by showing that Jesus is the only way that people can have spiritual sustenance. By looking at the signs Jesus performed in these chapters, we can rest assured that Jesus is God in the flesh, and that He is the only way we can serve God and please Him through obedience to His will.

In John 4 Jesus begins a discourse with a Samaritan woman at a well. While Jesus' disciples go into town to purchase good, Jesus goes to a well. He asks a woman to draw some water for him. The woman, who is a Samaritan, is confused because a Jewish man has asked her to draw water for him. Jesus said to her, “If you knew who it was who was asking you, you would ask Him to give you living water.” She learns that Jesus is the living water. She remarks that she has no husband to draw water for her. Jesus said, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband.” From that, the woman perceived that Jesus was a prophet because of what He had told her about her life (things that only a prophet could know). She had a question to which she had been seeking an answer. Realizing that Jesus was a prophet, she asked Him where the correct place was to worship. “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship” (vs. 20). In John 4:21-24 Jesus told the woman,

“Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In dealing with the woman at the well, Jesus showed Himself to be the living water that people must access if they are going to be right with God. Today, we often do not realize how important it is to have clean, drinkable water. If you go to Third World countries that have unclean, polluted water, drinking the water might make you sick. This makes a person realize the value of pure water. Jesus is our spiritual living water, and if men do not access it, they will die spiritually.

In John 4:21-24, Jesus told us the truth about worship. There is a lot of confusion in the world today about worship. So many people have so many different views about what worship is or is not, and what is or is not pleasing to God. Jesus cleared up this matter in John

4:24 when He said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” God is the object of our worship. We are not to worship other men. We are not to worship images or parents. And we certainly do not worship the devil. We are to worship God. In Matthew 4 Satan tempted Jesus by saying, “All these things I will give you if You will fall down and worship me.” But Jesus replied, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve (Mt. 4:7-11). God is the object of our worship. He is a spirit, and He must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. Worship is not an option, but is something that all of us must do if we are going to please God.

Today, I want us to notice that worship must be “in spirit in and in truth.” What does it mean to worship “in spirit”? We find help answering that question in 1 Corinthians 14:15. Paul said, “I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.” When we sing and pray “with spirit and understanding,” we are engaging our human spirit (our mind, our personality, and our emotions—the things that make us who we are). We must worship in a heartfelt manner. In Mark 12:30 we are told, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Every fiber of our being must be involved in spiritual worship. Worship “in spirit” also must be governed by truth. Our worship must be according to New Testament teaching. There are so many passages that teach us to be careful to do things the way God says for us to do them. In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul said that he had transferred some things to himself and Apollos so that the Corinthian Christians could learn “not to think beyond what is written.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if all people understood that principle? We are not to “think beyond what is written.” If it is not found in the pages of the New Testament (which is our guide today, and is what will judge us—John 12:48), then we must not even think about it. In Proverbs 30:6 we are told, “Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” Simply put, God does not want our additions when we worship Him. Whatever He has told us should suffice. Colossians 3:17 says, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” We must have God’s authority before we can do it. Revelation 22:18 tells us, “If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.” God is serious when He tells us not to go beyond what is written, not to add to His Word, or not to take away from His Word. “Worship in truth” means that we allow God’s Word—not our feelings, our emotions, or what is popular—to be the guide for what we do in worship.

In the New Testament, God tells us certain things that we are commanded to do in order to worship Him correctly. For example, part of our worship is prayer. In Acts 2:42 we read that the first-century Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” James 5:16 tells us that prayer not only glorifies God, but also has great power. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Prayer glorifies God.

Giving is an act of worship. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 we are told that we are to give as we have been prospered on the first day of every week. When Christians come together on the first day of the week, they are to give as they have been prospered.

The Lord’s Supper is yet another act of worship. In Acts 20:7 we read that the first-century Christians came together “to break bread.” Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11 that we are to do this “as often as we come together.” It is to be done in memory of Christ (1 Cor. 11). And we learn from the Scriptures that the frequency of our partaking of the Lord’s Supper is on the first day of every week. There is no specific week mentioned in the context. Thus, since every week has a first day, Christians are commanded to remember the Lord’s death every first day of the week.

