

Rev. Reuel Dawal / General

The Gospel According to John / Gospel / John 20:30–31; Proverbs 30:5

PROPOSITION: God has given us the sure testimony of Scriptures so that we will know Christ and believe in him—leading to eternal life.

---

I'm sure many of you noticed that we're not resuming our sermon series on the Songs of Ascents based on the book of Psalms. That's because I think it's no longer what our congregation needs now. (Of course, relevant pa rin naman 'yon sa'tin. Every portion of God's Word is relevant to us. But I believe the recent struggles and issues we had even inside the church is long past, and we've already learned from God's Word at least how we should respond to such trials):

- Looking up to Christ, rather than on men
- Remembering God's salvation, and
- Longing for God's sure restoration.

Pwede pa rin naman natin balikan 'yon in the future, Lord-willing, but for now—let's start a new series on the Gospel According to John.

## Introduction

Now, whenever we begin studying any book in the Bible, it's always best to understand the background of that book. Hindi natin kailangan i-cover lahat ng details, but at least, let's have some understanding of the overarching context and content of the book.

### a. Authorship

Syempre, unang tanong dyan: Sinong nag-sulat? Or sinong "John" 'yong tinutukoy? (e.g., John the Baptist, John Mark, or the Apostle John)

The traditional view throughout church history: The author is John, one of the 12 disciples, the brother of James, son of Zebedee, and one of the inner circle of Jesus's close companions.

- **INTERNAL EVIDENCE:** There are internal evidences that the writer is

a Jew and an eye-witness of Christ. For instance, in **John 1:14**: *"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."*

In **John 21:24**, the author says, *"This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things..."* In verses earlier (v. 20), it is the "disciple whom Jesus loved." He is distinguished from Peter, at kung ico-compare sa ibang gospels, it is most likely John.

- **EXTERNAL EVIDENCE:** Irenaeus (130 AD) wrote, *"Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who had even rested on his breast, himself also gave forth the gospel, while he was living at Ephesus..."* (Note: Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp —> Disciple of the apostle John)

So there's enough evidence that the apostle John is the author of this gospel account. And that implies to us that this was written by an eye-witness. Nakita niya mismo si Cristo, narinig niya si Cristo, at nakasama niya si Cristo.

[TRANSITION]: Now, since aware tayo na may iba pang "Gospels" written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke—is this a different gospel? Ano 'yong relationship ng book of John sa Synoptic Gospels?

## **b. John and the Synoptic Gospels (Similarity & Difference)**

'Yong 3 gospel accounts ay tinatawag na "Synoptic Gospels" dahil hindi katulad ng John, maraming portion ng Matthew, Mark, and Luke na magkakapareho in terms of "content, order and wordings."

Pero hindi ibig sabihin ibang-iba 'yong John.

All of them give account to the same story of the same person Jesus Christ. They show that Christ is the Messiah, the promised Savior. Since they are different authors, they provide different emphases on Christ. **In particular, John provides greater emphasis on the deity of Christ.**

At the same time, may portion na mayro'n sa Matthew, Mark, and Luke na wala sa John. At mayr'on namang mayron si John na wala sa Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

### **Example:**

- No birth narratives and Parables in John
- But only John gives account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

In all the distinctives, **John is more "interpretive."** Meaning, nagbibigay siya ng additional explanation do'n sa words and actions ni Christ or do'n sa situation mismo. For example, look at John 5:18 *"This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."*

This implies to us that **John provides a more theological account of the gospel.** At ito'y para mas makilala ng kanyang audience si Cristo at ang Kanyang mga gawa.

[TRANSITION]: Now, ano ba 'yong historical context nang sinulat ni Apostle John 'to?

### c. Occasion/Historical Context

Most likely, the gospel was written between A.D. 70 and A.D. 100 (which is the end of John's lifetime), and many references would even suggest that it is around A.D. 90.

After the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, the Saducees vanished, and the educated Pharisees competed with other Jewish groups/sects to gain allegiance from the majority of the people. This eventually led to efforts to make Jewish Christians/believers unwelcome in the synagogues (i.e., synagogues are places primarily meant for studying the Jewish law and Scriptures. Synagogues exist in many places throughout the Roman empire where Jewish communities are found).

Now, in the AD 90s, communities within the Roman Empire increasingly accomodated the veneration of the emperor as divine (i.e., Emperor Domitian). Jews are exempted from this imperial cult. **But when Jewish believers are excommunicated from the synagogues, and they wouldn't participate in the honoring of the emperor, they are viewed as disloyal citizens of the empire.**

Against this social pressure, John writes another gospel account and urges his audience to stand firm in recognizing and believing in Jesus as the Christ and Son of God, who is both the fulfillment of Jewish hope

and the ultimate Lord.

