

The Only Jesus There Is

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April 10, 2022

John 1:1-51

So, today's week two of our 150-year series in the Book of John. And Kyle said that last week, and I can promise you, it's not going to be that long, but we are going to be here for a little while. So this week, I'm going to give you two goals. I have two goals, I want state it up front. The first is this: I want you to know a little bit more about the author, and then second, I want to go through all of chapter one with you.

So, let's start with John, who's the author? What was he like? Did he have a family? What did he do for a job? What was he doing before he became a follower of Jesus? What did he do after writing this book? I think you're going to find this fascinating. So, in the gospels, John is one of the 12 that Jesus, quote, appointed so that they may be with him, that's the first part, and he might send them out to preach. So they're going to be with him, and they're going to go preach. So, John is always connected with his brother, James, it's always James and John, and because of that, people speculate that John was the younger brother. And Jesus gave these two guys a nickname: the Sons of Thunder. Sounds like a pro wrestling duo, right? The Sons of Thunder. They're passionate and pushy, they're bold and explosive, they're man's men. And we get a glimpse of their aggression in Luke 9.

The Samaritan people, they were not very nice to Jesus as they were passing through, and so, James and John come to Jesus and ask him, quote, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them? That kind of tells you what they're like. Okay? Mark 9, John tried to stop a guy from casting out demons, he's like, hey, you're not one of us. Stop doing that. He's telling Jesus this. You're not one of us, he says. So, he may have been the original Christian fundamentalist. No fun, too much dam, not enough mental, and that's probably John. He's this loyal, ambitious, zealous follower of Jesus, but he lacked gentleness, kindness and love. Not the kind of guy you want to meet in a dark alley. Probably don't want to sit next to him at church. Definitely don't want to make a son of thunder mad at you.

But Jesus gets a hold of him. And John is transformed, so that by the end of the life, everybody's calling him the apostle of love. And he's not a priest when he starts following Jesus, he's a prophet or a scholar, he's not a pastor. He's definitely not part of the social elite of his day. He's just a normal, everyday guy. He fished for a living. How many guys out there would love to have that? That's your job. You get to fish all day. That's what he did. And he had a small business, where it was partner with his brother, James and his father, Zebedee, and also two guys named Andrew and Peter. Yeah, those guys. The five of them had a fishing business and they were probably pretty successful because Mark chapter one says that they even had employees working for them.

So I want you to hear that. John is just a normal, everyday kind of guy, but after following Jesus, his life becomes so special that we're actually talking about this guy today, 2000 years later. He writes the gospel and he writes three letters in the New Testament. And he writes the book of Revelation. Really, only Luke and Paul write more of the new Testament than John. Which is crazy because Acts chapter four, he is called, quote, an uneducated, common man. And so through this common uneducated man, Jesus has educated the entire world about him. He wrote

the favorite book of most people, most Christians in the Bible. And aside from being one of the 12, he's also poor art of Jesus' inner her circle with Peter and his brother, James. They seem to have this special relationship and access to Jesus. And there's this funny story. John is actually comical.

So the other disciples are off doing something and James and John get their mom, and the three of them go to Jesus and they're like, mom, tell him, we want to be right next to you, right and left side in your kingdom. It's like, forget those other 10 losers. That's where we belong, right next to you, Jesus. But we find that this group of three, they get to go with Jesus into a room where a little girl had died and Jesus raises her from the dead.

These three go with him on top of a mountain as the other nine are down at the bottom and they see his divine glory when Jesus is transfigured. Jesus asked just Peter and John, he says to the two of them, hey, go into Jerusalem, find a place for us to eat the Passover. So we see, he tells them, hey, I want you to set up my last meal. In the garden just before Jesus is arrested, right, he's going to and go pray and there's the 11 of them now and he separates these three from the other eight and to say, I want you to come with me while I pray. On the cross, Jesus gives Mary, the care of his mother, into John's care.

And the last thing we learn about John in the gospels is that he's the first disciple of the empty tomb. You can read about it in John 20. It's another funny story, because what you find is that here's John and here's Peter, and they find out that Jesus has risen from the dead. So they start sprinting to the tomb. And John actually says in chapter 20, and I beat him there. Like, what? So he's this cheeky kind of guy that he's kind of brash and bold. In Acts, we find him in the upper room. He's there choosing Judas' replacement. He's there praying and worshipping with 120. They're waiting for the promises Jesus made to come true. He's with Peter in Acts chapter three as the two of them are walking in Jerusalem and there's a man there who's born paralyzed and they say, get up and walk and he does. They're arrested in Acts chapter four, for boldly preaching Jesus in Jerusalem, which by the way, is the city where Jesus was crucified. So they didn't run 40 miles away. They went right to where he was crucified and started proclaiming his resurrection.

