

the gospel of

JOHN

all intents and purposes

John: So That You Might Believe

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John 21: 20-25

Today we're in John 21, the end of the book, verse 20-25. Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. The one who had also leaned back against him during the supper and had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you? When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man? Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me. So the saying spread abroad among the brothers, that this disciple was not to die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. Now, there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written. I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Thank you, Brittany. All right, for those of you that are just trickling in, if you don't know who I am, my name's Eddie. I'm the lead pastor here. Glad you guys all join us. I was just up here 30 seconds ago, <laugh>, so you just heard that spiel already. So, um, today we get to wrap up a four year, four part book that we've all spent a lot of time on here in John. So we have a lot of ground to cover, but I think, and I suspect that the monumental, the, the monumental nature of this sermon, uh, for all of us will hit, will hit home. So lemme pray for us.

Well, Lord Jesus, I pray that the work over the last four years from many different preachers and many different musicians and, uh, deacons and um, servants, Lord God, I pray that the work will not go in vain here today. That we do a, we honor you in wrapping up this wonderful book as a book that's transformed and changed the lives of so many. I pray for me, Lord, as I preach, would you gimme, uh, courage and calm and clarity as I communicate, uh, your word? And I pray for my friends that their hearts and minds are open and receptive, Lord, cause there's so much going on. And I pray just for a moment, they might understand what it, what it might mean to have life and to believe in you, how good that could be. So I pray for their

attention and I pray a hedge of protection around this room. Lord, we're, we're establishing deacons. This is a big deal. This is declaration of, of hard work. And so, Lord God, I pray for a hedge of protection. Would the Spirit be present? We love you. We praise you in Jesus' name.

Amen. All right, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God. And the word was God. Heard that statement before? It's a big statement. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God. And the word was God. John chapter one, verse one. This is perhaps pound for pound, the most weighty, theologically rich. And at the same time, most life impacting statement in all of the Bible. And it's only one statement in that kicks off really 21 more chapters of potent sort of cosmically, overwhelming and life altering truths.

And that is an understatement. If I've ever heard one. John's gospel is powerful because it is complex, but it's simple. It's both right. Saying Augustine, who is a theologian in the fourth century, uh, north African, he said, wants that the, the gospel of John is deep enough for an elephant to swim and yet shallow enough for a child not to drown.

Over the last four years, our challenge really has been then to plumb the depths of such a book with its richness and its vastness like a submarine in the deep while at the same time having a good time in the shallow end with our floaties on hanging with Jesus. It's a little bit of both. It's both.

Now, if you want to boil the book of John down and like, sort of what it is, it's this John's gospel of Jesus is a divinely inspired story, a divinely inspired story, an account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But I guess the obvious question then, if you're gonna spend four years in something, is, uh, why is this all important? Maybe you're here and you're not a Christian welcome, and you're thinking, why is the story of Jesus more important than any other great philosopher? Any other great leader or religious, uh, movement person?

Uh, there, there are many stories that are sort of just as important or just as helpful. Why is this any different? Towards the end of the book of John, the whole book John 20, John actually tells us why he wrote such a book. Okay? He actually says it here. He says, these are written so that you may believe, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you would have life in his name, the roadmap, the blueprint, the framework for finding life in its fullest right here in the gospel of John.

There is not a single person in this room that hasn't wrestled with that idea. What is the meaning of life? Who who is here has not asked themselves those questions? What is the meaning of life? Why am I here? What's the point of everything I'm doing? And John here, he's making a really bold claim. I mean, this is a really bold claim to someone who's not a Christian. He's saying that the way to life is written right here in this, this book.

I told this story to many of you people and many of you folks, some of you friends. And, and I've also told it at the very start of when I jumped on and started teaching in John here at Doxa. But I received, uh, my first Bible getting on a team bus, going to play football. And um, I, I took the Bible because I was a scared freshman. And, um, I felt bad for the guy because no one was

taking his bibles. And so I got on last and I took his Bible and I asked him, what do I do with this thing?

And I was thinking, I start at the beginning, you know, like a Dr. Seuss book. Like what, what do I, what do I do? And he said, oh, you start with the gospel of John, cause all of the other gospels will tell you what Jesus did. But this one, this'll tell you who Jesus was. And I was floored by that. And I went home and I shockingly did that. I did that. I, I I went and I read it. And my life would never be the same. Like I, I I, I wish I could tell you this was a hyperbole, but it wasn't.

