

**SERMON: "BIBLE BASICS – JOHN"**

**TEXTS: NEW TESTAMENT JOHN 1:1-14 and 6:35-40**  
**NEW TESTAMENT JOHN 17:1-3 and 19:28-30**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

I've often tried to warn you about the dangers of looking back too much.

Jesus did not come to this world to preach a message of nostalgia.

"Let's go back to the days of David and Solomon." Instead he talked more about the present and future, announcing that "the kingdom of God has come near."

My suggestion has always been that following Jesus of Nazareth is like driving a car

We should look back some. We should look around some

But more than anything else we should look where we are going

We are following the leader, literally. Moving forward

The gospel writers all do this in their own way.

They all want to take us forward, following Jesus.

They all want to take us forward to the cross and the empty tomb

The story of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection is both the key point and the common thread of each and every gospel account

To get to that end, they all have to start somewhere

And to push the driving imagery a little farther, they begin by backing up.

Think about backing out of the garage to begin your trip.

Matthew goes back to Abraham and David. He starts with the family tree.

Mark goes back, just a little, to the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry as an adult

Luke goes back to Jesus' birth with shepherds and angels, Christmas

John goes back much, much further ... to the beginning of time, creation.

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.**

The primary message of John is that Jesus and the Father are together - one

To make that point, to show Jesus' authority, he goes all the way back, way, way back to show us that Jesus is not just from God, but with God 'in the beginning'

Jesus is God. In the beginning and in the flesh, literally. Verse 14 ...

**And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.**

## A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

John, the last of the four gospels written, some 20-30 years later, is different  
The others all flow with a similar current. Matthew, Mark and Luke are called  
the “synoptic” gospels because they are in a way synonymous.  
Matthew and Luke built on Mark who built on an oral tradition

John sees things and says things differently. Being a Beatles fan,  
I’d suggest Matthew, Mark and Luke are like Paul, George and Ringo  
And John is well, John ... we might say a bit more creative. Sgt. Pepper

John does things differently. He backs up a good bit more,  
gives us a cosmic view from back ‘in the beginning,’ And he, more so  
than the others, includes lots of material the others did not include.

Yes, Luke has his own unique stories – Beloved stories like the Good Samaritan  
and the prodigal and his brother. John gives us more stories, more stuff like  
the raising of Lazarus and all seven of the “I am” statements of Jesus.  
Our second lesson, from chapter six, is the first of those.

### *Show Image – I am the Bread of Life*

**Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me  
will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.  
But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.  
Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who  
comes to me I will never drive away, for I have come down from heaven  
not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.**

The Jesus of John’s gospel is confident. Got to be to make these “I am” statements.  
He tells people here that they will never be hungry, never be thirsty.  
That is admittedly a bit confusing. The disciples express that confusion  
They won’t quite get it until they are on the other side of Easter.  
He’s talking about bread differently. You will hear that language later  
as we break the bread and share the cup – holy communion.

The Jesus of John’s gospel is confident because he knows who he is  
(no telling people he has healed to be quiet in John) He is the Word made flesh  
He knows who he is and what he is here to do. You hear that in verse 39 and 40

**for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will  
of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I  
should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the  
last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son  
and believe in him may have eternal life, and I will raise them up on  
the last day.”**

Jesus is on a mission. To do what God sent him to do ... to raise us up, to save us.  
You know, **“For God so loved the world, he sent his only Son.”**

## CONFIDENT & CONNECTED

That confidence is rooted in Jesus' connection with the Father

He is here to do the Father's will and will do so because he and the Father are one. He makes that connection throughout the gospel from 'in the beginning' to Jesus' last words, "it is finished." Confidence from the cross!

The example I choose to highlight that connection between Father and Son is Jesus' prayer for his disciples from chapter 17. It is part of what scholars call Jesus' 'farewell discourse.' In chapters 13-17, he is preparing them for when he will no longer be with them in person. He is comforting them

He is telling them it will be okay. This is when he tells them (and us) about his Father's house having many rooms, how he is going to prepare a place for us ... what great words of comfort! This is when he shows them servant leadership and washes their feet. This is when he prays for them

### ***Show Image – Jesus Prays for His Disciples***

You ever have anybody pray for you ... out loud, right there with you?

It is powerful, personal. Sure sounds to me like that is what is happening here.

**After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.**

You hear the confidence in his prayer?

**"I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do."**

You hear the connection?

**"Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, for the words that you gave to me I have given to them ..."**

The prayer continues like that ... with a comforting confidence

And it continues, that confidence based on connection, all through John

We see that confidence even on the cross. Yes, Jesus suffers

But in John we don't hear that cry "My God, my God why have you forsaken me."

John has Jesus' last words be simply "It is finished"

### ***Show image – It Is Finished***

## SUMMARY

Jesus has done what he has come to do – to give his life that we might live

I remember a teacher in seminary described John as a U-shaped gospel  
It begins with Jesus in heaven with God creating the cosmos and it ends  
with Jesus, confident he is going back there ... back up there  
He goes back after he has done what he came here to do  
Heaven – down to earth – back up to heaven

I'm so thankful there are four gospel accounts of Jesus' life and work  
There are times I need to hear Jesus' voice crying out in solidarity  
with our brokenness, "my God, my God why have you forsaken me"  
I need a Jesus who has been through hell and back

I also need a Jesus who not only knows the way to heaven, he is that way  
I need both/and. I need Jesus with me and you, us and them  
from the top of that U all the way to and through the bottom,  
and in God's good time to the top ... and all the in between

I appreciate - lean on, depend on - both Jesus' humility and his confidence  
Matthew, Mark and Luke need John and vice versa. And we need all four.

I like how John runs the anchor leg of the gospels,  
finishing with that comforting confidence ... Like a parent saying  
to a frightened child, "Don't worry. I got this. I got you."

My parents taught me how to swim in the ocean, what to do when the current  
takes you back out. Don't try to swim against the current, the undertow.  
Swim parallel to shore for a bit to get out of it, then swim back  
I did that with some success ... but boy did it feel good to feel my dad  
wrap his arms around me and say "I got you."

That's not just a parent-child thing. Many times in my life, I have needed that  
comforting confidence. That I have found in Jesus of Nazareth  
the One who not only shows us the way but is the way  
the one who prepares a place for us ... and prays for us

He is the one who holds you and me, us and them and says "I got you."