In those early days, he's called a pillar in the church. Why? Because he was someone the church was actually built on because he was, remember the beginning, with Jesus. He was an eyewitness of Jesus' majesty. One ancient author writes that John took care of Mary until she died. And then he traveled from Jerusalem to Rome where he was arrested. And it said that he was thrown into a vat of boiling oil because he was a Christian. Now, we can't confirm whether or not that happened, but if that did happen, he survived it. And the last we hear about him is in the book of Revelation, another book that he wrote. And there we learn that he's on an island called Patmos, which is off the southern coast of Turkey.

He's likely arrested in Ephesus and then he's shipped there. And he calls himself in that book, quote, a brother and partner in tribulation. He's not elevating himself at all. He's like, I'm just like everybody else. I'm being persecuted. I'm in jail for being a Christian. He was a leader in the church. And he's there because he's preaching Christ. History tells us he's released, lives the rest of his days back in Ephesus, where he was probably arrested. And what is he doing there? He's teaching the truth, he's preaching just like Jesus said. And he's also gets a reputation for going after false teachers, even in his old age. And what Jesus told him to do, he did for the whole of his life. Because he was with Jesus, he preached Jesus, whether it got him praise or got him persecution, he preached.

And then also he took a group of men that he disciplined and then those men took his eyewitness testimony and spread it all over the world. He's almost universally recognized as the apostle that Jesus loved. And one ancient author writes that John, in his very old age, he was so old, he couldn't walk anymore, so people from the church would actually go to his house and carry him to church every Sunday. And he was barely able to speak, so he couldn't say very much. And this author writes, quote, he used to say no more at their several meetings than this, "Little children, love one another." Little children, love one another. So like a good teacher, he's repeating himself. But this author writes that the Christian's got kind of sick of hearing that all the time. And so, a group of them came to him and said, "Master, why do you always say love one another?" And he replied, "It is the Lord's command. And if this alone be done, that's enough. Love one another."

So John is one of these shining examples in the Bible of what God does with a person who is completely devoted to him. He takes him from a son of thunder, brash and bold and... To a man of love, a man who loved people and encouraged others to do the same. And it seems from his writings, when you put it all together, that he has an especially unique insight, not just into the message and ministry of Jesus, of course he has that, he was there, but he has this unique insight into the meaning and especially into Jesus' true identity. John, more than anyone else, gives us the only Jesus there is, the real Jesus, the actual one, the one who really exists, because few, if anybody, knew John better, I'm sorry, knew Jesus better than John did.

So let's learn from him about the real Jesus. Look at chapter one, verse one, summarize this opening section with the words Point #1, the reality. ***The Reality*** of who Jesus is. Who is Jesus really? That's the question John answers with the very first words in his gospel. So Matthew starts with the genealogy of Jesus, his family line. Mark starts with the preaching of John the Baptist, getting people ready to meet Jesus. Luke starts with a statement of historical reality, what I'm saying to you is historically accurate. And then he moves from there to the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus.

John, however, he starts in heaven. He starts in eternity past. He goes all the way back before the beginning and says, verse one, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. And the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. And without him was not anything made that was made." God is known most fully and finally through his son. And just as your words reveal your heart and who you are, the same is true with God's word. When the beginning began, the word already existed, he was with God there in verse one, which means that he is a separate person. If he is with God, he's a separate person. But notice, he's also identified as God. And then when God created all things, Genesis one, do you remember how God did that? He did it how? By speaking.

His word, verse three, is the agent. He's the accomplisher of creation. So much so, verse three, "Without him was not anything made that was made." Translation, everything that was created was created through him, which means by the way, that he can't be the first creation. He created all created things. At the moment of creation, the Word already was because the Word is eternal. Now we know this is Jesus because of verse 14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This is the theological understanding of the first Christmas. The Word did not appear to be human, like some phantom, but really is just projecting himself down and looking like a human. No. Deity added humanity.

And verse 17 gives us his name and his title. He is Jesus, that's his name. He is Christ, that is his title. Christ means Messiah. And there are three aspects to the Messiah. The first is that he is a

prophet who would teach God's truth and that all people would listen to him. Second, he's the priest who would represent God to the people and who would represent the people to God and that he would actually be a sacrifice for their sins.