Another act of worship is singing. The Bible teaches us to glorify God with songs. Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 both teach that we are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts to the Lord. We are to teach and admonish one another. And we are to sing and make melody where?—on a guitar, on drums, on a piano, or on an organ? No, you will not find those things mentioned in the New Testament. We must not “go beyond what is written.” The New Testament is our guide today (Jn. 12:48). The Old Law has been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). If we are to worship God correctly, then we must worship Him in song as He has commanded. “Is anyone happy? Let him sing” (Jas. 5:13).

We also are to glorify God through the act of preaching, which is the part of worship that God has chosen to save souls. In 1 Corinthians 1:21 we are told that God “chose the foolishness of preaching to save those who are lost.” Paul said to Timothy, “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). The Scriptures say that we are not to hold back anything that is helpful (Acts 20:27-28). God has defined how we are to worship Him, and we must not go beyond the pattern that He has set in the Scriptures. In John 4, Jesus shows the Samaritan woman that true worship is governed by the will of God, and is based on the human spirit being involved, not the place of worship.

In John 4:25-26 Jesus identifies that He is the Messiah Who was prophesied. The woman said to Him, ‘I know that the Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’” The woman knew about the Messiah, knew that He would be called the Christ, and knew that He would tell people “all things.” Jesus said, “I am the Messiah!” This is one of the clearest descriptions that Jesus gave of Himself as the Messiah. What do we mean by the word “Messiah”? Messiah means “God’s anointed.” Christ was anointed as a Prophet. In Deuteronomy 18:15-22 Moses said that a Prophet would come after him who was greater than him, and that in all things, people should hear him. In Acts 3 Peter identified that Prophet as Jesus. He was anointed as God’s Prophet. He is the voice of God today, as Hebrews 1:1-3 makes clear when it says, “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.”

Christ also is anointed as Priest. Hebrews 7 teaches us that Jesus would not be a Priest after the Levitical order, but would be a Priest “after the order of Melchizedek.” Psalm 110:4 tells us that His priesthood will remain forever. He is an unchanging Priest who always makes sacrifices for those who submit to His will (Heb. 10:12).

Christ also is anointed as King. In Revelation 19:16 Jesus is seen as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” In 1 Timothy we learn that He is the great and only potentate (or sovereign). Thus, Jesus truly is the Messiah (the Christ) Who was anointed and sent into the world.

In John 5 we see the third sign in the gospel of John relating to Jesus. Here, Jesus is seen as the Master of time. In John 5 we see a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. There is no one to carry him to the water. He has been lame for thirty-eight years. The context tells us that at a certain time an angel went down and stirred the water, and the first one into the water would be healed of his infirmity. But the lame man could not get to the water. Jesus is seen as the Master of time, in that what doctors could not accomplish in thirty-eight years, He was able to accomplish in a matter of seconds. This was a second chance for the man who had this infirmity. But what was the real purpose of this sign? It was to show the power and authority of Jesus, as verses 16-23 affirm. Jesus was seen to be from God because He was the divine Son of God. Everyone knew the lame man, who had been there for thirty-eight years. When the waters were stirred, someone always jumped ahead of him. The man was known by everyone. Jesus instantaneously healed the man. What did people think?

“Who could do this, except the Son of God?” Truly, Jesus has all authority in Heaven and on Earth (Mt. 28:18-20). This is another powerful sign in the life of Jesus that is presented in the gospel of John.

In John 5, John also deals with the resurrection of all men. Just like the lame man could come up from the water, so people one day will come forth from their earthly graves—some to Heaven, and some to Hell. John 5:28-29 says, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” Here, Jesus promises that everyone will one day come forth from the grave. What is it that makes Christianity unique? Where is the Christian’s home? Our hope is in the fact that the grave is not the end. Jesus conquered death and the grave (1 Cor. 15). All men are therefore promised that they will arise from their graves (Jn. 11:25). This is the hope that Christians have. We will not remain in the grave. Death is not the end. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 that all who are in the grave will one day come forth to meet the Lord in the air. If we are alive, then we, too, will be caught up together with Him, and shall always be with the Lord. Jesus is coming again. No one knows the time or hour (Mt. 24:34-36). But when Jesus comes, He will receive the kingdom and deliver it to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Thus, we have the hope of a resurrection from the dead. Romans 1:4 says that Jesus is proved to be the Son of God through the resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is a proof of His divinity. How can His empty grave be explained? No one can say that someone took His body because guards were watching the grave. Who rolled away the stone? Where is Christ’s body? Jesus’ resurrection is proof that He is divine, and that He is the Son of God.

