

A scenic landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and long rays of light that illuminate the scene. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with wispy clouds and a faint rainbow visible on the left side. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of evergreen trees frame the view. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Out of Darkness, Into the Light

31 Days in John

Scott Gilchrist

Out of Darkness, Into Light

31 Days of Abiding in God's Word

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Out of Darkness, Into Light
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Out of Darkness, Into the Light

Day 1

“And Jesus cried out and said, ‘He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.’”

John 12:44-46

Throughout His ministry, Jesus clearly and boldly proclaimed His deity. In John 12, He cried out with a powerful summary statement: *“He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me.”* To see Jesus *is* to see God. To believe in Jesus *is* to believe in the one true God of the Bible.

Then, in the next verse, we hear Jesus proclaim the good news—*“I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.”* In essence, Jesus was saying, “If you see Me, you are seeing the Father. I came as light into the world so that you don’t have to stay in darkness.” What a powerful metaphor!

What Jesus meant when He said, “To come to Me is to come out of the darkness and into the light.” It means no longer living in shame, for our sins have been forgiven. It means we can come boldly into God’s presence, knowing we have been cleansed from all our sins.

Jesus brings us out of darkness into the light!

“The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, And they said to them, ‘Why did you not bring Him.’ The officers answered, ‘Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.’” John 7:45-46

Jesus’ words are like nobody else’s. The hardened officers in John Chapter 7 were sent to arrest Jesus. When they returned, the priests and Pharisees asked them why they didn’t arrest Him. Moved by Jesus’ words, they answered, *“Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”*

The very words of Jesus’ bring life: *“The words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and are life”* (John 6:63). Paul wrote in 2 Timothy that *“All Scripture is inspired by God.”* (2 Tim 3:16). Paul coined the term “inspired” by combining the Greek words “God” and “breath.” He said that the Scripture is actually “God-breathed.” It is the very expression of the heart and mind of God. At the beginning of the Bible, God breathed into man the breath of life. (Gen 2:7). He is the author of life, and hence His words are life-giving.

I was greatly impacted as a young man by a teacher who was sixty years older than me. I took a night Bible class from him when I was at the university. Every Thursday night, I would drive across town and he would open up the Bible. I looked forward to those two hours like no other time in the week. After we had been basking in the Word of the Lord for an hour, we would take a break, and every now and then he would break into this song:

“Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life.
Let me more of their beauty see,
wonderful words of life.” [Hymn, by Philip Bliss]

I find myself sometimes singing that little song “sing them over again to me.” We should never tire of hearing His words—these are “words of life.” They are indeed life-giving.

Make this your prayer today and every day, “Lord, open my eyes to see the wonderful things in Your Word.”

*"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light for their deeds were evil."
John 3:19*

Have you ever wondered why so many people avoid Jesus? He is the most loving man that ever lived—the most compassionate and caring person ever described in all of literature. He offers so much, and yet by nature, many tend to push back and avoid Him when His name is mentioned.

Why is it that? Scripture gives us a clear answer. Just three verses after perhaps the most well-known verse in the Bible, John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life"*—Jesus goes on to say, *"This is the judgment [of God], that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light for their deeds were evil,"* (John 3:19). Later in John, Jesus testifies of Himself, *"I am the Light of the world,"* (John 8:12).

The Bible makes clear the doctrine of sin: that all have sinned and fallen short. Scripture opens with man in a paradise but by the third page of Genesis, man steps out of God's love and sins. He disobeys God. The whole story of the Bible—and the key to understanding both man's dilemma and God's solution - is rooted in owning and acknowledging our sin.

So, don't be discouraged when people turn away from Jesus. Scripture tells us this is to be expected. But as we talk about Jesus, God goes to work on the heart. He opens blinded eyes and people come to know this One who is the *"Light of the world."* The Light dispels the darkness.

Enjoy that and be encouraged: even though many people reject Jesus, God is always at work, calling out a people for His name—calling people out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.’” John 9:2-3

Every now and then I run into a verse in the Scripture that hits me in a new way. Recently, I reread this phrase in John Chapter 9 where Jesus responds to His disciples’ question about why a man was born blind. He answered, *“It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents, but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.”* I paused and I thought—what a great statement of why we are here! I personalized it, and I prayed, *“O Lord, may my life be one where Your works are displayed in me.”*

In the big picture of human history—and even more so in the greater picture of God’s eternal purposes—there is no higher calling than for the works of God Almighty to be displayed in our lives. His grace in our life, His watching over us, the way He cares for us, the way He strengthens us in times of trouble—these are just a few of the countless ways that the works of God might be displayed in our lives. Perhaps that could be your prayer today: *“Lord, help me to live in such a way that Your character, Your goodness, Your power, Your holiness, and Your mercy might be displayed in my life.”*

This is a very good way to describe our purpose in life. In context, of course, this blind man had endured much suffering. Yet, Jesus made it clear that it was *“in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.”* We are still talking about him today because God did indeed display His works in this man’s life.