And third, Messiah means that he's the King. He's the ruler of God's people. He's the judge of all the earth, who would destroy Israel's enemies, both the visible ones and the invisible ones. And he will establish a kingdom from which peace would reign throughout all the earth. Now look at verse four, all spiritually eternal life comes from him. This life, it says, quote, is the light. Light refers the truth and holiness, refers to the greatness and the glory of Jesus. And notice, the light doesn't shrink back from the darkness. He doesn't run away from the darkness. What does it say? He's shining where? In the darkness. He's advancing in the sin, in the rebellion, in the satanic evil of the world. And notice at the end of verse five, the darkness has not overcome it. Can't grasp it, can't conquer it, can't see ease it, so as to control it. All the powers of the sin, death and hell cannot possibly overcome and defeat Jesus.

He came to earth, verse 14, it says, quote, "we have seen his glory", his majesty, his greatness as the one and only unique, special son of God, quote, "full of grace and full of truth". From him, verse 17, those who trust in him, it says, receive grace upon grace. It's a picture that like the ocean, waves of grace never stop crashing on the shores of our lives because of Jesus. In the end, Jesus reveals who God really is at his very core. Look at verse 18, "No one has ever seen God." The idea there is no one's ever seen God at his core, at his essence. The only God who is at the father's side, he has made him known.

Jesus is the one and quote, only God, the one-of-a-kind God, because he became human. Jesus has made God known. And notice that's who we want to make God known because where was Jesus before he became a man? What does it say? He was at the father's side. There was a closeness, an intimacy between the father and the son. So you wouldn't want anybody else to tell you about God. You would want the one who is closest, who could explain God better than anybody else, because he knows him personally. He was there. And that's what we have in Christ.

So this is who Jesus really is. He's the eternal God, the creator of all things. The giver of eternal life, who became a human, teaches only truth, died for sin as a substitute, is Earth's true king and dispenses grace and dispenses truth. Any statement about Jesus that contradicts this cannot possibly describe the real Jesus. That Jesus would not be the true Jesus. That would be an imposter, a liar, another Jesus, to use the language of Second Corinthians 11:4.

And in that passage in Second Corinthians 11, Paul is saying to a group of Christians, do not tolerate any other Jesus than the real Jesus. And that's the thing. We should never be deceived into accepting anything less than the Jesus found here. Jesus is not a guru or an avatar, an angel or Satan's brother. He's not merely a prophet or merely a teacher. He's not an imposter. He's not a fraud. He's not a liar either. He's not a Buddha or one of the millions of Hindu gods, he's not the highest created being. He's not a social activist. He's not a manifestation of Krishna or some Egyptian God or Mithra or some other pagan cult. And he's certainly not walking around reincarnated in some liar saying, I'm Jesus. No, you're not. And why do I say all of that? Because every cult and false religion comes out after church goers who know just enough truth about Jesus for it to be twisted and to believe a lie. Listen, Jesus is Prophet, Priest, King, Creator, Word, and God, period.

You should not accept anything less. In fact, you should not accept anything else than the real Jesus. And that's what John wants us to see about him before he jumps into the historical

narrative. And that starts in verse 19. There's a series of four consecutive days. And you can see this in verses 29, 35 and 43, which I'll start with the same words, the next day, the next day, the next day. If you see three times, the next day, that tells you that there were four days, right? Following along? Okay.

Now, so point #2, let's think about the riddle. So summarize this text here. We'll call it ***The Riddle***, because who was John the Baptist, is the question that starts this second section. But the reason he's important is in verse 19, it's because of his, quote, testimony, his verification of Jesus' identity. So we're on day one and the Jews come to him and they're asking him, are you the Messiah?

See, they wanted a warrior to overthrow the Roman empire and put God's kingdom right on top of it. And John is abundantly clear. He's adamant, I am not the Messiah. But he's incredibly influential. There are thousands of people coming to hear his preaching. And that's because he was the fulfillment of a 700-year-old prophecy. Look at verse 22. So this envoy is there and they're cross examining him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" And he said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. 'Make straight the way of the Lord', as the prophet Isaiah said." And he hints at who this Lord is, that he's making straight, that he's getting people prepared to see in verse 26. So they're asking, okay, tell us plainly, what's going on here?

