



The Gospel of John

Seeing is Believing

**Christ Redeemer Church
Sermon Series Study Guide
Winter 2022**

edited by Pastor Don Willeman, Th. M.

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

On Sunday, January 30th, we will be continuing 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
January 2022
Hanover, NH

WEEK OF JANUARY 30th

Memory Verse:

And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

~ John 8:7 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 7:32-53

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 8:1-6

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think the Pharisees and scribes only bring the woman to Jesus since adultery requires two people?

- Why did the people see a need to test Jesus?

- When do you find yourself in situations where you are tempted to test God?

Prayer:

- Father, give me the humility to ask You for answers when I am confused rather than respond in pride and arrogance by seeking to test Your goodness. Remind me of Your provision and goodness today.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:7-11

Reflection Questions:

- What does Jesus's response reveal about what He cares most about?

- How would you have responded to the Pharisees in Jesus's situation? What temptations might you have felt?

- When do you think the woman felt more shame – in front of the crowd or in front of Jesus alone? Why? Where would you have felt more shame?

Prayer:

- God, please reveal the areas of my life where I am struggling with shame. Father, help me to see my sin first as an offense against You, not only as an offense against others or society's standards of acceptability.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Father, I know I have a judgmental heart at times, help me to see my own sin so that I do not become blind to it or harsh towards others in their sin.
- Father, help me to seek out an attitude of love, grace, and reconciliation towards those who have sinned against me and/or those around me just as Jesus has done for 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 FEBRUARY 6th

Memory Verse:

Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

~ John 8:12 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:12-20

Reflection Questions:

- What does Jesus mean when He refers to Himself as "the light of the world?"

- According to Jesus, what are the implications of walking with Him?

- In what ways have (or are) you currently experiencing "the light of life" that Jesus speaks of here?

Prayer:

- Jesus, thank you for bringing Your light into my life. Give me a willing heart to walk with You. Help me to walk in Your light.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:12-30

Reflection Questions:

- How does Jesus explain His authority and message?

- What does this passage teach us about the Trinitarian reality of God?

- What does Jesus mean when He speaks of being “lifted up?”

Prayer:

- Father, thank You that because Jesus was lifted up for me, You are always with me, and will never leave me alone.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:21-30

Reflection Questions:

- Why does Jesus repeatedly speak of people dying in their sin within these verses? What does He mean by this?

- In verse 25, the Pharisees ask Jesus the question: “Who are you?” One could argue that this is the central question of John’s Gospel. What are the Pharisees failing to see and understand here?

- What are the positive implications of verse 24?

Prayer:

- Thank you, Jesus, that you died for my sin so I wouldn’t need to die in my sin.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Father, help me to grow in my understanding of the words of Jesus.

- Please bless your people with a growing understanding of the gospel as they meet this Sunday morning.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 13th

Memory Verse:

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

~ John 8:31b-32 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:12-30

Reflection Questions:

- What are three things you learned from the sermon yesterday?
- How are you responding to these things? Actions? Heart level response(s)?
- What, specifically, are you praying for/about in response to this?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to me in Christ, in the preaching of Your Word.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:31-47

Reflection Questions:

- What do you understand truth to be? What does it mean? Reflect on v. 31-32.

- The Jews say, “We have one Father – even God,” what is Jesus’ response? Is He harsh? (Who does Jesus say their father is? How does Jesus describe their father?)

- What is the mark of someone who is “of God?” Read John 8:47.

Prayer:

- God of truth, help me to recognize my prejudices and fears. Forgive me for loving myself and fearing others more than loving You and the truth. Father, help me to know more fully what it means to be Your faithful child.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:31-47

Reflection Questions:

- What comes to mind when you think about freedom? What came to mind when the Jews thought of freedom? Read John 8:33.

- Were the Jews correct in saying that they have never been enslaved to anyone physically?

- What does Jesus say about the power of sin and its ability to enslave? Read John 8:34-35. What does the New Testament teach about sin and its power to enslave people? Read Romans 3:23; 6:15-19.

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to me in Christ, for healing my blindness and giving me spiritual sight, and for giving me freedom from the bondage of sin.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, help me be humble at heart and willing to live for You.
- Lord God, bless the preaching of the gospel on Sunday morning. Open the eyes of your people, as well as those who visit to see Christ!

