



The Gospel of John

Seeing is Believing

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

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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

Starting Sunday, September 26th, we will be returning to our sermon series on the Gospel of John. This study guide is intended to be a simple and basic way for us to engage in the passages for each week’s upcoming sermon.

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, and yet most obviously human. The Jesus of John 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
September 2021
Hanover, NH

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 26th

Memory Verse:

When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"

~ John 6:14 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:1-4

Reflection Questions:

- As you think back to the sermon yesterday, what encouraged you most?

- How were you challenged to trust in Christ?

Prayer:

- Spend time thanking God for His grace to you and ask for the strength to trust and obey Him this week.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:5-11

Reflection Questions:

- Why does Jesus ask Philip about where to buy bread? How does Philip respond?
- How was this a test for the disciples? What would faith look like for them, considering the needs of the people who had come to hear Jesus?
- Is there anything concerning about Andrew's response? Is there anything good about it?

Prayer:

- My Lord, provide for my needs, and help me to see the needs beyond my own. Teach me to consider the interests of others first, and to trust You for them.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:12-15

Reflection Questions:

- What did the feeding of the 5,000 reveal about who Jesus is?

- What do the people decide to do as a result?

- Why do you think that Jesus does not go along with them?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to me in Christ; help me to set my mind on Him today.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Lord God, in my weakness and sin, have mercy on me. Forgive me for my doubts, and help me to see You clearly.
- Heavenly Father, help me to love my church, my family, and my community as You have loved me.
- Pray that God would bless the preaching of the gospel at tomorrow's worship service, that He would feed His people and show them his love.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 3rd

Memory Verse:

"But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.'"

~ John 6:20 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:16-21

Reflection Questions:

- What are a few things that especially 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:

- Lord, as we continue to take an up-close look at Jesus, would You please allow all of us to see Him clearly.
- As we do, please don't leave us the same, Lord. We pray and ask that You would challenge us, encourage us, and transform us more and more to reflect Him.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:16-18

Reflection Questions:

- The only other account that we get of this particular scene comes from Matthew. He's a bit more explicit about the storm prior to the approach of Jesus. He says that "...the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them." How do you think that the disciples were feeling at this moment?

- One thing that we could easily overlook here (and in all other scenes within the Gospel accounts actually) is that this is taking place in the normal flow of the disciple's lives. How might you relate to them in this particular stormy moment as you reflect upon your own life right now?

Prayer:

- Ask God to help you see the importance and relevance of the everyday circumstances of your life; good, bad or mundane.
- Ask God to meet you in whatever choppy waters you may be encountering right now. Pray for one other person in the same way.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:16-21

Reflection Questions:

- We're told here that Jesus walked out on the water and *met* them as the "sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing." Or as Matthew put it, while they were, "a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them." What insights or encouragements should we take from this for ourselves?
- At first, as Jesus approached their boat, they perceived Him as one more cause for fear? How might this also be relatable to us?
- In a matter of moments, they went from being frightened to being glad. What brought about this change, and what does it teach us?

Prayer:

- God knows us through and through and 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 6:16-21

Prayer:

- Pray for our worship service tomorrow morning—that we all might see Jesus approaching us in the midst of our various fears.
- Pray for our time together—that we all might worship Him with gladness!

WEEK OF OCTOBER 10th

Memory Verse:

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.'"

~ John 6:35 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:1-21

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from the sermon on Sunday?
- What fears do you have that make it hard to trust in the provision and goodness of God?
- What do those fears reveal about what you love and care about most?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would help you to dwell on His Word this week, and specifically what was communicated about His Word this past Sunday
- Spend time going through those fears you listed above, and ask God for His forgiveness and help in trusting that He will provide what you need even in the midst of fearing things besides Him.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:22-40

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out from the passage?

- Jesus chastises the crowd for wanting Jesus because he gives them bread rather than this “bread of life.” What does Jesus mean by “bread of life?”

- Why do you think our expectations of what God can accomplish frequently end up being so small?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would be working to expand our vision of what He is doing in this world.

- Pray that we would be seeking this “bread of life” rather than whatever we view right now as more important.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:22-40

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think the people demand signs so strongly and consistently?

- Think about what it means to come to Christ and never be cast out. What specific comfort would you feel if you were welcomed, loved, and known in such a way like that?

- Is there anywhere in your life where you are struggling to trust that God will truly give you what you need? What makes those things so hard to trust God with?

Prayer:

- Pray for a specific person or people who you long to see come to trust in God. Ask and pray for help trusting that God's will is being done and that He would use you in bringing this person to come to know and have a relationship with God.

- What do you long to pray for, but are scared to see God's response to? Ask God for confidence even in praying for things to happen that you're scared to see changed.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:1-40

Prayer:

- Pray for the service tomorrow. Pray that God would be preparing the hearts and minds of all who will here God's Word spoken and that it would be planting and growing seeds of faith.
- Pray for wisdom. Pray that God would use the message tomorrow and His Word today to show you how to be thinking about and living in relationship with God in a more faithful, Gospel-centered way.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 17th

Memory Verse: John 6:51

I [Jesus] am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:22-40

Reflection Questions:

- After listening to yesterday's sermon, how do you understand what Jesus meant when He said, "I am the bread of life"?

- Write down three things that struck you from yesterday's sermon.