And John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know. Even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." He seems to be messing with them. He's not giving them a clear answer. Hey, here's my question. Tell me plain... And he doesn't go, well, yeah, you're talking about him right there. Yeah. The guy you're looking for, he's right there. He doesn't do that. He's just kind of like, I'm going to keep baptizing, getting people ready to meet their Messiah, which by the way, was his job. Look back at verse seven. What was John there to do? Why was John there in the first place? Verse seven tells us, talking about John the Baptist, it says, "He came as a witness." He's there to tell you, here's the truth about Jesus. He's there to bear witness about the light. Why? That all might believe through him. That was why he existed, to go like this. Not me, him. Look at him. And John the Baptist just seems to know that Jesus is special.

Look back at verse 27. He says, I'm not even worthy to untie his sandals. That's like one of the most lowly, disgusting jobs for servants in the first century. Think about it. There's no roads and Nikes, right? Everyone's wearing sandals. Which means whatever you're walking on, it's getting all over your feet. All the dirt, all the mud, all the other not so good smelling stuff. That's all over your feet. You get home, you're like, I'm not touching that. That's what I have a servant for. And so, you're going to sit down and put your feet out and your servant's going to come over and take your shoes off. And John says, I'm not even worthy to do that. That's how incredible this person is. See, the religious leaders they've been maybe trying to solve a riddle, who is John the Baptist and who's this person he's talking about? But it's clear that John the Baptist knew the real Jesus.

And what I think John is doing in this intersection is, he's building up to verse 29 to 51, because in that section, there's just an avalanche of truth about Jesus. There are two testimonies. One is from John the Baptist. He's going to tell us who Jesus is. And second, he's not going to play games anymore. He's just going to state plainly, this is who Jesus... And then second, there's this group of new disciples that are going to tell us who Jesus is.

In this section, 29 to 51, there's no less than eight titles and eight descriptions about who Jesus is and what he came here to do. So we'll call this last section, the revelation. Point #3 ***The***

Revelation, the suspense from the riddle gives way to the revelation. Here's who John was talking about. Here's who Jesus really is, starting in verse 29.

John the Baptist is going to reveal Jesus in verses 29 to 36. And then John goes silent. We don't hear from him again until chapter three. But in these eight short verses, he has a ton to say about Jesus. So in verses 29 and 36, he says, Jesus is the Lamb of God. And in verse 29, he gives the meaning, the Lamb of God, Jesus, will, notice, take away the sin of the world. And presumably by calling him a Lamb, that's going to happen by his death because lambs didn't last very long in those days. He's going to be a substitute for the forgiveness of sin. But while those lambs covered sin, notice what this lamb is going to do. What's he going to do with sin? He's going to take it away.

Next, he identifies Jesus as being eternal in verse 30. He existed before him, even though John is older than him. He's saying that this person coming, he kind of puts it this way, he's older than his birthday, which means, John says, that he has a status higher than him. But if John is a prophet, what's higher than a prophet? Well, he tells us. He says, he talks about the Holy Spirit and how the spirit is going to fall on him and control him. And he's going to actually baptize people in the spirit, which happens at salvation. But all this talk of the spirit for the first century listener, that would key them into, wait, he's talking about the Messiah, the one who was foretold in our scriptures, that he's going to come in the power of the spirit. But here's the other thing. It's one thing for water to clean you, it's another thing entirely if the spirit cleans you. If he cleans, you're clean forever.

Finally, verse 34, John affirms what we've already seen. He calls Jesus, the Son of God. This is another title, identifying the Messiah. But as we'll see when we go through the book of John, this title, Son of God, doesn't only point to the fact that he's the promised Messiah from the Old Testament, but it also indicates that, whatever God is, I am. Just like you got your human nature from where? Your parents. It's passed from them to you. The idea is being the Son of God is, what the Father is, I am. So John the Baptist reveals Jesus to be the Messiah. But this Messiah is a Savior who will take away sin.

Then in verse 36 to the end of the chapter, you've got these five disciples. They meet Jesus. And then some of them also reveal who Jesus really is. So as we enter verse 36, John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God." And it says there that a couple of his disciples were like, oh, well, I'm going to leave you now, John, I'm going to go follow him. And that's what they do. Andrew and an unnamed disciple, who many think is John the author, they call him rabbi.