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 20th

Memory Verse:

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me."

~ John 8:42 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:31-39

Reflection Questions:

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

- How has your understanding of freedom changed after meditating on these verses?

- What are some ways you can abide in God's Word this week?

Prayer:

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to make God's Word clear, understandable, and life giving to you.
- Pray that we would be people who seek the truth. Pray that our communities would be changed by the truth of the gospel.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:39-47

Reflection Questions:

- What is/are Jesus's criterion(a) for understanding who our Father is, and how is that different from this crowd's understanding?

- How is Abraham's response to God (see Genesis 12-18) similar/different to this crowd's response to Jesus?

- Jesus is speaking here to Jews who had believed in him (see v. 31). Who or what might believers today rely on as their source of truth rather than the Word of God?

Prayer:

- Pray that we would desire to do God's will.
- Pray that God would illuminate the other things/people we tend to trust in besides God's word.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:48-59

Reflection Questions:

- What statements by Jesus in this passage stand out as provocative? Why might He have made them to a crowd of people who had believed in Him?

- Why would the Jews have picked up stones to stone Jesus after his statement, “before Abraham was, I am?”

- Have you accepted the offer of life that Jesus gives through His Word? If not, what’s keeping you from doing so? If you have, how are you experiencing the gift of life He’s given you now?

Prayer:

- Pray that God’s people would respond to the challenge of His Word with obedience instead of rebellion

- Pray that God would continue to draw people to Himself by His Word.

SATURDAY:

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.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 27th

Memory Verse:

Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

~ John 9:39 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 8:48-59

Reflection Questions:

- Write down 3 reflections/observations (things that stood out to you) from the sermon yesterday.
- What did this passage teach us about Jesus? What did this passage teach us about ourselves?
- What is one specific way God might be calling you to respond to His Word?

Prayer:

- Oh Lord Jesus, truly no one like you has ever walked the earth. You are the great I AM, the God who IS—without beginning or end. So, nothing could ever be more important than knowing You, and yet I confess that so often that is not a priority for me. Help me seek you Lord. Help me know You. Help me walk with You and worship You today, for You alone are worthy of worship. Amen.
- Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to us through Your Son. Please allow me to be a part of Your continued work of revealing Him to the world by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 9:1-17

Reflection Questions:

- What do we learn about one of the reasons that God allows us to experience suffering (like being born blind)?

- Jesus is the Word of God who caused the entire cosmos to come into existence. Yet to restore this blind man, He chose to touch his eyes with mud made by his own saliva. What are ways in your life that Jesus has tangibly shown you His personal care for you?

- What kinds of things do you think might have motivated the Pharisees to not want to see that Jesus made this blind man regain his sight? What kinds of things cause you to operate more cynically instead of by faith? How can you cultivate greater trust in the living God today?

Prayer:

- Lord, we are amazed by sight if we've been blind. But we so quickly forget your grace that enables us to sing "I once was blind, but now I see." Help me be more aware of your sight-producing grace today, and please allow it to overflow into the lives of those around me.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 9:18-41

Reflection Questions:

- Notice the power of this man's testimony. He's an uneducated beggar and yet the Pharisees are left with nothing but ad-hominem attacks against him. Why? Because of the transformation he has experienced through encountering Jesus Christ. When is the last time you shared your testimony with someone? Pray that God would open doors for you to share the work of the gospel in your life with the same kind of irrefutable joy.

- Look at verses 39-41. How can thinking that you see prevent you from being able to see? Can you think of examples of people whose confidence in their perspective makes them blind to the truth? Where in your life might you have this kind of blinding overconfidence?

Prayer:

- Make a list of 3 people who do not yet see Jesus as Lord. Ask God to give them sight and give you sight to see how you might be a part of this work.

- Lord, I know that there are things I am blind to in my life and about myself. "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Ps 139:23-24).

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 9:24-33

Prayer:

- God, please pour out Your Spirit and grant sight to our blind eyes as we worship tomorrow morning. Please enable us to “taste and see” that You are good.

WEEK OF MARCH 6th

Memory Verse:

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

~ Romans 1:21 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Romans 1:18-21

Reflection Questions:

- What does Paul say that we all know about God?