Take this phrase and meditate on it—*“In order that the works of God might be displayed in [me].”*

"He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." John 8:47

Throughout His ministry, Jesus was consistently confronted with religious people who did not understand or even want to hear what He was saying. He was right in the midst of such people when He declared, *"He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."*

Jesus' words raise the question, "Who hears, and who doesn't?" Today, most people do not read or listen to Scripture. Oh, they may hear it in church occasionally, but most people do not even do that anymore. Why is it that some hear and thirst for God's Word, while others want nothing to do with it? You might hear them say, "Don't talk to me about that. It's boring. It's dry." But in John 8:47, Jesus puts His finger on the real issue: *"He who is of God hears the words of God."*

The Gospel of John begins with this powerful truth: when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are born of God—we become *"children of God."* (John 1:12-13). The earmark of being in the family of God is that we desire to hear His words.

Jesus goes on to say, *"For this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."* In reality, there are only two kinds of people: those who are of God and those who are not—those who have been born of God, and those who have not. How will you recognize them? Jesus makes it clear: those who are born of God listen to His voice. *"He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life."* (John 5:24).

Do you delight in His words? Do you hunger and thirst for His words? Do you love to hear them opened up and explained? If so, that is compelling evidence that you know and love Him. But if they seem dry and uninteresting, it could be that you are not a child of God, or perhaps you are a child of God who has drifted away from Him and lost your first love for Him. Sometimes it is hard to tell a believer from an unbeliever at that point. Spend time in His Word. Cultivate a hunger, an eagerness to hear His Word, because *"He who is of God hears the words of God."*

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” John 15:11

Joy is one of the great blessings of knowing the Lord. Satan tries to deceive us and says that following Christ will lead to a life of drudgery and anything but joy. But he is a liar. The truth is, when we walk closely with the Lord—when we abide in Him like branches in the vine, depending on the Him daily and moment by moment—our joy is made full. The world knows something about happiness, but it is often fleeting and tied to changing circumstances, but deep, lasting joy—real joy—comes from Christ alone.

Chapter 15 of John opens with this analogy from Jesus: *“I am the true vine, and you are the branches...Abide in Me, and I in you”* (John 15:1,4). He goes on to say, *“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”*

I hope you know the joy of Christ today. The closer we walk with the Lord, the deeper our joy becomes. We have God’s Word on it. Do not believe the lie that following Jesus leads to a life of drudgery. Jesus invites us to walk with Him, to yoke up with Him, saying, *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”* (Matt 11:29-30). Our load is light because He carries it for us.

We can know the deep-seated joy that is such a wonderful result of walking with Him.

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” John 17:17

Have you ever marveled that Jesus Christ—the Lord of Lords, the Creator of the universe—prays for you? If you are a child of God, if you have put your faith in Jesus, if you are, as the Scripture says, “[drawing] near to God through Him,” then take heart: “He always lives to make intercession for [you].” (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus prays—for us! We should not get over the fact that God the Son prays to God the Father on our behalf.

What does Jesus pray for? In John 17, we are given a glimpse into His prayer. There are many things that Jesus prays for, but in verse 17 He prays that we would be sanctified through the truth of God’s Word, “*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*”

When we came to Christ, God declared us righteous—but that was just the beginning. He then began the lifelong process of sanctification: shaping us to be more like Jesus. The word *sanctify* comes from the root word holy—meaning set apart, refined and transformed. God smooths out the rough edges out of our lives, changing the way we think, our priorities, and our attitudes. As Paul describes in Galatians 4:19, Christ is being formed in us.

God’s method of changing us—of sanctifying us—is with the truth, His very Word. “*Your word is truth.*” The truth that initially set us free (John 8:32) continues to renew and liberate us. There is no better way for us to cooperate with Jesus’ prayer than immersing ourselves in His word. As we do, the Spirit of truth—the Holy Spirit—takes the Word of truth and transforms us from the inside out.

What a powerful prayer Jesus prays for us, and what a meaningful way to pray for one another: that God would “*sanctify [us] in the truth,*” and remind us daily that “*His word is truth.*”

“Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” John 20: 30-31

I often encourage those who don't know the Lord yet to read the Bible. God's Word is powerful—*“sharper than any two-edged sword.”* (Hebrews 4:12). In particular, I encourage people to read the Gospel of John. It has been used by God to reach countless hearts. Near the end of John's Gospel, we find these words: *“Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”* John wrote these things down so that we might believe in Christ—and that through believing, we might have life in His name.