I was on a very different track. I was a self-righteous, arrogant kid who had a really hard life. And yet I opened the Gospel of John and not looking for the gospel, not feeling like I needed the gospel. And my life was changed. This is where I believed, this is where I believed I I the world. I had seen change forever. I saw through a different framework, it went upside down. I don't know how to explain it. And when I opened the book of John, John, he told me who I was. I was really a lost kid. I was searching to make something of myself. I I didn't, was broken. I had had a hard life. I I was also a sinner. I was a broken sinner. But then reading John, I realized I could have something that I didn't know I was even looking for. And that's life in its fullest.

So I'm gonna state a very simple assertion to you this morning, very simple that John is saying to you, I think in this passage, but I think that God is also saying to you right now, very simple. Okay, here it is. If you believe in Jesus, you will find life.

If you believe in Jesus, you will find life. Now, I think, I think human beings like our, like our ourselves, we, we love to make things more complicated than they really are. We love to complicate what it means to believe. Like we could watch -- this is not like, you know, when you think of believe, maybe you're thinking of like going to Disneyland and seeing Tinkerbell fly through the sky, or you're thinking of, uh, Mickey Mouse or what, I don't know what you think of when you hear the word believe, but it's actually not as caught complicated. But we love to get so caught up in deciphering what believing it really is that, well, we never actually do it. <laugh>.

We love to pontificate on life and we sit back and discuss the nuances of what life may mean. And we discuss the philosophers and the Greeks and the so and the in the Sophists and all of these different people. And we we're trying to understand them.

It's meaning, it's scope. And we get so distracted that we never actually live the life that we have <laugh>. So for today, let's sort of examine John's statement. Its a simple statement on why he wrote the gospel that believing you'd have life. Now, I want to just give by way of preface, I think you might say there's probably some, well, you thinking, wait, hold on a second. I am a Christian, okay? I do believe in Jesus already. I, I don't know if I wanna, I I don't know if, I think there's probably some other things we can get out of this. I mean, let's get into the Greek of the passage and break down this and this and gimme some meat and potatoes here.

Hold on a second. Now, or you might even say, man, I don't know if we can waste time understanding sort of the basics of life and believing there must be more.

And I would say if, if just a few things, two things exactly. One, I think I'm clearly trying to tell you something, right? I'm clearly trying to tell you something. If you're here and you're believing you believe that you're in good position with life and believing in these concepts in your life, the sermons that we preach here are meant to be very invitational. They're meant to be very invitational. So the question you have to ask yourself is, are there people around you whom you've invited to hear the simple gospel? Just something to pray about.

Second thing, and this is perhaps the most profound thesis of the sermon. It's that we don't always need deeper truths to believe. Most of the time we need to believe the same truth more deeply. Make no mistake the moment you think that you don't need to study the basics of the gospel is the moment you need the gospel the most.

We need it the most. Now let's get into those basics. Why is the Gospel of John written just like we've said, first thing, the gospel of John is written so that you might believe, okay, you said believe a number of times. Okay, believe in what?

Glad you asked. Okay, John 20, 30, and 31, it says this. Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and the son of God. Ah, so, so, so John was written so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God.

Now, contrary to casual belief, Christ is not Jesus' last name, okay? It's, it's not as if Ed Christ is walking around or you know, Jared Christ, you know, is also down the block from you. It's not a last name. The word Christ or the the is actually a title. It's a title. It means the anointed one or the chosen one. It means the Messiah, the Savior. So when we believe in Jesus as the Christ, we are believing that he is the anointed one sent into the world by God to save us from sin and death. That's what it is.

Now, I wanna make this really digestible for you, okay? I'm gonna explain the basics of the gospel. The, the whole reason why the Bible is here is literally wrapped up in these next two or three minutes, okay? So I'm gonna, I'm gonna lay out a list of what the gospel consists of. So if you're someone here who sort of knows the gospel, then first I would say, I submit to you and say, you should hear it again for yourself and for your own soul. But then work on being able to say it this succinctly to your neighbor because the gospel is this important and it's why the book of John is written.

So what's the first sort of part of the gospel? How does this start? Well, God creates the world and humanity right in the beginning. Genesis one teaches us that God creates everything. He creates it to be good. The beasts of the air, the animals, the birds, uh, the oceans, uh, the heavens in the earth. He creates everything and he declares it to be good. And he creates mankind, humankind, to be very good. And we human beings, we lived in right standing relationship with God. We lived perfect with him. We didn't, there was never any mouthing off to God. It was, it was a great relationship. He gave us everything we needed and we flourished.