Look at verse 37. The two disciples heard him say this, heard John call Jesus the Lamb of God, and so they follow Jesus. Thank you, John. You've done your work. I'm following Jesus now. "Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi," and then John gives the translation, which means teacher. So it's the first thing we learned about Jesus from his disciple. He's a teacher. "Where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see. So they came and saw where he was staying. And they stayed with him that day, for it was about the 10th hour." And noticed this, one of the two, we don't know their names yet, "One of the two who heard John speak and follow Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."

So we know one of them was named Andrew. The other one, we never get his name, which people say it's probably John humbly putting himself in the story because he was there but doesn't give his name. Now, following Jesus is more than I'm just going where Jesus is going. To do that, it repeats that twice to get at the idea that this marked them as becoming disciples of

Jesus, giving him their allegiance. And Andrew actually runs and goes and gets his brother. And he says to him, "Hey, we have found the Messiah. And Andrew brings Peter to Jesus". And Jesus does this crazy thing in verse 42, he changes Peter's name. Hi, nice to meet you. I'm Jesus. Oh, you're Simon? No. Your name's Peter now. Kind of funny. But who changes people's names in the Bible? Yeah. Genesis, right? Book of Genesis, numerous times changing people's names. What's that all about? Changing a name speaks to what God is going to do with that person. So Jesus is saying to Simon, hey, you're Peter, you're a rock. You're going to be a leader in this movement I'm starting.

Verse 43. It says, "The next day". Now we're on the fourth day. Jesus travels north to Galilee and Jesus meets a guy named Philip. And he says, verse 43, "Follow me". And Philip does and he grabs Nathanael, verse 45 and says, hey, "We have found him of whom Moses and the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." This is Old Testament prophecies. Hey, all that stuff we've been hearing about in Sabbath school all the time when we were little kids, he's here now. We found him and he even has a name, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. So, so far in this text, we're seeing, okay, he's Divine and he's the promised Messiah. And yet, he's very human, he's Lord and eternal and Son of God. And yet, he's got a dad and he has a hometown and he has a name. And his hometown is a Podunk, good for nothing town either. Right?

In verse 46, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Rhetorical question. Answer, no, nothing good comes out of there. That's the wrong side of the tracks. He's a fulfillment of prophecy, but this, from the wrong side of the tracks guy, notice, has supernatural knowledge. Verse 47, "Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit. Nathanael said to him, how do you know me? Jesus answered him before, Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Might read that and go, oh, maybe Jesus was walking by and he was sitting under a tree and Jesus saw him. But Andrew didn't see Jesus seeing him. And so he goes, oh yeah, I saw you. No, no, no. Nathanael tells you why this is important, by his response. "Nathanael answered him, Rabbi," we've seen that, teacher, "what you just did, you are the son of God. You are the king of Israel." He did something supernatural there. Now those first two titles, rabbi, son of God, we've seen those, but king of Israel, that title also means, Messiah. So he's the son of God, he's the king, he's supernatural knowledge prophesied in the Old Testament, all four of those things point to the same conclusion, Jesus is the Messiah.

That is John's whole thrust from verse 19, all the way to verse 51 to say this one idea with eight different descriptions and eight different titles, he is the Messiah. Few short verses, ton of information is being revealed to the reader. So if you're reading John 1, it should be screaming to you that John is screaming at you, Jesus is the Messiah. The most important truths about Jesus are all on page one of the book of John. And then the rest of John seems to be given to just proving everything we just learned in chapter one, verse 45, especially, that the Messiah, the Christ, is in fact, Jesus of Nazareth.

So far, we put it all together. He's the Lord. He's the Lamb of God. He's the Rabbi or the teacher. He's the Son of God prophesied in the Old Testament. He's from Nazareth. Dad is Joseph. He's the King of Israel. And then verse 51, very end, he's the Son of Man. Son of Man. That doesn't mean that he's human. Son of Man, that title refers to Daniel chapter seven, verse 13, where there is this person, this human that goes into the very throne room of God. And in that moment, the God of the universe gives him dominion and power and authority over the entire created order.

And right before Jesus calls himself that, notice what he says about himself. He proclaims himself as the only way to heaven. Verse 51. He says to Nathanael, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angel of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." Like a ladder from heaven to earth, so Jesus will connect God to humanity. He speaks for God to us and he stands in for us with God. He's God's communication to earth. And he's earth's representative with God. All of this, verses one to 51, this is the real Jesus. The only Jesus there is.

