



The Gospel of John

Seeing is Believing

**Christ Redeemer Church
Sermon Series Study Guide
Spring 2021**

edited by Pastor Doug Cooper

Special thanks to Anna Kaye Schulte for the sermon series artwork

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INTRODUCTION

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

~John 1:1, 14 (ESV)

“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 that by believing you may have life in his name.”

~John 20:30-31 (ESV)

“...if two thousand years of pious handling had not dimmed both John’s story and its demand, this gospel would still be seen as the burning outrage it continues to be, a work of madness or blinding revelation.”

~Reynolds Price (1933-2011), Duke University

The Gospel of John: An Introduction

There simply is no other document in all of human literature like the “Gospel According to John.” No other writing, except perhaps Paul's epistle to the Romans, has had the kind of redemptive, transformative effect on human existence that John's Gospel has.

Even within the corpus of Scripture—even among the other gospels—it stands apart in its own, unique category. On its face it is a bundle of contradictions. The opening lines tell us that Jesus is the light of God that is both unstoppable and rejected (John 1:4-13). Jesus is presented most explicitly divine, yet most obviously human. The Jesus of John’s Gospel explicitly claims equality with the Creator, while also explicitly suffering need and weakness. He thirsts and has to ask for water, but then in turn claims to be Living Water that satisfies our thirst eternally. He weeps at the death of a friend and then proceeds, by the power of His own command, to raise him from the dead. This is nothing if not shockingly strange. Who is this man?

Perhaps no one in recent memory has grasped the uniqueness of this gospel better than the late Reynolds Price (1933-2011). The professor at Duke and prolific man of letters points out that:

“...a powerful case can still be made that this last gospel—little more than a pamphlet and written in a curiously shackled Greek prose—is the most outrageously demanding work, in any type of prose or verse, that had yet appeared in the West or Near East. Even its companion gospel Mark, some twenty-five years older and a reckless pioneer, is tamed a little in the

dazzling light of John.” (*Three Gospels*, Reynolds Price, Touchstone/Simon & Schuster 1996, p. 128)

Price goes on to sum up the Jesus presented in John:

“The force that conceived and bore all things came here among us, proved his identity in visible human acts, was killed by men no worse than we, rose from death and walked again with his early believers, vowing eternal life beside him to those who also come to believe that he is God and loves us as much as his story shows.” (Price, p. 166)

To this summary, he then says:

“None of the other active world religions says anything remotely similar or comparable.... There is likewise no parallel in the theologies of John’s contemporaries – the dead myths of Greece or Rome, with their demigods and deified bureaucrats. ...John hands us a brand-new thing.” (Price, p. 167)

Jesus is, indeed, something brand-new, unlike anything we have seen before, and He has the power to make our lives new.

How to Use the Study and Prayer Guide

The date at the top of each page notes the Sunday for the respective week. The Scripture verse listed under each heading is a suggested memory verse. Below that you will find a passage of Scripture, followed by “*Reflection Questions*.” In general, these readings will allow you to reflect on the previous sermon or prepare you to hear the sermon for that upcoming week. We estimate that each day’s “lesson” should require no more than 15 minutes.

To be clear, this guide and these times are not intended to be a “legalistic” requirement. Not at all! Rather, it is a way for us as a congregation to walk together as we explore God’s Word and petition our Father in heaven. And to what end? Our hope is that as we grow in our understanding and practice of daily prayer and meditation, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and so grow in our love for Him and one another.

A Word about Walking with Christ

Walking with Christ is a work that God is calling us to and, in a very profound sense, doing in us. As we will see in the Gospel of John, it is Jesus who calls us to discipleship (John 1), and it is Jesus who restores us to discipleship when we fail and fall (John 21). Without Him we can do nothing (John 15). This is why we call the message of Jesus the gospel (i.e. good news), because it is not about us but about Him. “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the pastoral and administrative staff and interns of our Hanover, New London, and Quechee churches who have collaborated to craft this study guide for the benefit of our congregations...and beyond.

