



Exploring God's Love through the Bible:
The Revealing of Christ in the Gospel of John
Dec 18, 2016

Initial Reading: John 1:1-14

- Without question, the Apostle John speaks often of love, and in particular, love in the context of the ministry of Christ our Lord.
- Given that the last few weeks we've found our Sunday lessons primarily in the synoptic ("seeing together") Gospels, I felt a quick trip though John would encourage you in the love of God.
- John's Gospel, unlike Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is structured differently, and for a reason. MacDonald writes:

John builds his Gospel around seven public miracles, or "signs." **Each is designed to show that Jesus is God:** (1) Turning the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (Joh 2:9). (2) Healing the nobleman's son (Joh 4:46-54). (3) Healing the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda (Joh 5:2-9). (4) Feeding the five thousand (Joh 6:1-14). (5) Jesus' walking on the Sea of Galilee to rescue His disciples from the storm (Joh 6:16-21). (6) Healing the man blind from birth (Joh 9:1-7). (7) Raising Lazarus from the dead (Joh 11:1-44). In addition to these seven performed in public, there is an eighth sign performed only for His disciples after the resurrection—the miraculous catch of fish (Joh 21:1-14). (Emphasis mine.)

- John gives the Holy Spirit's purpose for this Gospel at the end:

Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

- Consequently, because this Gospel book is evangelistic in nature, one of the most loving things God does for us in John's Gospel is give us such wonderful **revelations** and characterizations of the identity of Christ.
- Our goal today is to examine those revelations, marveling at the love of God in Christ Jesus.

THE WORD

- In our initial reading, John, right away, begins to reveal Jesus as **God** the Son.
 1. He calls Him the Word that was both with God and the Word that was God. (v1)
 2. He describes Him as eternal. (v2)
 3. He describes Him as the Creator of all things. (v3)
 4. He describes Him as the Author of Life (v4) and the Author of Salvation (vv5-13)
 5. He describes the *Incarnation* of Christ! (v14)

- Our Lord's description as *The Word* is significant, especially considering how God's people treat the Word of God these days. This should not be.

*1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**;*

1Jn 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Rev 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

*Rev 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God.***

- Oh, how great is the Love of God in sending the Son!

1Ti 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Joh 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

1. In Scripture, bread is the "staff" of life, a symbol for that which allows man to live.
2. Jesus is true **Manna!**
3. What are your thoughts as you consider the love of God in sending us Living Bread?
4. Note the promise: "He shall live forever." What does this truth do in your mind and heart? Compare to your problems. Should we still have joy?

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Joh 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

1. This verse takes a wonderful physical reality and relates it to the **spiritual**.
2. To be in darkness is to not have light. The world, without true Light, is in darkness:

Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Joh 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

Joh 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

3. To follow Jesus is to have the light of life; to refuse to follow Jesus is to be in darkness.

4. If you are truly following Jesus, you are walking in an increasingly bright light! How does this wonderful and undeserved truth impact your heart? What love!

THE "I AM"

*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Before Abraham was, I am.** Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:56-59)*

1. God, in His mercy, continues to reveal Christ as God the Son in this Gospel.
2. This verse is an obvious allusion to God's statement of His eternal nature before Moses:

Exo 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

Exo 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

3. "I AM" is a declaration of **deity** and an expression of the eternal nature of God's power and authority. The Jews saw it as such judging by their reaction!
4. This truth concerning Christ is still controversial to this very day. But oh friends, the Word was with God and the Word was God!
5. If Christ is not God, His sacrifice is sufficient only for Himself. What does it do for your understanding of God's love to know that God the Son paid your penalty?

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Joh 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

Joh 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Joh 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

1. The image of a shepherd captures great love and care of God in Christ.
2. Jesus, as the good shepherd, watches over us, protects us, leads us to food and water, cares for us when we are ill, ensures the newest babes are fed and healthy, prays for us, and so much more!
3. But unlike a human shepherd, the Good Shepherd laid His life down...for sheep!
4. We, like real sheep (which are notoriously dumb), often fail to remember and appreciate the great sacrifice of the Good Shepherd.
5. How might you be a better sheep due to the Shepherd's great love?

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Joh 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

1. Hallelujah!
2. You might recall this wonderful narrative, where Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, died.
3. Our Lord, filled with compassion (John 11:5, 35-36), went and raised Lazarus from the dead.
4. In love, He demonstrated His power over **death** for Gospel purposes (John 11:4, 15).
5. Amazingly, by her statement of faith, Jesus not only raised Lazarus, but raised Martha as well! Jesus is still raising people from the dead! May we be like Martha, willing to believe Jesus and take Him at His word.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Joh 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Joh 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Joh 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

1. I love MacDonald here: "The Lord Jesus Christ is Himself **the way** to heaven. He does not merely show the way; He is **the way**. Salvation is in a **Person**."
2. There is NO other way. There is NO other truth. There is NO other life. This is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

3. If you believe this, you are loved mightily by God! This knowledge comes ultimately via revelation:

Mat 16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

4. **What kind of love is this? Not only does Christ save us, but in Him we know and have seen the Father!**

5. Truly, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col 2:9)

6. **To have Christ is to have ALL; to not have Christ is to have NOTHING.**

FINAL THOUGHTS:

John reveals the love of God in Christ Jesus in a unique way, laying before us so much of the *loving* character and *divine* identity of our Lord.

We also see in John that Jesus remains stern with those who would abuse the things of God (John 2:14-17), and tender with the worst of sinners (John 8:1-11).

May we grow in our knowledge of Jesus. May we embrace Christ in all things. May we love Him and live for Him more and more!

Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Manifest Yourself to us, oh Lord. Teach us how to obey your commandments! We need You!

Amen.