A friend of mine once shared that she was feeling the guilt of her sin. She went to a priest, her religious tradition, and confessed her sin to him. The priest told her, “Your sins are forgiven” but she didn't find any peace from that. So, she asked him, “Can I have it in writing?” The priest stammered a bit and replied, “Well, no, you can't have it in writing.” She left empty, without the certainty of real forgiveness.

Can I have it in writing? That is a natural request, isn't it? We want to be sure. Praise God, my friend later came to realize that we *do* have it in writing! It is in The Book—the Bible. God wrote it down for our benefit and instruction. Our sins *are* forgiven. He has put our sins “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12). We now have life in Christ, and it is not just something that we conjure up. We have God's Word on it, His written Word. We have this Book.

So enjoy it. That is why He wrote it. *“These things have been written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you have life in His name.”*

We Have Found Him of Whom Moses Wrote

Day 9

“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’” John 1:45

When you come to know the Lord Jesus, one of the first things that changes is your desire for others to know Him too. I was recently with a new believer who was eager to tell others about Christ. I encouraged him in this, and he has been doing so repeatedly and with great joy.

In the Gospel of John, we see a similar response. When Philip met Jesus Christ, he immediately went to find Nathanael and said to him, *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

Jesus—the One we have found—did not just come on the scene. Jesus had been written about from Genesis through Malachi and His coming was foretold throughout the whole Old Testament. The early Jewish followers of Christ were familiar with these Scriptures.

Today, many people in our culture are unaware of these Hebrew prophecies. When we point out these promises, it helps them see that God not only sent His Son—He *promised* us His Son long beforehand. From the very beginning, when mankind first fell into sin, God began to promise a Savior and He gave detailed prophecies about the Lord Jesus.

So, when we share Jesus with others, we are telling them about the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. This is one of the many reasons we can be confident that Jesus is indeed the Son of God: His life and ministry fulfilled hundreds of prophecies that were written in the Old Testament, centuries before His birth.

Indeed, we *“have found Him of whom Moses ... wrote.”*

“And He was saying to them, ‘You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins.’” John 8:23-24

God delights in being trusted—believed in. When Jesus, God the Son, was here on earth, when He walked among us, He called people to believe in Him. He said, *“Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins.”* What an amazing statement—and He repeats it. To reject Christ, to write Him off as a mere prophet or regard Him as a great man but not the Lord of the universe, not to bow before Him, will one day be seen as utter rebellion against Him.

The great self-existent One came to earth and said, *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 6:38). Jesus came, *“to lay down [His] life for [His] sheep”* (John 10:15). He came to die on a cross—for you and for me. And He warned, *“unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* What a sobering statement—and yet, what an invitation. For He also said, *“The one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out”* (John 6:37).

When you turn to Jesus and trust in Him, you will find His arms are wide open. Throughout His ministry, He continually invited people to come to Him. *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matt 11:28). Come, believe in Him—and not only will your thirst be quenched (John 6:35), but as He promised, *“From [your] innermost being shall flow rivers of living water”* (John 7:38).

Enjoy this great truth about our Savior today—and point others to Him. For unless we believe that Jesus is the great *“I AM,”* our Lord and Savior, He warned, *“you will die in your sins.”* The only alternative is to enter eternity in our sin. But thanks be to God—He made a way for us to come right into His presence.

“And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, ‘Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews’...and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. And so the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, ‘Do not write, ‘the King of the Jews’; but that He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written.’” John 19:19-22

As believers, we often long for people to recognize who Jesus really is. When we come to know Him, we want everyone to know Him. Think with me about that amazing scene at the cross. Pilate placed this inscription on the cross above Jesus: *“Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews”*. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek—the three great languages of the day—so that anyone passing by would recognize who it was that was hanging on this cross (John 19:20). Pilate, of course, meant it for evil. He meant it as an example of what Rome would do to anybody who claimed to be the King of the Jews. Pilate rubbed the Jews’ nose in it.

It is an ugly scene. Yet, at the same time, it points forward to that day when everyone in heaven and on earth will recognize that Jesus Christ is indeed the King of the Jews and the Lord of Lords. Paul wrote of it clearly in his Epistle to the Philippians. He wrote of the coming day when *“God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:9-11).

There is no question in heaven today who Jesus Christ is. The angels and the redeemed saints all worship him. There is no question in hell—*“under the earth”*—who Jesus is. The only place where there is any question is in the small, unbelieving hearts of men and women on this little sin-scarred planet.