In John 6 we are introduced to the fourth sign regarding Jesus—the feeding of the 5,000. This expresses that Jesus is the Master of quantity. There were 5,000 people. Jesus had been teaching them, and His disciples were fearful of sending them away, lest they starve. Jesus told the disciples to feed the people, and the disciples asked, “With what can we feed them? Do you want us to go into town and buy food? We do not have enough money to do that. But we do have a lad here who has five loaves and two small fish.” Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” He then took the loaves and fish, blessed them, broke them, and fed 5,000 people—with twelve basketsful of leftovers remaining. The five loaves and two fish would not even have filled one basket. Yet when the people had eaten, there were twelve basketsful of leftovers remaining?! Think about the miracle that Jesus performed by turning those five loaves and two fish into enough food to feed a multitude. This shows that Jesus is the Master of quantity because He has power over the things of this world. This teaches us that the quantity of God’s blessings is unlimited for His children. Just as Jesus was able to feed 5,000 people with only five loaves and two fish, God’s blessings for His children are unlimited. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that “all spiritual blessings” are ours “in Christ Jesus.” James 1:17 tells us that “every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” What point was Jesus trying to get across? He wanted the people to see that He was the Bread of life. In John 6 Jesus feeds the 5,000. People followed Him, the text tells us, because they thought they would get a free meal. But Jesus wanted them to see beyond the miracle to the lesson—that He is the Bread of life. He wanted them to see that if He could take care of them physically with five loaves and two small fish, then they should think about what He could do for them spiritually. If people will put their trust in Jesus, they will not have a care in the world as long as they stay true to His teachings and do what God says. In Matthew 6 Jesus was dealing with worry and anxiety. He reminded people that life is more than food, and that the body is more than clothing. We should not worry about those things,

because even the heathens worry about them. He then said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt. 6:33). If we put the kingdom first, we will not have to worry about food, shelter, and clothing. We must understand the importance of following Jesus.

In John 6 Jesus also performs another miracle. He walks on the water. Jesus, after feeding and teaching the 5,000, sent His disciples across the Sea. He then came to them, walking on the water. The disciples were fearful, but Jesus told them not to be afraid. This proves that Jesus is the Master of natural law. What happens if a person tries to stand on water? The laws of gravity demand that the person sinks in the water. Yet Jesus was able to walk on water without sinking. How? This proves that He made the laws of nature and knows how to control or conquer them. Thus, He is divine.

In John 6 we also learn an important lesson about what it really means to believe in Jesus. Sometimes when preachers are preaching on things like repentance or baptism, they are accused of believing in "works-related salvation." This is not true. We do not believe in any type of salvation in which, after we are saved, we then can look up to Heaven and say, "God, You owed me that." But don't we all believe that there are works we must do in order to be saved? That is what the Scripture teaches. Every time I hear denominational preachers say, "If you say that baptism is essential to salvation, then you believe in a works-based salvation, and God says, 'No works!'," I am reminded of John 6:28-29. Every denominational preacher who says, "You must believe to be saved," condemns himself. Belief is as much a work as baptism. John 6:28-29 says, "Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'" Is belief a work? According to John 6:28-29, there can be no denying that it is. Belief is a work. Is it a meritorious work—one we do, and then afterwards say, "God, I believed in Your Son, so you owe me Heaven"? Of course not! Is it a conditional type of work that I must do in order to be saved? Yes, it is—just like repentance, confession, and baptism. We have never said that baptism is a work that "earns us" our salvation. We have always said that, just like belief, it is a condition that God set forth. And if people do not submit to baptism, then they have not done the will of God. We must not say that baptism is a work, and thus is not essential to salvation. When we do that, we condemn ourselves because belief also is a work. According to Jesus' words in John 3:16, everyone must believe in order to be saved. And according to Jesus' words in Mark 16:16, everyone also must be baptized in order to be saved.