Now, look back at verse 10. Verse 10, since Jesus is all of these things, since all of this is you, Jesus really is, listen to the tone of tragedy in verse 10, "He was in the world and the world was made through him. Yet, the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him." The creator was unknown and ultimately rejected by his creation. His own people, the Jews, didn't recognize their God when he was right there with them. Instead of honoring him and following him and pledging their allegiance to him, they did the exact opposite. Their God, the one whose law they claim to obey, whose word they claim to love and live by, this God came to them. And verse 11, they did not receive him. Instead, they had him killed. They crucified the God they said they loved so much. I mean talk about sincere people being sincerely wrong. Talk about the irony of ironies.

They had Jesus crucified to honor God, when the God they thought they were honoring was in fact the one that they had crucified. They completely missed who Jesus really is. And listen, they are in the Bible, page after page, so that you will not do the same. There are others though, who did not make this tragic mistake.

Look at verse 12, "But to all who did receive him, anybody, to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but they were born of God" to receive Jesus, verse 12, is to embrace him and is to believe in him. And when that happens, notice verse 12, Jesus gives people the right to become children of God. Through Jesus, anybody can be adopted into God's family. And that's been God's plan all along. Think about it, when Jesus said, here's how you should pray, what did he reveal about God? What did he call him? Father, right? And Jesus is what? He's the Son. God is adopting people from all over the world into his family. And how does he do that?

Verse 13, not by who your ancestors are. And verse 13, not by your will, what you want, not by your desires. And verse 13, that's not happening by your father's will either, someone in your family saying, I really want this for you. No, all of that means nothing for becoming a part of God's family. That, becoming part God's family, is something, verse 13, God does when you're born again, when he births you into his family. Just like you were birthed into your family, so you must be born again into God's family. He gives you spiritual life when he births you into his family. And when that happens, he makes you his very own forever. If you've been born again, it's hard for me to believe that you don't know it. To be born again is to be made new, reborn. The old is gone and the new is here. The new you wants to live for Jesus. The new you is pained when you fall short of that. The new you seeks to grow and change and be more like Jesus.

Whereas the old you was living for you. The old you wasn't really concerned with living for Jesus all that much. The old you maybe even used living for Jesus as a way to promote self. The old you, God existed to get you out of trouble. God existed to affirm your ideas and your goals as legitimate. There's no sense, no real sense of trust in him. No real sense of submission to him. If I've just been describing you, please don't be the tragedy of verses 10 and 11. Believe in the

Lord, Jesus Christ today. Right now. Now, maybe you know people who need to be born again. Maybe you know people who need to be made new.

Look down at verse 43. Verse 43. Remember Jesus finds Philip. And he says to Philip, follow of me. But you see Philip's heart in what he does next. He finds a friend, Nathaniel, verse 45, and he says to him, hey, "We found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth." We found the Messiah. Nathaniel though, he's a skeptic. His response again. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Come on. There's no way the Messiah came from that Podunk place. And now, notice what Philip does. This objection doesn't stop him. He doesn't start with some proof. He doesn't start with his personal testimony. He just gave his skeptic friend three simple words, come and see. Come and see. And you know what, he did come and see, and Jesus took care of the rest.

For many of you, these 150 yearlong series, that's going to give you dozens of chances for you to invite the Nathaniels in your life to come and see. Each week, we're just going to look at Jesus, this Jesus, the real Jesus, the only Jesus there is. And as I was coming to the end of the study and putting the message together, as I'm thinking through this, I'm just thinking, God, please fill Redeemer with Nathaniels, skeptics and non-Christians and people who are hostile, fill this place with them. Why? Because there are a bunch of Phillips here who just simply go to the people that they know and interact with all the time and just simply say, come and see Jesus. May God do that with all of us as we study the real Jesus together in the book of John.

Let's pray. Father, if they're any Nathaniels here right now, I pray that they would see Jesus and that he would do the rest. He would open their eyes to who he really is just like he did with Nathaniel, and that they will believe in him. And I pray that you would use each of us here in special ways that we have with this group of about, I don't know, eight to 15 people in our lives who need to come and see Christ. Give us the words, give us the demeanor, give us the wisdom. Give us everything we need over this next period of time to say to them, come and see, come and see the Jesus that I know and love. God, as I think about the community here in Gilbert, 60% of people that live here have no religious affiliation at all, which means tens of thousands of people who live around us, our neighbors, our friends, our family, coworkers, other students, they need to come and see. So please use each of us to do that, I pray. In the glory of your name, Jesus. Amen.