But praise God that one day He will be known clearly as Lord. We long for that day when His name will no longer be spoken in mockery, but declared in truth with every tongue confessing, that Jesus Christ is indeed Lord, *“to the glory of God the Father.”*

“They said to him, ‘What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?’ He answered them, ‘I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too do you?’ And they reviled him, and said, ‘You are His disciple; but we are disciples of Moses.’” John 9:26-28

One of the most helpful commands in Scripture is to “[speak] the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). While this is truly possible, only through the Holy Spirit, it should always be our goal. Sometimes, I find that looking at the opposite of something can be instructive. It can give us deeper insight. Just as truth can be spoken in love, it can also be spoken in hate.

There is an example of this in John 9, where the Pharisees and the self-righteous religionists repeatedly interrogate the blind man whom Jesus had healed. Growing frustrated, the man asks them why they keep asking him about this miracle. *“Do you want to become His disciples too?”* His answer enraged them, *“And they reviled him and said, ‘You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.’”*

Their statement contained an element of truth—the healed man was indeed in the process of coming to know and believe in Jesus Christ. John 9 is a beautiful revelation of his becoming a follower of Jesus. Yet, the Pharisees used this truth as an insult, *“they reviled him”* with it. And as for their claim of following of Moses, it was only a half-truth because they had distorted his teachings.

This passage reminds us that truth can be spoken in hate. Christians often face persecution not because of lies, but because of truth spoken with contempt—with a reviling attitude. Yet, Jesus provides the perfect example of how to respond: *“While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously”* (1 Peter 2:23).

As followers of Christ, we must be careful not only of what we say, but how we say it. Even when we speak truth, it should always be spoken in love.

“Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘So You are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’” John 18:37-38

On the night our Lord was betrayed, He was subjected to multiple phases of what can only be called a kangaroo court—an illegal and utterly unjust trial. Eventually they dragged Him before Pilate, the Roman governor. As Jesus stood before him, Pilate asked, “*So you are a king?*” Jesus answered, *‘You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I come into the world, to bear witness to the truth.’*” Pilate said to him with skepticism and arrogance, “*What is truth?*”

How relevant this ancient scene is to our world today. As Jesus Christ stood before the Roman governor, He declared, “*For this I have been born.*” Whenever Jesus speaks, we should pay attention. He came into the world to bear witness to the truth. And truth matters. Even in a day like ours—when people ask, “Who can say what truth is?” and use phrases like, “your truth” and “my truth”—subjectivism seems to rule. But deep down, we know that truth is real, and it matters.

Jesus said, “*For this I have come into this world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.*” On another occasion, He declared, “*I am the ... truth.*” (John 14:6). The Truth of God was standing in front of Pilate—yet Pilate dismissed Him.

Many today respond as Pilate did—with doubt or indifference. Perhaps you have thought, “That may be true for you, but not for me.” But truth is not subjective. Whoever responds to Jesus—the One who is the Truth,—will find life, forgiveness and a transformed relationship with God.

I urge you, if you are reading this devotional: respond to Jesus Christ. He came to die for you and me, He rose again, and He will return. These are not just claims—they are truth. He is the Truth.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12

I have asked—and sometimes people ask me—what it means to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:12 beautifully ties together two key verbs: *receive* and *believe*. To believe in Jesus is to receive Him, and to receive Him is to believe in Him. But what does that actually mean? Believing in Jesus isn’t merely acknowledging His existence. To believe in Jesus means to trust in Him, to rely upon Him, and to receive Him personally into your life.

When we receive Jesus, we receive a person. We believe truth about who He is and what He has done for us. You really can’t have one without the other. When you come to Christ, you may not fully understand everything, but you believe in the truth about Him: that He is the Son of God, that He gave His life for you, died in your place, and rose again. Belief is not just an intellectual agreement with a creed—it is a personal response of coming to Him and receiving Him.

John 12:1 links these two verbs—we receive Him and we believe in His name. We must not separate what God has put together. Jesus Himself uses the same two verbs in John 7, *“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive”* (John 7:38-39).

To believe in Jesus Christ is to respond to Him personally and to believe the truth about Him. When you do, He comes to dwell in you spiritually through His Holy Spirit.

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and disclose it to you.”

John 16:13-14

Before Jesus left, He taught His disciples about the Holy Spirit and assured them that they would not be left alone. He told them, *“I will not leave you as orphans”* (John 14:18). One of the things Jesus mentioned repeatedly about the Holy Spirit is that He delights in glorifying and magnifying the Son of God. *“He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and disclose it to you.”*

The Holy Spirit delights in taking the things of Christ and opening them up and revealing them to us. Before we came to know Christ, the Bible may have seemed like a dry, religious book. But now, with the Spirit of truth indwelling us, Scripture comes alive. Through the Spirit, we see Jesus more clearly and understand His teachings more deeply. One way you can be sure you are on the right track in your Bible study is this: are you seeing more of Christ? The Holy Spirit came to take the things of Christ and disclose them to us.