But then the part two comes, humanity corrupts the world and sins. Humanity saw God's plan, but thought they could improve upon it. They thought they could improve upon God's plan.

The serpent sliver their up and he deceives them. He, he throws them off. And so all of a sudden God says, Hey, you can't eat of, you can eat of any tree you'd like, but this one. And they eat of the tree anyway, believing that their plan was better than God's.

Then what happens? The world becomes corrupt. All of a sudden, creation groans. It breaks down, natural disasters happen. And humankind, we sin. We miss the mark, we hurt each other, we hurt ourselves, and we've become separated from God and separated from each other.

The ramification of said sin is that, part three, all sinners die. The reason why you and I die friends is not because we age. And this is part of the natural biology of evolution. The reason why we die is because we sin. Our human, our framework, our our hardware is corrupt. Our software is corrupt from the very ground up. We, it is a disease and a condition that we cannot get rid of. And we all sin against God, sin against one another. And we've broken off our relationship. And make no mistake, the reason why we age and grow old and eventually get sick and die is because of sin. And that's hard to hear.

But part four is that God makes a plan to save humanity from said sin and death. You see, God's not content with our relationship being broken, even though he didn't break it off himself, we broke it. He's like, I don't like this. I'm gonna send my son Jesus in the world. Jesus is gonna live a perfect life. He's gonna heal, he's going to preach and he's going to befriend and he's gonna show the world what it looks like to live perfect in an unperfect world. He's a great example. And his plan is to ultimately try to save humanity from themselves and their own sin and death.

But, and this is part five, Jesus was so perfect in his, in his life that humanity couldn't handle it and it killed him. See, God's grand plan was that he was gonna be sacrificed. And humanity didn't know is that they were gonna be the one being this doing the sacrificing. And they do it. Jesus dies on behalf of sinners so sinners can go free. Again, the wages of sin is death, but Jesus never sinned.

So instead he would take the sins of humanity onto himself and in his perfection, he would give us his perfect righteousness. That'd be the great exchange. We're exchanging our sin for righteousness. And so all of us get to be counted as righteousness, righteous before God. And then all who believe in Jesus' resurrection can go free.

Jesus Christ raises from the dead conquering death forever. Anyone who would believe in this message, the message that John teaches, would no longer have to be dead in their sins. Death has no power over you because if you believe in Jesus, you rise again in eternity with him and you get peace and joy and contentment in this life because guess what? That stuff doesn't have any power over you because it's not, it doesn't matter if you die, you've got an eternity awaiting you. Imagine that.

This is the gospel. Friends, this is the good news. This is it right here. This is the story that John is trying to teach. This is why so many disciples died. So many of them were killed just to tell you this very simple message and it's a sweet and wonderful message. Now, I think there are probably a few types of people listening to this message today.

Okay? I think one type of person might be someone who says, you know, I hear what you're saying and I see what you're saying. But I, I wouldn't say I believe in Jesus sort of as a savior or anything. Maybe if he was alive, he was a good person. But I wouldn't say that Jesus is God.

Great, I'm glad you're here. Okay? I'm really honored. I think our church, the reason why we install deacons and this sort of thing is for you, we, we care deeply about, about you. We want you to understand this very life giving message. But I do have a few questions for you. If this isn't your, the, the foundation for why you're alive and why you're living, then what is your alternative? Then why, why are you here? Why are you here? Why are you here on the earth? What, what's the purpose of your life? What's the purpose of all life?

What's the meaning of love? Why does joy matter to you? It's not enough to just reject this story about Jesus. It's really not enough to reject the story. You're gonna have to fill that space with something, with some framework, some moral code and ethic. And you have to answer the question because you're already living by some moral framework and moral ethic.

So the question is, does your moral code or moral ethic hold any water? Is it based in any reality? Christians have to answer that same question. The Bible says, if Jesus Christ did not die, if he is not, if he is still in the grave or if he did not resurrect, rather than we, our faith is in vain and we're still in our sins, we've gotta wrestle with that. You've gotta wrestle with yours as well.

Why are you here? What's the meaning of life? Do you have an explanation for all of these things that doesn't begin with, "Well, I think that..."? Is there any authority outside of your own thought process that you can govern and root reality in?

