

What did Jesus say we must do to follow Him? How did He tell us we could save our lives?

So, before we can have new life, we need to come and die to our selfish ways. That's not the easiest thing to do. Our culture is constantly focusing us on a different direction- feeding our own needs and wants. Dying to our selfish ways is not just a decision, it's a journey. We need to reorient our hearts on God's will above our own. That's what it means to "believe Jesus is Lord"; you've given Jesus total control of your life. And that is evidenced by the way you live your life.

Can you point to a moment where you surrendered yourself entirely to Jesus? If not, that is step one. If so, how are you keeping your daily decisions under the lordship of Jesus? What practices do you have that keep you focused on God and His will in your life? Are there some that you used to have but let slip away? This would be a good time to take an account of what you need to do to keep yourself calibrated to the heart of God.

WRAP-UP

John told us plainly what his purpose was in writing this gospel, it was so that we would believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing in Him we would have life. And believing doesn't mean acknowledging that statement is true, it means living a life that reflects the power in the truth of that statement. If your life doesn't do that, it's time to check your definition of good news.

MEMORY VERSE

John 1:14 NLT - 14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son, and by believing in Him we would have life.

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge – Read through the first chapter of John this week. Notice all the different terms John uses to refer to Jesus. Reflect on what each of them represents in your life.

“Is Jesus King?” Believe and Have Life #1

INTRODUCTION

Get ready for our summer sermon series, we are going to explore the Gospel of John. It has been said that it is shallow enough to wade in, but deep enough to lose an elephant! The Gospel of John is unique. Unlike the other three Gospels it doesn't begin with Jesus' genealogy or birth, it begins with His pre-existence at the time of Creation. It doesn't retell the parables but recounts His miracles. And even in John's description of the last supper, he doesn't mention the bread and the wine, but his is the only gospel that tells us Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Why is this Gospel so different? John tells us his purpose. It is found in our key verse, John 20:31. John specifically chose what he would include so that the reader would believe Jesus is the promised Messiah, Son of God and that we would have life. And while it is clear enough for a first-time reader to get that message, it is complex enough to challenge a bible scholar.

Ice Breaker

How do you get into a pool- by wading in from the shallow end, or jumping into the deep end?

Key Passage

John 20:31 NLT - 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. New Genesis, New Tabernacle

John 1:1-3 NIV - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

If you just read the first three words of John's Gospel, you might think you had opened a different book. Those are the first words from the book of Genesis. John knew many of his audience would recognize that. There was no doubt John was referring to the God of the Old Testament who created all things when he referred to him as "The Word". In that first sentence John challenges us when he says, "the Word was with God and the Word was God." Now how does that work?

John 10:30-33 NIV - 30 I and the Father are one." 31 Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

The Gospel of John is filled with examples of Jesus' deity. This wasn't only a hurdle to John's original audience; it is a hurdle to many today. While we won't try to explain the mystery of the trinity in this study, the concept that Jesus is God is foundational to the Christian faith.

What have you previously heard or studied about Jesus being both God and man? Do you recall any explanations that have helped you to understand this concept? How does John 10:30-33 address the objection that Jesus never claimed to be God?

In calling Jesus "the Word" John uses the Greek word *logos*. *Logos can be defined as meaning "of speech; a word, uttered by a living voice, embodies a conception or idea."* When we think back to Genesis 1, what was the result of God's spoken word? What was the climax of God's spoken creation in Genesis 1:26?

It was in God's mind and His will to create the world and everything in it, and it was through His spoken word that we see creation formed. In calling Jesus "the Word" John recognizes that Jesus existed before He "became flesh" in Bethlehem, and all He did while He walked on this earth gave us an understanding of God's mind and His will for us. God didn't stop speaking in Genesis, He continued a new Genesis through Jesus, His Logos, the Word. Jesus in the flesh was the embodiment of God's spoken word, the Logos that would not fall to sin and death as Adam, the first man, had.

John 1:14 NIV - 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Exodus 40:34 NIV - 34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

1 Corinthians 6:19a NLT - 19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? ...

As John continues to reveal more about "The Word" he says He became flesh and that He dwelled among us. The first time God and mankind dwelled together was back in Genesis. God put man in the garden and walked with us. When sin entered the picture, we no longer had access to the presence of a holy God. But God still wanted to meet with man and so He gave Moses the plans for a tabernacle, a sort of tent where the God of heaven could meet with man on earth. But that meeting was only with the high priest once a year, who had to be ritually cleansed and represented the people before God. God wanted more for us and so Jesus came to tabernacle among us.

How did John describe what we beheld in Jesus (v.14)? What was it that filled the tabernacle when Moses finished constructing it (Ex 40:34)? According to 1 Cor 6:19, where does God's Spirit dwell now?

3. Reframed Gospel, Reoriented Heart

We refer to this book as John's Gospel. Gospel means "good news". But what do we consider the good news of the gospel? It might not be the same news that Jesus brought. For most people "good news" would be something that brings pleasure, or power, or influence. Let's see if that is what Jesus promised.

Luke 9:23 NLT - 23 Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

Matthew 16:25-26 NLT - 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?