The Spirit loves to magnify Jesus Christ, and when you and I are filled with the Spirit, we will desire to glorify and magnify Christ as well—at work, at home or at play. The Holy Spirit within us wants to glorify Christ.

As we fix our eyes on Jesus, the Holy Spirit reveals more of Him to us. We become more Christ-like, and our lives can point others to Him. Spirit-filled Christians will draw attention to Christ in such a way that He is glorified and magnified.

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
John 3:16*

Have you ever noticed that when the New Testament speaks of God's love for us, it almost always uses the past tense? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"* and *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us"* (1 John 4:10).

Why is this significant? Because the full measure of God's love for us is not merely found in the statement, "God loves you," but in a statement that points back to a truth. God loved us enough to give His Son for us. The past tense emphasizes that His love is rooted in His great act of love, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). So much flows from that—God loved me when I was His enemy, and He gave His Son for me. Now that I am His child, I can bask in the present tense reality of His love God for me.

As you read the Bible, I encourage you to watch for this pattern. The New Testament repeatedly states *"God so loved us."* While there are a few exceptions, the emphasis on past tense is intentional. Every time you see the past tense nature of God's love, remember He is reminding you of the great demonstration of His love, the great proof of His love—that He *"did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"* (Romans 8:32). God so loved you, that He gave His only begotten Son—for you.

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin because they do not believe in Me.” John 16:8-9

What is the most destructive sin you can think of? The Bible underlines the awful reality of sin, but it highlights one sin in particular—the sin of unbelief. When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse, He assured His disciples, *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever”* (John 14:16). Jesus then explained, *“When He comes, [He] will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment.”* The Holy Spirit’s ministry to the world is quite different from His ministry to believers. To the world, He is a divine prosecuting attorney. To believers, He is their Comforter.

Jesus is very specific in what the Holy Spirit will convict the world of: sin, righteousness and judgment. But I want to focus on verse 9—the Holy Spirit *“will convict the world...concerning sin because they do not believe in me.”* The sin of unbelief is what keeps people from Christ. The Bible records stories of adulterers, murderers, liars, and thieves who found forgiveness in Christ. But unbelievers who reject Christ remain in their sin, approaching eternity in their guilt and shame.

That is why the author of Hebrews warns, *“Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart”* (Hebrew 3:12). Unbelief takes the very word of God and doesn’t believe it. John writes, *“The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son”* (1 John 5:10). To reject the gospel is to call God a liar, not just about trivial matters, but about His very Son.

Never minimize the seriousness of unbelief. The Holy Spirit has been sent to convict the world of this sin because it is the one sin that separates us from salvation and relationship with God.

“Therefore they were saying to him, ‘How then were your eyes opened?’ He answered, ‘The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam, and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.” John 9:10-11

As I was recently reading in John 9, I was grabbed by this phrase: *“The man who is called Jesus.”* These words came from the man who had been blind from birth, until He encountered Jesus Christ and his life was radically changed—big time!

He could see! He was no longer blind. The people around him were astonished and began to question, “Is this really the guy who was blind?” So they asked him what had happened? *“He answered, ‘The man who is called Jesus made some clay, and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam, and wash;’ so I went away and washed, and I received sight.”* What an amazing testimony!

Jesus Christ changes lives. He came to open the eyes of the blind and to set the captives free. There is one God and one mediator between God and men—*“the man who is called Jesus.”* So, enjoy Him today. And when people ask you what has happened in your life, tell them: it was the man that they called Jesus—*Yeshuah*, which means “Yahweh saves” or “the Lord delivers.”

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.”

John 21:25

When John wrote his account of Jesus' life, he was selective in what he included. He tells us, *“Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in His name”* (John 20:30-31).

John echoes this truth in the final verse of his Gospel: If everything Jesus did were recorded, the world itself could not contain the books. That is not hyperbole. He is essentially saying, that telling the full story of Jesus is an infinite task—because Jesus is God, the eternal “I AM,” the infinite One.

Instead of giving us a world full of books, God gave us one book—the Bible. Although the Bible is finite in length, it is infinite in scope because it is the self-revelation of the eternal, Most High God. The Gospel of John is all about Jesus, God's Son, and the whole Bible, a collection of 66 books, is an inexhaustible treasure revealing His glory.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but [God's] words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35). Even in eternity, we will continue discovering revelations of God Himself through His Word. God did not give us an infinite number of books; He gave us one infinite book.