Now, this is a serious question and, and the reason is cause people spent thousands of years pondering the meaning of life. I mean, some of us are 15 years old or 20 years old, or 30 or 40 or 70 or or 80. That's, that may or may not be old, but people have wrestled with this question for, for millennium. This is not an easy question to answer. So the hard serious question has to be how do you justify laughing, loving and weeping and becoming awe-inspired or being motivated to serve, to serve if we're just cosmic stardust bumping into stardust in a vast, purposeless, meaningless universe?

You need an answer for that. Now, I hope you don't hear me asking that arrogantly, cause I, I'm not, I actually, I'm asking that question because I asked it myself. We all in some way ask these questions. And you know what? We need answers to them. We need answers to 'em. Cause if we don't find, if we don't find inherent meaning, we start going off and creating it. Cause we're, we, we need meaning and purpose. We're created for it. You're wired for answers like this, aren't you? And you're not content if you don't get 'em, sure, you, you could get really good at pretending like you don't need 'em and bury your head in the sand and try not to think about

the existential questions of the heart. But you know what? We hit a midlife crisis every now and then, and we're faced with the reality of the, of our lives in the situation. And we have to go, wait a second. Has everything I've been doing adding up to anything,

You know, the Bible, um, it teaches that the reason why human beings seek these answers is because we're made in God's image. We're made in the image and likeness of God. We, we desire to be reconnected and to be connected with our creator. This is why we get emotional when we see traumatic things or pandemics or, or we cry when someone gets sick or dies. This is the reason why we do these things, because deep down we know this is not the way the world is supposed to be, and we feel it in our stomach. This isn't right. Does your worldview hold water?

Now there's another kind of person hearing this gospel that I just shared. This is maybe some of you, maybe most of you. This is the kind that says, yeah, I know this. I, I believe this message already. If that's true, then yes and amen. I'm so glad you believe that. What God wants for you then is not to believe initially like some people, but to believe more deeply.

You know, sometimes, uh, when you know something or believe something or you do something over and over again, it can kind of feel, uh, routine. Do you know what I'm talking about? Like, I just moved recently, um, not too far from my house. And over the last, uh, I don't know, couple weeks I've noticed that I've accidentally driven to my old house, uh, coming home <laugh> and you know, I played football, so I got some questions. You know, I start asking like, Hey, you know, do I need to see somebody?

You know, uh, so, but, but I think we're all wired in that way. We, we do something over and over again and we start to sort of, it just becomes mundane, right? I, I was driving from San Francisco to Utah, uh, one time with my family, and it's about 11 hour drive. If you know the drive on I 80, you go over, uh, the Sierra Mountains and then it's straight shot right through Nevada all the way to Salt Lake City. It's a straight shot. And, um, it's a long drive. And usually I like to drive the whole trip. It's just something I like to do. And my kids are usually nuts, but every now and then they're, they're pretty cool, right? They're pretty chill and they relax.

And in this particular time, they had fallen asleep because we were getting to the end. We're about 70, 60 miles off and it's a really straight, narrow road. And it was about 3:00 AM and the, the snow started to fall a little bit and it was very peaceful and calm and everyone in the car is sleeping except me. And you know what happens in those moments when you're on long road trips, head starts, uh, bobbing a little bit, right? Not to the music <laugh> falling asleep and you start to doze a little bit and doze a little bit and as light snow. But see, the thing was, I had been driving because, because it's so straight and it's no like, there's no variance.

Uh, I was driving the same speed on the same road for so long that I started to drift until an out of control semi blows past me at 3:00 AM honking its horn, uh, and my car goes it because, you know, even when the semi passes you, it blows, but it's snowing.

And so the car shifts and I start shaking and we start sort of skidding on the road and I'm freaking out and everyone's still sound asleep in the car, except for me. It so's just me having a panic attack alone. And then like five seconds later, seven or eight police cars come flying by. Whoa, the sirens, lights, *sound of cars passing*. No respect for my kids sleeping! Just, and I'm like freaking out. Lemme get, oh my gosh, this is nuts. I'm wide awake, my adrenaline's pumping.

So like the next stop, I stop over in a, a sad town called Winnamuck in Nevada. And I pull over and I get out and I, and I stop at the gas station and I just sort of, oh, and I get a cup of coffee at 3:00 AM I get a cup of coffee, I'm terrified. And I get back in that car, my adrenaline, I am telling you, I am like, phew. No one woke up.