Prayer:

- Lord Jesus, You alone are the bread of life. When I come to You truly, You truly satisfy my soul—my deepest hungers and thirsts are only satiated by You. Still, I find myself running so many other places. Please help me by Your Spirit's power to come to You for sustenance when I feel inner thirst. Thank you that when I come to You, You will never cast me out. Work these things into me for Your name's sake, Amen.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Exodus 16:1-17, John 6:41-51

Reflection Questions:

- What parallels do you see between the Exodus 16 passage and the John passage? How does understanding the context of the manna in the wilderness help you understand Jesus' claims about Himself as the bread from heaven?
- We see how the pharisees respond to Jesus in this passage. Imagine living in Israel during Jesus' ministry. How would you respond to the claims that He is making here?
- In what ways is it a comfort that no one can come to Christ apart from the Father drawing them? Write down three names of people you will pray for God to draw to Himself:

Prayer:

- Lord Jesus, thank you that You came down from heaven. You did not come as a dictator to control us. You did not come as a professor to merely teach us. Instead, You came as bread to be broken. It is only when I am nourished by Your broken body that I am experience the beginning of eternal life. Please teach me what it looks like to eat of Your flesh today, so that I might experience this true life and offer it to those around me.
- Pray for the three people you wrote down above. Ask that the Father would be drawing them to the Lord Jesus. Pray that He would be opening doors for you to talk with them about the gospel. Pray that God would help you see the opportunities He is giving you to be a part of His work.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:52-59

Reflection Questions:

- How would you explain to someone what it means to feed on Jesus' flesh and drink His blood? Why do you think He uses this kind of language?

- Why must you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood in order to have true life?

Prayer:

- Lord, the language You use in the passage is jarring, but how much more so for You! Thank you for allowing Your body to be broken and Your blood to be shed in order to pay the penalty for our sin. Forgive me for how easily I take the price You paid for granted. Help me drink Your blood and eat Your flesh in the way that brings true life and sets me free from every form of self-righteousness. Thank you for Your incomprehensible love. Give us the strength to comprehend it in higher, deeper, and wider ways. Amen.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:41-59

Prayer:

- Ask God to encourage and inspire all who will facilitate our worship service tomorrow morning.
- Pray that the Spirit of God would be working to make the proclamation of the gospel clear and compelling—bring conviction and encouragement where they are needed.
- Pray that God would be at work amongst us—drawing many to the Lord Jesus to eat from His flesh and drink from His blood.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 24th

Memory Verse:

"Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'"

~ John 6:68 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:41-59

Reflection Questions:

- Write down 3 reflections/observations (things that stood out to you) from the sermon yesterday.

- What did you learn about God, Jesus, and yourself?

- What has changed in your heart and life? How has your belief and conduct changed?

Prayer:

- Pray that the Word of God would nourish you and fill you.
- Pray that your soul would be satisfied by the "bread from heaven."
- Pray that you would be nourished by Christ and not hunger for fleeting and earthly things.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:60-71

Reflection Questions:

- Who are the disciples that are referred to? Were they the twelve?

- Why did some disciples leave?

- How does Jesus know which disciples will leave?

- What can you learn from this?

Prayer:

- Pray for specific people you know who have not come to know the love and grace of Father, salvation through His Son, and the filling and sealing of His Spirit. List them here:

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:60-71

Reflection Questions:

- What do you think Jesus means by 6:62 (“Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”) in response to eating His body and blood?

- What does Jesus tell us about the Spirit and the flesh?

- What is the difference between belief and obeying? Think about the disciples’ response to Jesus in v. 68-69 and Jesus’s response in v. 70.

- As you meditate on 6:68-70, what do you think it means to be a true disciple?

Prayer:

- Pray for understanding of God’s Word that you may grow in your knowledge and love of God.
- Pray that God would show you areas of your heart and life that are not in conformity to His Son, and pray for help.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:60-71

Prayer:

- Spend some time praying for those who will be gathering at church tomorrow. Pray that the Word of God would dwell in them richly. Pray that the Spirit of God would bring comfort and correction, encouragement and exhortation.
- Pray for the preacher. Pray that God would embolden him and increase his confidence in the power of the Word of God.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 31st

Memory Verse:

*"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.
And I will raise him up on the last day."*

~ John 6:44 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:60-71

Reflection Questions:

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

- What do you feel like the call to action was?

- How can you answer that call in your day-to-day life this week?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would continue to make His Word clear, and that your understanding of it would increase.

- Pray that the message of the gospel would be spread in the Upper Valley, and ask God how He might be using you to spread it.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:44

Reflection Questions:

- How does this verse hit you when you first read it? Make any general observations

- Read 6:25-44. How do you think this would have hit the ears of someone who had crossed a sea to find Jesus?

- If Jesus' words are true, what does that tell you about how someone becomes a Christian?

- How does God draw people to himself?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would show you the ways He is drawing you to Himself, and pray that you would respond in faith.
- Pray that God would help you respond to His sovereignty over salvation with praise instead of grumbling.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6:65

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus doubled down on His statement in the midst of His disciples' grumbling?

- How do you think some people came to be called disciples without believing in what seems like a core belief for Jesus?

- What kept the Twelve following Jesus, when so many others fell away because of His statement?

- Where is the comfort in this verse? Where is the warning?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would keep His disciples from falling away because of sin, suffering, and idolatry.
- Pray that God's disciples would be marked by their thanksgiving rather than pride because of their salvation.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 6

Prayer:

- Pray that God would prepare His people to hear His Word.
- Pray that the church would respond in faith.
- Pray for those that are preaching, that they would preach with the same clarity and boldness as Christ.



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