Pick up God's word today and read about our infinite Savior—the eternal One who, from all eternity, purposed to bless us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered Him, ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’ He said to them, ‘I am He.’” John 18:4-5

From the very first verse of Scripture, God reveals Himself as our Creator: *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1). However, He does not reveal everything about Himself all at once. Instead He reveals Himself throughout history—a process theologians call *progressive revelation*.

In Exodus 3, God reveals Himself to Moses, appearing to him in the midst of a burning bush. Filled with awe, Moses asks for His name. God replied, *“I AM WHO I AM ... Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’”* (Exodus 3:14). The name, “I AM,”—meaning Yahweh, the self-existent One—is regularly translated in our Bible as “LORD” in all capital letters.

Centuries later, when Jesus came, He often prefaced His claims with this same divine “I AM” statement: *“I am the bread of life,”* (John 6:35); *“I am the resurrection and the life,”* (John 11:25); *“I am the Good Shepherd,”* (John 10:11).

In fact many of Jesus’ fabulous claims were prefaced this way. But one that always touches my heart, is when they came to arrest Jesus in Gethsemane. Judas arrived with a Roman cohort—somewhere in between six hundred to a thousand soldiers—armed with torches, swords and clubs. As they approached, Jesus met them with a question, *“Whom do you seek?”* They answered, *“Jesus the Nazarene.”* And when Jesus simply replied, *“I am,”* the soldiers *“drew back and fell to the ground”* (John 18:3-6). What an amazing display of His power and sovereignty!

Yet despite this, they still arrested Him—failing to recognize who stood before them. Today, many still refuse to bow to Jesus. But a day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Christ is Lord. (Philippians 2:10-11). I hope you know Him as your Lord—the great “I AM” of Scripture. And I hope you have bowed your knee to Him. If not, let me encourage you to respond to Him today.

The Danger of Religious Scruples

Day 21

“They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium; and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.”

John 18:28

How easy it is to be caught up with religious rituals and religious scruples—so much so that we miss the reality of a relationship with our Creator. We are all susceptible to this, but I find the most profound example in the actions of the Jewish leaders when they were condemning Christ to the cross.

In John 18, after putting Jesus through a sham trial, they led Him from Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, into the Praetorium—the official residence of the Roman governor. Yet, because it was a Gentile place and they feared they might be defiled before the Passover, *“they themselves did not enter.”* What a tragic irony. They had their religious scruples, even as they were missing the whole point of the Passover. They were condemning the very One to whom the Passover pointed—the Passover Lamb, the Christ, the Messiah! Paul writes in Corinthians, *“For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”* (1 Corinthians 5:7).

It is possible to be very religious and not have a heart for God. These Jewish leaders exemplify this in one verse. They didn't want to be defiled, but they understood nothing about real defilement—the defilement of sin that separates us from God and can only be cleansed by the blood of Christ. Jesus dealt with our defilement when He came and bore our sins in His body on the cross. May we never let religious rules and religiosity keep us from seeing the reality of what the Bible is stating and the very reason why Christ came.

Lord, deliver us from religious scruples that would keep us from real relationship with You.

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” John 6:35

I remember reading a book by Paul Brand, a physician and missionary to India, who had a real gift of teaching using the human body to illustrate spiritual truths. In one of his teachings about the food that God has provided for us, he wrote about how, in our modern world, we rarely experience true hunger. Because we snack so often, we rarely allow ourselves to get hungry. He noted that if we allowed ourselves to get hungry, food would taste better.

That thought has stayed with me because, like many others, I often eat just to eat. Jesus used this analogy of hunger to get to a deeper truth—the real need of our soul. Sadly, many of us try to sustain ourselves on spiritual junk food, snacking all the time instead of truly coming to Him and being fed by Him.

In John 6, after feeding the five thousand, Jesus addressed the crowd that sought Him only for more physical food. He told them they were looking for the wrong kind of food. He said, *“He who comes to Me will not hunger”* (John 6:35), and *“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life”* (John 6:54). Of course, He wasn’t speaking of physical consumption, but of coming to Him to listen and to digest His words.

Are you spiritually hungry today? Don’t try to live on just a little snack here and there. Come to Jesus. Spend meaningful time with Him. Feast on His Word. Chew on it. Meditate on it. Digest it. When you do, you will discover that He is who He claimed to be—*“the bread of life.”*

We were not designed to live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

“While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.” John 12:36

As you read this, you may find yourself thinking, “I’ve been hearing about Jesus a lot lately.” That is no coincidence—God is bringing His Son before you. When Jesus was here, He declared, “*I am the light of the world*” (John 8:12), and urged, “*While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light*” (John 12:36). God is bringing circumstances into your life to draw your attention to Jesus, and to expose you to who He is and—hopefully—to convince you that He is the Son of God. Trust Him.