I'm just in the car and I get back in the car. And when I got back in that road, do you think I fell asleep? No. Oh no. I did it not a chance. Like my head was on a swivel. I didn't, I hadn't gripped a, a steering wheel like that since I was taking my driver's test when I was 16 years old. And like I am squeezing 10 and 2, slow and steady win's the race. Like I'm, I'm looking everywhere. There's not a car on the road. I'm freaked out.

I had been driving the same speed on the same road for so long that I started to drift and I started to fall asleep. And you know what? Jesus wants gospel sirens to blow past you and to snap you out of your dull and your sleep in your faith. He wants your spiritual adrenaline to pump through your soul so that the, the mundane nature or simplicity of the gospel doesn't lull you to sleep.

And so he will often send moments like this in our lives to sort of snap us out. He wants your head on a swivel. He wants you to grip the steering wheel like it's the first time you ever heard the Gospel of John preached. Experience the freshness of an old gospel that you've heard so many times. Jared Wilson calls this (an author) gospel wakefulness. It's treasuring Christ more greatly and savoring his power more sweetly.

There is a deeper and fuller appreciation in gospel wakefulness for Jesus. There is a radical joy. People so, so joyous that people are annoyed and how joyous you are. Like why doesn't anything bother you? A radical peace on your life where people are starting to ask questions like, how are you getting through this? This is so hard for our company, for our family, for our mayor, for whatever. How are you getting through this? A peace that people ask you about. And they, they ask you a question. Why are you so steady gospel wakefulness?

How awake are you? How awake are you? Because if the gospel is boring to us, then we might need some sirens to fly by to us because it is powerful cause God has more for you and he has more to do through you. Remember, we don't always need to believe different truths. Most of the time we need to believe the same truth more deeply.

Okay. What is the other reason that the gospel of John has written? It's this, the gospel of John is written so that by believing you would have life. Yes, yes, yes. You can fill in my, my gap there next time, that's great. Life.

This idea of life is a super theme in John. Like if you want to get your, you, you know, get excited about the book. Uh, this idea of life is mentioned 36 times in the whole book of John. It is only mentioned, it's mentioned less than 17 in every other New Testament book. This is a big deal to John.

But I guess the question I had, and maybe the question you have when you hear something like this is, well, what does it mean to have life? Uh, do you have life right now? I mean, do I have life? I mean, what is life? How do you get life is a hard question to answer, right? After thinking about this and thinking through this, I can tell, I think I only thing I could probably tell you is what having life is not. Okay.

And having life is not a few things. It's not merely being alive or breathing right? You are breathing hopefully in, in here and we're all breathing. Do we have life because we are breathing? No, that's not John's purpose. He's not saying that if you believe in Jesus, you'll get oxygen in your lungs. We all have that. Okay? So it couldn't be that. It's not just, uh, merely breathing. It's not, it, it isn't that there is a stark difference. We all know between breathing and living your life to the fullest isn't there? In having life, there is purpose and volition and there's power and there's goals and there's dreams and there's vision and there's love. When you have life, you get to live life. But when you are merely breathing well, your life is sort of living you. And you know what I'm talking about. You know what I'm talking.

So many of us are there, aren't we? We feel like we're just on a conveyor belt. The days and months just pass by with no real purpose. And we're sort of busy, but not really directed in any given way. This is why the, you know, the ideas like midlife crisis or age milestone crises are so, are so common is because every now and then we hit an age, we hit 18 or 21 or 35, right?

You hit 18 and you're like, oh my gosh, I'm an adult. What do I do? You hit 21, I'm outta college and I gotta get a job now. Like who's gonna pay for my bills? You hit 35 and all of a sudden you had all these dreams and goals and visions for your life and now you got a bunch of kids and you're watching Daniel Tiger on repeating. You're trying to figure out like where was the goals and dreams of becoming the CEO of God?

And maybe you hit 50 and your youth's gone and you go, wow, did I waste every moment of my youth? It went by like that. It's over. Or you hit 65 and all of a sudden you're trying to retire. And well, the reality of death is starting to creep closer. These ages force us to come to grips with the direction of our lives. Have we actually been living or have we been merely breathing?