- How do we know these things about God?

- What does it mean that our hearts are darkened? How does this impact what we know?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, thank You for the provision of Your Word this past Sunday. I pray that You would help us to absorb the truth of that Word both on Sunday and throughout our week.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 9:18-23

Reflection Questions:

- Why didn't the Pharisees believe that the blind man had received his sight?

- Why didn't the blind man's parents answer their questions?

- How did their attitudes prevent them from knowing and speaking the truth?

Prayer:

- God of truth, help me to recognize my prejudices and fears. Forgive me for loving myself and fearing others more than loving You and the truth.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 9:35-41

Reflection Questions:

- Why does the formerly blind man believe in Jesus? What has Jesus done for him?

- What does Jesus say He intends to do through His judgment?

- How have the Pharisees become blind? Why does Jesus declare them to be both blind and guilty?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to me in Christ, for healing my blindness and giving me spiritual sight.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, help me be humble at heart and willing to live for you.
- Lord God, bless the preaching of the gospel on Sunday morning. Open the eyes of Your people, as well as those who visit, to see Christ!

WEEK OF MARCH 13th

Memory Verse:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

~ John 10:11 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-6

Reflection Questions:

- In this "figure of speech," who might Jesus be referring to when He speaks of the gatekeeper?

- When Jesus speaks of thieves, robbers, and strangers, who do you think He has in mind? What are these people aiming to do?

- In what ways does Jesus describe the shepherd of the sheep? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, help me to know Your voice better and follow in Your steps this week.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 10:7-21

Reflection Questions:

- Twice in this section Jesus refers to Himself as “the door.” What does He mean by calling Himself a door?

- Based on what we read here, what makes Jesus a “Good” shepherd?

- Jesus speaks of the intentions of the thieves and robbers and contrasts them with His own. Go through these verses and create a two-column comparison of your own.

Prayer:

- Father, thank You for Your goodness towards me. Help me to recognize it throughout my day.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 10:7-21

Reflection Questions:

- Five times in this section Jesus speaks of laying down His life. What things does He say in connection to this? List them.

- Jesus speaks of His sheep knowing Him and knowing His voice. What do you think He means by this?

- Based on what we read in verses 14-18, what do we learn about the Father's heart and involvement as it relates to the Gospel?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing so much of Yourself and Your Son in Your Word. Help me to take in a little more today.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Father, please continue to open my eyes to Your goodness in my life and in the world.
- By Your Spirit God, please be with those tasked to preach Your gospel this Sunday morning. Open all our eyes and hearts to its message. Amen.

WEEK OF MARCH 20th

Memory Verse:

"If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

~ John 10:37-38 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-21

Reflection Questions:

- What are a few things that 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 10:22-30

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out in this passage?

- Why do you think Jesus refuses to give those who are gathered around Him the plain answer they ask for in verse 24?

- Does verse 29 give you comfort? Jesus equates himself with the Father, and He claims that no one can take you from the Father's hand. If this is true, then what does that mean for our salvation in Christ?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would give clarity where we desire to know His will and peace over the things He chooses not to reveal to us.
- Pray that we would trust in the salvation accomplished for us in Christ and not be so tempted to try to justify ourselves before God in whatever way most tempts us.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 10:31-42

Reflection Questions:

- What is the difference between “making yourself God” and what Jesus is doing here?

- Jesus points to the works that He has done as evidence of exactly who He is – not to mention Scripture itself. What are some possible reasons that this does this not convince many of these people?

- Why do you think Jesus returned to the place John had been baptizing?

Prayer:

- Pray that both the church and those who do not know God would trust in the works Jesus has done demonstrating his equivalence and unity with God.
- Pray for specific people in your life who you long to see know Jesus more deeply.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 10:22-42

Prayer:

- Pray that God would prepare His people to hear His Word.
- Pray that those who hear the message would be responsive to that Word.
- Pray for those that are preaching, for the same clarity and boldness Christ demonstrates.



• Christ Redeemer Church •
• P.O. Box 5523, Hanover, NH 03755 •
• office@christredeemerchurch.org •
• www.christredeemerchurch.org •
• Don Willeman, Pastor • 603-643-5588 •