In the name of the One who is full of grace and truth,

Don Willeman
April 2021
Hanover, NH

WEEK OF APRIL 11th

Memory Verse:

"He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease."

~John 3:30 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 2:13-24

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from yesterday's sermon?

- How might you live differently as a result?

Prayer:

- Lord in Heaven, thank you for being a God who breaks in, who cares about holiness and purity, and who longs to be known by your creation. Please forgive me for the ways that I've sinned against you and thank you for new life in your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-3

Reflection Questions:

- What do you note about the way Nicodemus came to Jesus here? Is this significant?

- What did Nicodemus say about Jesus in his greeting (v. 2)?

- Why does Jesus greet Nicodemus and reply to Him the way He does (v.3)? What is His point? What is the privilege of one who is born again?

Prayer:

- Lord, I confess that I am often motivated by fear and shame. Restore in me a new heart – a heart that is not ashamed of the gospel of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:4-8

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus' proposition is an exclusive one meaning the ONLY WAY to see the kingdom of God is to be born again. What do you think, feel, and/or believe about this?

- Does Nicodemus understand Jesus' statement about being born again? How does he interpret Jesus' words?

- What does it mean to be born of water and the spirit? Does Jesus' explanation help you understand (7-8)?

Prayer:

- Make a list of 3 people you know who do not yet believe in the Son of God. Pray that God would pour out His Spirit to help them see the One who is above all so that they too might be born again in Him.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-8

Prayer:

- Pray for our church gathering tomorrow. Pray that those who might be new to our church community would feel welcomed and be able to get connected into the life of the body. Pray for strengthening and deepening of our fellowship through the Word of God. Pray that the love of our Triune God would be on display through the preaching and singing, as well as our relationships and interactions with one another.

WEEK OF APRIL 18th

Memory Verse:

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

~John 3:17 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-8

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from the sermon yesterday?

- How did it affect the way that you think of your relationship with God?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would help clarify something about Him and His plan for the world that has caused you to struggle or be confused.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:9-15

Reflection Questions:

- In verse 12, Nicodemus is struggling to understand what Jesus is teaching. What elements of Christianity do you still find yourself struggling to understand or believe?

- Without knowing how this story will end, verses 14 and 15 must have been rather confusing to Nicodemus. What do you understand these verses to mean?

- How might Jesus's response to Nicodemus instruct us as we grapple with our own confusion over His words? How might we approach Him?

Prayer:

- Pray that Christ would be lifted up in your life and that He would deepen your faith.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:16-21

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think John 3:16 is so frequently quoted and memorized?

- Why do we tend to hate being “exposed?”

- What makes being exposed by the light of Christ different?

Prayer:

- Verse 21 implies that those who are “in Christ” no longer need to hide. Pray that God would give you that confidence in your relationship with Him.
- Pray that God would reveal the areas of your life in which you are still “loving the darkness” and that He would show you His superior love and light.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:9-21

Prayer:

- Pray for the service tomorrow, that God would prepare the hearts and minds of all who will gather there.
- Pray for the person preaching tomorrow, that they would have wisdom and bring clarity to the significance of the passage.
- Pray that Christ’s light would shine brightly into the lives of those around you, whether they currently have faith in Him or not.

WEEK OF APRIL 25th

Memory Verse:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

~ John 3:19 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:9-18

Reflection Questions:

- How did the sermon yesterday encourage you?

- How did it instruct or redirect you?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would take the things that you're learning and work them into your life.
- Ask Him to give you a teachable heart this week.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 2:23-25

Reflection Questions:

- Why did the people believe in Jesus? Does the text seem to indicate that this was a good or bad reason? Why or why not?

- Why do you think you believe in Jesus? If you are not a Christian, what do you think would lead you to believe? Or what do you think is keeping you from believing?

- This passage is kind of humorous in that it says the people “believed” in Jesus, but Jesus refused to “believe” in them (i.e., entrust Himself to them). What do you think this means? What do you think Jesus knew about people?