But let's look at one another verse, one other verse rather, to help us sort of get it more full picture. And I think we get this from John chapter 10, verse 10. This is what Jesus says, the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. The thief. The thief of, of all these different things of lust, of greed, of envy, of jealousy, of stored up treasures in heaven, building the 401k, climbing the corporate ladder. These, these items, these comparisons, all of these things that are here, the thief comes to steal and to kill and to destroy. But I came that you might have life and have it abundantly.

See, Jesus didn't just come for you to be alive and breathe. You're already doing that. He came to give you everything your everything life has to offer you. And when you buy into this world where you compete and you build up treasures for yourself in heaven and you get into little tiffs with your friends and family and you're gossiping and slandering, that's the thief coming to steal, kill and destroy and to take you out.

But Jesus didn't come for that. He came for the exact opposite to have life and have it abundantly. The word used here, the for abundance in the Greek, it's like having this overwhelming super abundance of something. This is massive. To be a follower of Jesus, then, means that you have a super abundance of life. And doesn't that sound so much better? You know, when we try to live our own lives apart from God, it, it can get dull and it gets dispiriting. It really does.

We spend most of our time not really living, but trying not to feel awful. Do you know what I'm talking about? Like we're, I, I'm not actually living, I'm just trying not to feel bad. Like how do I get rid of my heartburn? Like that's, that's the, that's the basis of our life. Like how do I not feel awful? Like how do I not feel stressed, depressed, overweight, tired, sad. Instead we have no attention to what it means to fully live our lives. We're just trying to get back to baseline.

And when you live your lives, your own life without God, that's where you end up. Just trying to get back to baseline. And you'll never get there cause there's always something else. But when we walk with Jesus, there is a new vitality. I'm telling you, there is a super abundance of life. It is overflowing.

It's only when we live with Christ that life becomes finally and really worth living. And we begin to live with the real sense of the Word. Having life is, is seeing and drinking and eating and and being in, in HD, in technicolor. We're we're seeing with such vibrancy, it's engulfing the presence of Jesus with everything we are there is a, a, a, a level of clarity in this. It's vibrancy, it's unbelievable.

The dopamine highs in this life are extraordinary. It's a desire all of a sudden to begin to fight for joy in your life against money and contentment and in satisfaction and in jealousy. It's finally where you are ready to die every day to the things that ransack your joy. And make no mistake all of the things I just listed, that's their intention is to ransack your joy.

Having life then is a spiritual bulletproofing of your joy and your peace. And nothing can take that away from you. Not even death itself. Oh, death. Where is your sting? Imagine being able to live with that level of Teflon strapped to you. What that might do, huh? Wouldn't that be something? Wouldn't that be something where the things of the world don't bug you at all because your joy and your peace is protected? Because make no mistake, life's bullets are flying and you are running through a field and they're flying by your head. Contentment, lust, greed, anger, frustration, abandonment, trauma are flying through you. And here you are trying to guard your own peace and joy running out in there like, oh, guess what? You're gonna catch one. It's only a matter of time.

And yet, Jesus here is offering you a spiritual bulletproofing to having life to believe the message of Jesus. Where guess what? I don't need any of those things in order to make myself feel good.

We spend so much of our life trying to go get joy in peace through manufacturing our own safety and manufacturing our own will. What if you just had meaning by default and you didn't have to go make it? We're literally spending our whole lives trying to make our, make something of ourselves.

But you're already something in Christ. Wouldn't that take a lot of pressure off? The meeting at work doesn't seem such a big deal anymore, does it? Ah, I've already got eternal consentment and peace and joy. Man, if he gets mad, he gets mad cause this is who I am today and that's okay. And if I this isn't enough, then that's okay. And the Lord will protect me. That's right. And my joy and peace won't be shaken by then. That's all right.

And yeah, our marriage is going through a tough spot right now and it's been really tough. But you know what? I really believe that Jesus Christ has given me peace, joy, and contentment. And I'm gonna work for my marriage. But you know what? I don't have to lose my peace and my joy because I have Jesus, even though it's hard, man, this is not just like spiritual Jesus juking. This is the real deal. Instead of bulletproofing ourselves or at least trying, we try to make ourselves impervious to life's challenges. And you know what? You're gonna catch one at some point.

This is what we want, isn't it? We want this spiritual bulletproofing of having life and believing. And really this is what Jesus offered Peter last week if you were joining us.