In John 6 we also learn that Jesus presents Himself as the Bread (or manna) from Heaven. In Old Testament times, during the time of the Israelites' wilderness wanderings, God fed His people with manna from Heaven. It came down in the mornings, and the people picked it up and put it in their baskets. They asked, "What is it?," and then called it "manna." In a spiritual sense, God is the manna (or bread) from Heaven. In Matthew 5:6 Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Jesus is the epitome of righteousness. Thus, when Jesus talked about drinking His blood or eating His flesh (as the manna from Heaven), He was not talking about cannibalism. He is not talking about the Lord's Supper. He was talking about men and women consuming His teaching and accepting it into their lives. Philippians 2:5 tells us that we must "have the mind of Christ," which is what helps us do God's will. A lot of people have trouble with Jesus' words. His disciples did, and some still do today. When Jesus said that people had to eat His flesh and drink His blood, what was he talking about? Notice John 6:63, which is a divine commentary in this same chapter, explaining what Jesus meant. Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." Jesus was not talking about His physical flesh. Rather, He was say-

ing that spiritually we have to consume His teaching, His words, and His spirit in our lives before we can be faithful children of God. For some, that was a hard teaching. In John 6:60 we read that these were hard words for some of Christ's disciples. In fact, some of them found Christ's words so difficult that they "walked with Jesus no more." Jesus then said to those who remained, "Do you want to go away also?" Jesus did not try to apologize or say, "Well, I know that My words were a little rough." He said, "There's the road. Are you going with them?" Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Jesus understood that, at times, hard statements had to be made, and that people had to make personal choices. Sometimes we have to make hard choices in life as well. We must understand the teachings of Jesus, and then do what they say.

For example, the Bible teaches that there is only one church. Everyone who is not a part of that church will be lost. In Matthew 16:13-18 Jesus said, "I will build My church." Ephesians 4:4 teaches us that there is only one body, which is the church. The church is the only group that will return to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). To some, that is hard. But it is simple if we will submit to God's will and be a part of the church. For some, it is a hard statement when we say that everyone who has not been baptized for the remission of sins will go to Hell. But that is what Jesus said. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). If a person does not obey what God says regarding baptism, then that person will be lost. That is hard—unless the person is ready to submit to God's will. It is hard for some people to hear Jesus when He said that most people in the world will go to Hell. But that is what Jesus said. In Matthew 7:13 Jesus said, "Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." We must understand that Jesus taught that most people will be lost. It is hard for some when we say that it is a sin to worship God with instrumental music. But the Bible teaches that we are to sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph. 5:19). That is hard—until we make up our minds to submit to the will of God.

So, while Jesus offered some difficult teachings, He also taught that not everything will be easy. Some things will require us to make difficult choices. When we make the choice, we must be careful to make the right choice. We do not need to leave Christ behind. Instead, we need to tell Him that no matter how difficult it might be, He has the only words that can lead us to eternal life. Thus, we must follow Him.

Are you a child of God? Have you submitted to the will of the Father? Are you a member of the Lord's body? Jesus is the only way that we can be saved. Won't you submit to His will today? The Scriptures teach that you must hear the Word of God, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of those things in your life that are not right, confess His name before men, and then arise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). May God help each of us, all the days of our lives, to seek Jesus with all our hearts, and to always do His will. May we always have the courage—even when things are difficult—to say, "Lord, Your words are the words of eternal life. We want to follow You."

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR JOHN LESSON 3 (CHAPTERS 4-6)

1. According to this lesson what is the main purpose of the gospel of John?
2. In the first part of John 4, with whom was Jesus speaking?
3. In John 4:19 the person with whom Jesus was talking said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet." What caused the person to say that?
4. What issue did the person with whom Jesus was speaking raise in John 4:20?
5. In John 4:21-23, what answer did Jesus provide to the person's inquiry?
6. What important point is mentioned in John 4:24?
7. What does it mean to worship God "in spirit"?
8. What does it mean to worship God "in truth"?
9. In 1 Corinthians 14:15, what did the apostle say that Christians should do?
10. According to John 12:48, what will serve as our judge when this life is over?
11. What important point is contained in Proverbs 30:6?
12. What important message is contained in Revelation 22:18-19?
13. What important confession did Christ make in John 4:25-26?
14. John 5 teaches us that Jesus is the Master of something. What is it?
15. What important point is discussed in John 5:28-29?
16. What important statement did Jesus make in John 11:25 that relates to His comments in John 5:28-29?
17. What two miracles did Jesus perform in John 6 to further offer proof of His divinity?
18. What does Matthew 6:33 urge Christians to do?
19. What does Matthew 6:34 urge Christians **not** to do?
20. What did Jesus mean when He said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness"?
21. In John 6:28-29, what "work" did Jesus discuss as being essential to a person's salvation?
22. What did Jesus say in Mark 16:16?