Prayer:

- Thank God for His grace in your life.
- Ask God to reveal the motives of your heart.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:19-21

Reflection Questions:

- According to this passage, why do people refuse to become followers of Jesus?

- According to this passage, why do some people choose to become followers of Jesus?
- According to this passage, do people choose to become followers of Jesus because they are “better” than those who do not? Why or why not?

Prayer:

- Pray Psalm 139:23-24 – “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”
- Pray that God would reveal to you the motives of your heart. As He does, ask for forgiveness where that is appropriate.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:34-42

Prayer:

- Pray that God would draw many from within the various spheres of our lives to know and believe in Jesus.
- Pray that God would bless the preaching of the gospel at church tomorrow.
- Pray for those that you have invited to church or will be coming to church with you.

WEEK OF MAY 2nd

Memory Verse:

"He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease."

~John 3:30 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:19-21

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from yesterday's sermon?

- Are there any steps that you feel led to take as a result?

Prayer:

- Lord, it comes easy for me to walk in the dark instead of Your light. And subtly, like the frog in the kettle, small compromises lead to big ones. Please help me this week, to walk in Your light. May You be glorified through my life. Amen.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:22-30

Reflection Questions:

- Describe John the Baptist's joy. Where does it come from? What does it produce?

- How does his joy set him free from striving for self-promotion? How might freedom from self-promotion set us free to experience more joy?

- John says, "He must increase, but I must decrease." How might you take practical steps to grow and live into this same mentality?

Prayer:

- Lord, I confess that so often my mental energy is entirely consumed with *my* life. This kind of mentality cuts me off from You, the source of true life and joy, so that I am exhausted and drained. Please set me free to be a servant of Your glory. Help me to experience the complete joy of knowing the one I was made for. Amen.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:31-36

Reflection Questions:

- Verse 34 speaks of God giving His Spirit without limit. In what *way* is God “giving” of His Spirit in this verse?

- What is being contrasted with “believing” in the Son in this passage? What does this teach us about the nature of true belief?

Prayer:

- God is above all. He alone is truthful, and He offers us His Spirit without limit. Give thanks!
- Ask God to pour out His Spirit, that many who do not currently know Him, and who may even currently reject Him, would come to recognize and accept these things as truth – that they would recognize and receive Him!

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:22-36

Prayer:

- Pray for our church gathering tomorrow - that God would pour out His Spirit without limit through the preaching of His Word.

WEEK OF MAY 9th

Memory Verse:

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

~John 4:24 (NASB)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 3:22-36

Reflection Questions:

- What are a few things that stood out to you from yesterday's message?

- Practically speaking, what can you learn from these things, and how might you apply them to your own life?

Prayer:

- Father, if I can only receive what You give, please give me all that I truly need this week. Teach me to be thankful and content.
- For each of us within our shared churches Lord, would You please cause Jesus to loom large in our eyes this week? Please work in us in such a way that He would become greater to us, and that we would become less.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:1-15

Reflection Questions:

- Based on each of her responses here (within these first 15 verses), it seems as though this woman isn't quite grasping who Jesus is, or the heart of His message to her. Can you recall times when you've struggled to truly grasp the words and posture of Jesus toward you? If so, describe them. How has that changed with time?

- As best you can tell, what *was* the heart and intention of Jesus towards this woman?

- In what ways was this counterintuitive?

Prayer:

- Give thanks to God for His gracious approach and generous intentions toward us who believe (Eph. 3:20-21)!
- Ask God to quench your thirst for those things that never seem to truly satisfy.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:15-30

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus is full of surprises. After His warm and curious introduction, He then takes a sharp turn and begins to question this woman concerning some of the most intimate details of her life. In what ways does she respond over the course of this conversation?
- Once again, as best you can tell, what was Jesus up to here? What was His heart and intent toward her?
- What does this teach us about Jesus and His own intentions toward us?

Prayer:

- God knows us through and through, yet still He beckons us to come. Give thanks!
- Ask God to do this critical work in your own life (Ps. 139: 23-24).