But in our passage we sort of see that there is one potential sidetracking to us actually getting to live the life that we feel like we want. There's one spiritual sidetrack here and it's found in John 21 versus 20-23. And so let's explore this and figure out why in the heck is the gospel John ending with this.

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you? (That's, that's John). When Peter saw him, that's John, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man? And Jesus said to him, if it's my will that he remain until I come, what's that to you? Follow me. You follow me. So the saying spread abroad among the brothers, that this disciple was not to die. That's John. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but if it is my will that he remained till I come, what's that to you?

Okay, so last week we saw Peter and Jesus having a moment, one last interaction as Jesus restores their relationship. And it was beautiful. And Jesus told Peter, Peter, you deny me three times, but guess what? You're not gonna deny me again. You're gonna love me, but you're gonna be killed for your commitment to me. And then we get Peter's response, hearing this hard message. And what is it? Peter? Um, after hearing, he's gonna die, uh, looks around and

sees John and says, well, what about this guy? He going die too, right? Jesus. I mean he he's not just we all dying though, right? We're all <laugh>.

And and what was Jesus, uh, reply to, to Peter? Uh, It's, it's really none of your business. How my relationship unfolds with John or any of these other disciples or any other person doesn't really concern you, does it?

And this is really our final boss for believing and having life in Jesus. This is it. We will often look to the lives of others to compare and even validate our own lives. And if you say you don't do it, oh man, I would, you should preach. Cause this is cause this is hard, right?

We all do this and we'll often look to the lives of others to compare or even validate the lives that we have sort of began to live. And we'll look at what happens and we'll say, oh man, dang, they're still in a relationship. Oh man, I, I haven't found anybody. Dang it. Oh wow, they got through that sin? Like, dang, I'm still struggling in that. Like I'm happy for 'em, but I just mean it's harder. Oh wow. Their, their kids are so well behaved. I mean, man, sh such and such has been such a problem. Or Oh wow, they're a deacon already, man, they, they got here after me. Dang.

Or we'll say things like, oh man, they're in rough shape, <laugh>. Or we'll say that, you know, I'm working through this bible study and I've been through it a little. I've been through a little more than they have. And so I probably could have handled that a little better than they did with a little more grace. Or man, I haven't seen them at church in weeks. What's going on?

Jesus gives us really great wisdom here. Too many times we based our own self worth and our own spirituality by comparing ourselves to other people. And that's the name of the game. Human beings love to look sideways and compare. We either look at the super spiritual and feel bad about ourselves or we look at those who are doing poorly and we get all high and mighty internally or externally. Both attitudes are a sidetrack from any of us actually having life. If there's anything that is a thief of joy, it is comparison. Jesus says, I'm here, that you might have life, not that you would live someone else's, but here you are living someone else's life being a way worse version of them. When I've created you to be who you are, you're missing it.

You can't have life when you're looking at other people, do their thing. Both, uh, attitudes are a sidetrack from you actually living the life God's called you to. That's why Jesus says to Peter, mind your own spirituality. You follow me. Don't worry about what's going on with them.

I'll show with you a picture, um, up on the screen and if, uh, you recognize this fella here at the bottom, this is Michael Phelps, probably the greatest swimmer in American history. And here's, uh, at the time was his biggest competitor and he had beat him in some, uh, really big races, um, or meets or whatever swimmers call them. Forgive me, I'm don't want you to be offended. But he was swimming and he's beating him right in this one. And, and here it is. This is the gold medal match. And this was like the big showdown of what was gonna happen. And here you got both of these guys swimming for the gold.

Now Michael Phelps is looking somewhere. Where do you suppose he's looking? Michael Phelps is one third away, one third of a pool length away from the finish line and his competitor staring at him. Now, the way you finish well is not by looking sideways the way you finish, well, the way you compete and run the race and fight the good fight of faith is not by looking at so-and-so's kids or their marriage or their spirituality or how much they give or how well they're doing at their job. The way you do this is to do what Jesus said, which is mind your own spirituality. You follow me.

And the win isn't how well you do against another person. Some of you are going to die sooner than others. Some of us are gonna make more money than other people. Some of us are gonna be blessed with the opportunity to have kids. And some of us are gonna be blessed with the opportunity to not have kids. Some of us are gonna make lots of money and some of us are gonna lose it all. Some of us are gonna be good, uh, good parents and some of us are gonna struggle. Some of us are going to lose family at a young age and others of us will see them into their grave and maybe they will even watch you into yours.