This simple yet profound statement in John 12:36 describes the very reason God sent His Son. Jesus came into a world of darkness as the light of the world. When we place our trust in Him as our Savior and Lord—when we “*believe in the light*”—we become sons and daughters of light.

You might be tempted to respond, “I’ll think about it,” or “I need to learn more,” or “maybe later.” There are many ways to say *tomorrow*, *mañana*, *someday*. Jesus’ words, however, carry a sense of urgency: “*While you have the light, believe in the light.*”

If you have never put your faith in Jesus Christ, let me encourage you—don’t put Him off. Believe in the Light today, so that you may become a child of God.

“He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.” John 3:29-30

John the Baptist is a great pattern for us in so many ways. But I want to draw our attention to this one statement he made when his followers came to him, concerned that more people were going to Jesus than to him. John’s ministry was declining as he fulfilled his God-given purpose of pointing people to Christ. John responded with this simple, but profound, statement: *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*

This is the secret to joy in the Christian life—Christ must increase, and we must decrease. John said in essence, “I am just the best man at the wedding, and I rejoice to hear the bridegroom’s voice.” When we have this perspective in life, it will give us joy. In fact, John could say, *“this joy of mine has been made full”* because he found joy in seeing people coming to Christ.

So often we are concerned about people’s opinion of us, recognition, or how many people follow us on social media. But to have true joy, we need to seek to magnify Christ and be willing take a back seat to the One that we serve

Think about that today—in your life, your work, your home, and in every sphere of influence. Are you seeking to magnify Christ? May our hearts truly echo John’s words: *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture says, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:37-39

The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. He becomes within us a stream of living water—not only satisfying our spiritual thirst but also becoming a wellspring of life and blessing to others. As Jesus said, *“From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”*

When Jesus spoke these words about the Holy Spirit, He used the future tense. The Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified—He had not yet ascended into heaven. In fact, every mention of the Spirit in the Gospels looked ahead to when the Holy Spirit, the source of life and living water, would come.

That time came on the Day of Pentecost, and from then on, every reference to the coming Holy Spirit was past tense. And His coming into our lives is stated in the past tense. When you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit took up residency in your life. He indwelt you and became the source of living water that not only satisfies your thirst, but overflows to bless others.

What a joy to know Him and to enjoy intimacy with our Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Remembering the Ultimate Sacrifice

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13

As Americans, we are particularly grateful for the freedoms that we have in this country. On days like Memorial Day, we pause to commemorate the great gift of freedom. But it is not merely a gift—it was earned or purchased through the sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that we might have this kind of freedom. It is very appropriate that we honor those who have served our country and remember those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy.

When we speak of someone that has made the supreme sacrifice, we understand what that means. Universally, this touches people, whether they know the Lord or not. But we who know the Lord, should be overwhelmed by the fact that when God became man, He gave His life for us. He laid His life down. Jesus made the supreme sacrifice. He said, *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”*

And yet, Jesus did not give His life only for His friends—He gave his life for His enemies. Jesus may have been called the friend of sinners (Luke 7:34), and praise God for that! But Scripture tells us that He did not lay His life down for those who were friendly toward Him, but for those who were hostile to Him—His enemies (Romans 5:10).

We were those enemies—shaking our fist at Him, spitting at Him, and rebelling against Him. Yet even from the cross, He prayed, *“Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34). He gave His life for His enemies. *“Greater love has no one than this.”*

As children of God, we marvel at Jesus’ sacrifice and great love for us. *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10).

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.” John 15:20

On Jesus’ last evening with His disciples, the same evening He was going to be dragged before the authorities in a sham trial, and the day before He would be crucified, He said to them, *“Remember the word that I said to you.”* His call to remember was more than merely not forgetting. He was calling them to intentionally think about His words—to bring them to mind, to consider them deeply. In essence He was saying, *“Remember what will soon happen to Me.”*

Jesus often urges us to remember—to remember what He said, remember His example. He warned them, and us, not to expect better treatment than He received. He reminded them that when persecution comes, remember it was first aimed at Him. *“A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”*

There is something powerful in remembering. The term is used throughout the New Testament. Jesus used it specifically to prepare us for suffering. Are you experiencing hardship today? Remember, Jesus understands suffering intimately. He has been there. He endured suffering. He was tempted and tested in every way that we are, yet He did not sin.

So, remember this and take courage: your Master knows what you are going through. Do not expect better treatment than what He received. Though they crucified Him, He conquered death—and He now lives in you. His Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of Christ, is called the Comforter. Remember these things.