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:1-30

Prayer:

- Pray for our worship service tomorrow morning—that we all might worship Him in both spirit and truth!
- Pray for our time together—that we all might better know the heart and intentions of Jesus as we hear His Word preached.

WEEK OF MAY 16th

Memory Verse:

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.'"

~ John 4:34 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:30-38

Reflection Questions:

- What does Jesus reveal about this relationship to doing God's will? Why is it "food" to Him?

- What kind of harvest is Jesus referring to? What does He want His disciples to do?

- How is doing God's will in this situation a blessing to the disciples? What advantages do they have compared to others who have labored to do God's will?

Prayer:

- Gracious Lord, help me to love your will and see the opportunities to do it!

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:39-42

Reflection Questions:

- Why did the Samaritans initially believe in Jesus? What about the woman's testimony was so compelling?

- What changed about their belief in Jesus? What do they believe about Him?

- What can we learn about the process of becoming a disciple?

Prayer:

- My God, thank you for giving me your Word! Help me to grow in trusting you and your Word.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:43-47

Reflection Questions: Why didn't the people of Galilee honor Jesus?

- What did they think of Him before He began His ministry?

- How has their opinion changed, and why?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, I give you glory for your powerful works of healing and salvation for your people!

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:34-42

Prayer:

- Pray that God would bring many in our community to know and believe in Jesus.
- Pray that God would bless the preaching of the gospel at church tomorrow.
- Thank God for opening your eyes to see and love Jesus.

WEEK OF MAY 23rd

Memory Verse:

So, Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

~ John 4:48 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:30-47

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from yesterday's sermon?

- How might you live differently as a result?

Prayer:

- Father in heaven, please help me to understand your Word, to see you, and to know you. Help me to be completely satisfied by doing your work. Your Son said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work." May that be my heart as well! Amen.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:46-54

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever experienced something difficult or painful that caused you to turn to Jesus for healing, guidance, or comfort? How did that experience build your faith in God?

- What is the most memorable or significant lesson you have learned about God by turning to Him in times of trial and adversity? Has He always provided help in the way that you wanted Him to?

- When you find yourself in times of difficulty, how often do you pray? What is the tone of your prayers?

Prayer:

- Lord Jesus, You are the only one who can heal and cleanse me where I most desperately need it. Please help me to walk today in ways that are only possible by Your Spirit and Your Word. Heal me of unbelief. Help me to come to You with my burdens, joys, and pains alike. Amen.
- Pray for a friend who needs Jesus' healing and cleansing power.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:46-54

Reflection Questions:

- Why did this man come to Jesus? How does Jesus respond to the man's request (v. 48)? Is Jesus being harsh or unkind to this man?

- Why did Jesus come into the world (Read John 1:35-36; 2:19-22; 3:14-15)? Did Jesus come to be a miracle worker?

- What happens as the man is traveling back to Capernaum the next day? What happens to his faith and the faith of his household as a result of this long-distance miracle?

Prayer:

- Lord Jesus, you healed people physically but were always pointing people to the reality that there is a far more dangerous disease. Please set me free from my sin and its destructive consequences! Help me to follow You in loving service, even when it costs me greatly. Cause the glory of Your kingdom to come. We so desperately need it. Amen.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:46-54

Prayer:

- Pray for our church gathering tomorrow. Pray that those visiting our church community would feel welcomed and connected.
- Pray for our shared churches to be strengthened and deepened through the preaching of God's Word.

WEEK OF MAY 30th

Memory Verse:

"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I am working.'"

~John 5:17 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 4:46-54

Reflection Questions:

- Make a list of three things that stood out to you from yesterday's service.

- From this list, what's one that you can and should apply to your life? How might you begin?

Prayer:

- As we saw in this passage, the words of Jesus have the power to bring the dead to life. Pray that God would help you to believe His Word, and that He would transform you through it
- Pray that God would help you to be a messenger of Jesus' life-giving words this week. Consider a few specific situations where you will need the Spirit's help to do so.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:1-9

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus asked the man who had been disabled for 38 years if he wanted to be healed?