Mind your own spirituality. That's really none of your business, how God's treating them. What matters is that you follow me.

John 11 says, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, he shall not live yet, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

This is the race we run towards, that we have the resurrection and the life, not so that we're better than others. This is the big deal. This is the point of the gospel of John.

Okay. January 19th, 2020. Does anyone know what happened on this day? Probably not. You wouldn't, I wouldn't expect you to know. I'm just curious. John. January 19th, 2020 is the date that Doxa began the series in the book of John. Okay? It's the first day and judging by the date, a lot's changed. Not just here at Doxa, but around the world since January 19th, 2020. We're all just young tikes trying to figure out the world back then. You know what I'm talking about? <laugh>.

New leaders, new buildings, new vision, A lot going on that happened at Doxa. That's about it though, right? Oh, the worldwide pandemic thrown in there too, for sure. But, but life is sort of like that. Life is like that. It's ever changing. We preach more. Doxa, we're gonna preach more books, we're gonna preach more gospels we're starting. Galatians this's gonna be awesome. You're gonna hear different preachers other than myself or or any of other great preachers, or you're gonna be in different MCs at some point. You might even move to other cities and be a part of other churches.

But you know what? Gospel of John and this message will never change. That's right. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. The logos, the truth incarnate, the, the the, the purpose of the universe. The, the the, the reason why the ocean doesn't spill out into space. The, uh, the grand designer, everything, the, the reason for the cosmos, the, the author of and perfecter of

all that we've ever seen, the logos truth incarnate is distilled down into a single person that will never change. And you have access to him no matter what sufferings or successes you find, you will have an unmovable and unshakeable God to go to.

The last verse in John the last, the final verse in John 21 says this. Now, there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written <affirmative>.

God's doing a million things in your life into the lives of others. And you're aware of like two or three of them.

He is doing so much. His will is like this massive ball of yarn that's like put together. We have no idea how he does it, but he's stitching it together. Some people in this room are hearing, gonna hear the gospel of John for the last time could happen. Some people in here are gonna hear the, are hearing the gospel of John for the first time. Some people are going to give their life to Christ because of this sermon. And other people are gonna have more questions to answer about why they believe Jesus as a result of it.

And yet here he is stitching it all together, trying to figure this out for us. He's a powerful God that offers you life and life and its fullness as long as you would believe in him. Don't you want that? The gospel of John changed my life.

I it's it's quite literally true that I, I know for a fact that if I did not read the gospel of John when I was 18 and 19 years old, I wouldn't be here as a pastor, that's for sure. So all of that would be different, but I probably don't meet the woman that I'm married to and I probably don't have the kids that I have. And I certainly wouldn't be living here in Redmond with you all.

God has an opportunity. The grand designer weaves all of our stories together and he uses books like John to impact us in a way that changes us and makes something new of us. When that guy came up to me and he looked at me and he said, oh, you read the gospel of John, you think I had thought that that was gonna impact me in any sort of way?

No, I was just hungry. I wasn't worried about anything. I'm just getting on a bus in the same way I'm telling you that if you read the gospel, John, your life can change.

And you might look back at this moment one day and go, man, this weird guy was standing up there and he told me to pre to read the gospel, John and I read it and my life changed forever. And now I've married and now I've got kids and now they're Christians because of what he said. Because that's what God does. He's the author of life and he perfects things and he changes things and he shapes things and you can't shortell him.

You can't think the gospel is, you've learned it. It's no, it's no way you've learned it. No one's learned it. No one understands the impact. We don't even know everything he's doing in our lives. So I say to you, if you want to have life and believe, go read the Gospel of John. All the

other gospels will tell you what Jesus did. But this one will tell you who Jesus was. Okay, let me pray.

Well, Lord, I pray for my friends, I, they're all at in different spots and different positions in life. And they're coming some of 'em with questions and some of them with lots of answers seemingly. And well Lord, spirit's more powerful. And so I pray you would soften our hearts and our, and our, our will, our volition to you. I pray you would be kind and gentle to my friends that are feeling a lot of animosity in a message like this, that you would show 'em your character. You're not an evil God. You're a good, good God will never leave us nor forsake us. And for my friends that needed some encouragement, might they go back to your story, the gospel and might, might they have the sirens of spiritual faith fly past them and awaken them to the wonderful news so that their heart becomes more full with a story like this. In Jesus' name, amen.