*“If therefore the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed.”
John 8:36*

I am very thankful to have been born and raised, and lived my life in a country that cherishes freedom. Freedom means so much. Yet the Bible speaks of a far greater freedom—not political or financial—but spiritual freedom, the kind of real freedom Jesus described as being *“free indeed.”*

When you come to know Jesus Christ, you begin to realize that He has set you free—from your guilt, from the corruption of your sin, from the heavy, depressing weight of sin. He set us free from the bondage of sin so that we don’t have to be a slave to sin any longer. Through Christ, we are truly set free.

This is real freedom—essential and eternal freedom. It begins when a sinner finds that God, the Savior, has removed their sin *“as far as the east is from the west”* (Psalm 103:12). He has made you a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). You are His adopted child who can cry out to Him, *“Abba, Father,”* (Romans 8:15). Imagine, you can go to the Creator of the universe and call him “Dad.” That’s real freedom. Freedom, indeed.

You may have freedom from financial pressure or health concerns. You may be living a comfortable life and believe you have everything under control. But if you don’t have spiritual freedom—the freedom that only Christ can give—it is just a shell of what real freedom is.

On the other hand, I meet believers—perhaps you are one of them—who are experiencing the liberty and freedom of being in Christ, even in the midst of trials, financial struggles or health issues. As Jesus promises, *“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

Real freedom comes from Christ alone. He is the true Liberator.

"He therefore answered, 'Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I can see.'"
John 9:25

There is nothing quite like the privilege and joy being able to speak to others about Jesus—to witness, to tell them about our Savior. When we come to Christ, God places within us a desire to tell others what He has done in our lives.

One fear that many of us have that can keep us from speaking about Jesus to others, is that we don't know enough. But as a believer, there is one thing you *are* an expert on: your own story. You don't need to be a theologian or know all the intricacies of the gospel. You simply need to tell others what Jesus Christ has done for you.

The blind man in John 9 is a great example for us. When he was questioned about Jesus, he said, *"Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; [But] one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I can see."* He didn't have all the answers. He was still in the process of understanding who Jesus is. He was coming to the realization that Jesus was more than a just man or a prophet. But when they asked him what he knew about Jesus, he was able to say the one thing he *did* know, *"Whereas I was blind, now I can see."*

Every Christian can say this, *"I may not know everything, but one thing I do know—I was blind, but now I can see. I was guilty, but now I'm forgiven. I was empty, but now I'm fulfilled and satisfied."* From there, you can share your own story of what Christ has done for you.

Look for an opportunity to tell someone today. You are the expert on your own life, and that is something no one can dispute.

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” John 14:27

In the opening of John 14, our Lord speaks these comforting words to His disciples, *“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me”* (John 14:1). Then, towards the end of chapter, He repeats this reassurance: *“Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”*

Recently, I saw two other passages in John that deepened my understanding of this great exhortation. In John 12, we see that Jesus—our sympathetic high priest—was Himself troubled as He contemplated the agony of the cross. He said, *“Now My Soul has become troubled; and what should I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But for this reason, I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name”* (John 12:27-28). Jesus’ spirit was stirred and troubled, but He didn’t cave into fear or despair.

The second passage is found in John 13:21, where Scripture records that as Jesus considered that one of His own disciples was going to betray Him, He *“became troubled in spirit.”* Yet once again, He did not give in to that—and He tells us not to either.

Jesus knows what it’s like to be troubled. When He was here, He endured suffering, betrayal, and sorrow. Yet He did not let this overcome His heart. As Scripture tells us, He was *“tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15). When you are tempted to be troubled or fearful, know that your Lord understands—and He enters into your situation. You are not alone. Just as Jesus chose to trust the Father’s will in the midst of His troubles, He calls us to do the same.

Are you tempted to be troubled today? Believe in God. Believe in the One who spoke these words—Jesus Christ.

“There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.” John 1:6-7

I am amazed that in the prologue to the Gospel of John—those eighteen verses which are packed with profound truth about Jesus Christ, the Word in the flesh—there is, you might say, an interruption. In verse six, the focus shifts to another man: *“There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.”*

Jesus Himself said of John, *“Among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist”* (Matthew 11:11). Of course, our Lord is the exception to that, but even so, this is high praise from our Lord. John the Baptist spoke with power and authority, and his mission was clear: he came as a witness to point others to Christ.

Scripture tells us that people came to John asking questions: *“Who are you? Are you the Christ? Are you the prophet Elijah?”* John answered them, *“I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said.”* (John 1:23). The greatest of men, quoting the Old Testament, described himself merely as a voice preparing the way for Jesus.

John is a great example for us. We too, are called to be voices pointing others to Christ. A voice is not seen, only heard. We need to witness and tell people about our Savior with our voices. Today, ask God to give you boldness to use your lips and your mouth to point people to Christ. In so doing, you will be serving the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

John the Baptist is a pattern for us to follow. Think on that today: be a voice. Speak of Jesus. Point others to Him.



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