- What do you make of the man's response?

Prayer:

- You are the only one who can heal and cleanse us where we most desperately need it. Please help us to walk today in ways that are only possible by your Spirit and your Word.
- Pray for friends who need Jesus' healing and cleansing power.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:10-18

Reflection Questions:

- The Pharisees take issue with Jesus because they were more concerned with the letter of the law than the spirit of the law. They cared more about proving their own righteousness than the expansion of God's kingdom through Christ's work. Where might you be caring about your appearance over and against God's purposes to bring healing into a broken world?
- What could be worse for this man than being unable to walk in a society without wheelchairs and where being disabled was seen as a marker of God's judgement? What does this miraculous intervention teach us about Jesus?
- How does it help you to know that Jesus claimed God as His Father even though His claim to be equal with God would cost Him His life?

Prayer:

- Father, please remind us that you are still at work to this very day, and that Jesus is still on the throne! Please be at work both in and through me today. Amen.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: 5:1-18

Prayer:

- Pray that God would cause His Word to break through in our lives as we worship together tomorrow!
- Ask God to fill and empower all who will be leading our worship service tomorrow morning.
- Pray that God would impact our time through His Spirit and cause Jesus to be seen clearly and loved deeply.

WEEK OF JUNE 6th

Memory Verse:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

~ John 5:24 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:1-18

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from the sermon yesterday?

- What was something that was said that challenged a way in which you have been living your life?

Prayer:

- Praise God for coming down in human form to proclaim all that He did to us.

- Praise Jesus that He was equal with God since that meant His sacrifice on the cross was truly sufficient to bear the punishment of our sin.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:19-24

Reflection Questions:

- How would you describe the relationship between the Father and the Son?

- Why does the Son's equivalence with the Father matter?

Prayer:

- Ask God to help you honor the Son with your life.
- Pray that God would help us to marvel at the works He is doing.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:25-29

Reflection Questions:

- What does Jesus seem to be talking about with this “an hour is coming” phrase (stated twice)?

- In verse 29 Jesus says that those who have done good will come to the resurrection of life. Does that mean we are saved through works? Why or why not?

- If we are not saved by works, then what might Jesus mean by this?

Prayer:

- God, I thank You that Your Son chose to pay the penalty for my sin though I deserved His judgment and punishment. Help me to live a new life. One that is different from the spiritual deadness I knew before I believed in Him.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:19-29

Prayer:

- Praise God for having granted full authority to the Son.
- Ask God to be working to restore more people to the “resurrection of life” through faith in Jesus.
- Pray for someone you know who you hope to see come into faith in Jesus Christ. Pray that God would use you and give you opportunities to witness to those who do not believe.

WEEK OF June 13th

Memory Verse:

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

~John 5:39-40 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:30-36

Reflection Questions:

- What is the source of Jesus' testimony? Why does He give this testimony?
- What does Jesus point to in order to give credibility to His testimony?
- How is Jesus' testimony greater than John's?

Prayer:

- Lord, help me to know what is true, to love the truth of your Word, and to speak the truth in love.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:37-42

Reflection Questions:

- How has the Father borne witness about Jesus?

- What are the Scriptures supposed to teach the people who read them?

- What kinds of things do people look for in God's Word apart from Jesus?

Prayer:

- My God, I come to You and my savior Jesus Christ for life. Forgive me for seeking life anywhere else!

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 5:43-47

Reflection Questions:

- What accusations is Jesus bringing against His opponents? What are they seeking?
- Why does Jesus point to Moses as their accuser?
- Why does Jesus believe that He and Moses are teaching and saying the same things?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, teach me to love your Word and teach me to love Jesus, the One your Word reveals.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:1-4

Prayer:

- Lord God, forgive me for my selfish and sinful ways. I have not lived up to your Word, but I hope in your glorious grace.
- Heavenly Father, help me to believe your Word. Help me to grow in my ability to both see and live for Your glory!
- Pray that God would cause His church to grow together in love and in mature faith through our time in worship together.



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