That is the occasion and the situation of the Christians back then, and most likely, 'yon din ang nag-udyok kay John na sumulat ng bagong gospel account bilang dagdag patotoo 'don sa existing na 3 gospel accounts. And it must be his hope that this gospel account will help further establish the Jewish and Gentile Christians in their faith.

## d. Outline

Hence, John provides his gospel account with this basic outline:

- Prologue/Introduction — John 1: 1-18
- Public Ministry — John 1:19-12:50 (including 7 signs and miracles of Christ)
- Private Ministry — John 13-20 (including discourse with disciples, and the greatest sign [death & resurrection])
- Epilogue/Ending — John 21

And that is the basically what we will go through in this sermon series on the gospel according to John (\*which I still don't know kung kailan matatapos).

*[TRANSITION]:* Ngayon, bago po tayo pumunta sa John 1:1, simulan muna natin do'n sa purpose mismo ni John sa pag-sulat nito. Why did he wrote this gospel? Let's read once again, John 20:30-31.

Unlike the other gospel accounts, John makes his purpose clear here: It is to proclaim the **true identity of Jesus**, that he is the Christ and the Son of God, so that people will believe in him and be saved.

Ibig sabihin po: Para ikaw ay maligtas at magkaroon ng buhay na walang hanggan, kinakailangan mong makilala si Jesus at maniwala sa Kanya, at ito mismo ang layunin ni Juan at ito rin ang layunin sa pag-aaral ng gospel na 'to.

**PROPOSITION:** This morning, we will learn that God has given us the sure testimony of Scriptures so that we will know Christ and believe in him—leading to eternal life.

And we will look at the **(1)** truthfulness of the gospel, **(2)** the content of the gospel, and **(3)** the aim of the gospel.

First, John's purpose statement reveals...

## Main Point 1: The Truthfulness of the Gospel

John 20:30 - *"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book"* (repeated in John 21:25)

What signs? Signs that demonstrate the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, as the Son of God. And according to John, Jesus did them in the presence of his disciples. Meaning, may eye-witnesses. Nakita at narinig nila mismo si Cristo.

This is actually what John repeatedly includes in the gospel: **There are sure testimonies to Christ.** May mga tiyak na patotoo patungkol kay Cristo.

For example:

- **The witness of John the Baptist** — John 1:6-7 - *"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him."*
- **The witness of God the Father (through Christ's miracles)** — John 5:36-37 - *"But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me..."*
- **The witness of other people (after raising Lazarus)** — John 12:17 - *"The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness."*
- **The witness of John himself (during crucifixion)** — John 19:35 - *"He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe."* (Repeated in John 21:24)

Going back to John 20:30, John is saying here that although not everything is provided in this gospel account, there's enough testimony to prove the identity of Jesus Christ. May sapat na patotoo at ebidensya para patunayan at makilala mo na si Jesus nga ang Anak ng Diyos at Tagapagligtas. At dahil sa mga patotoo na 'to, maniwala ka. Sumampalataya ka.

## A. Challenge and Objections by People

Now, apparently—despite these testimonies—there are many people today who are like Thomas. **(See verse 25)**. People would argue today, “Unless I see God, I won’t believe that he exists... Unless I see Christ resurrected, I will not believe...”

Even if you show them Scriptures, they won’t believe. They’ll argue: “Sulat lang naman ‘yan ng tao... Gawa-gawa lang ‘yan ng tao.”

### a1. Written and made-up only by men

To answer this, we quote 2 Timothy 3:16 *“All Scripture is breathed out by God...”* 2 Peter 1:20-21 *“... no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation... [It is not] produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God... carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

So hindi ‘to basta sinulat lang ng tao. Ito’y sinulat ng mga tao ayon sa pagkilos ng Espiritu ng Diyos sa kanila. Kaya ‘yong sinulat nila ay galing din mismo sa Diyos. **Bagama’t sinulat ng tao, ito’y mga salita ng Diyos.**

At paano natin masasabi na totoo ‘yong mga nakasulat sa Bible at hindi gawa-gawa lang? Marami tayong arguments na pwedeng gamitin. Even history and archeology will give testimony.

But just consider how the early witnesses died. For instance, historians said that the apostle Peter was crucified upside-down. Why would the early Christians be willing to die? Bakit di na lang sila mag-recant? Bakit hindi na lang nila sabihin, “Ay, joke lang naman ‘yong faith namin kay Christ.”

Why? Because they know it is true. They know that everything that Christ said and did is true... Hindi gawa-gawa lang na kwento. They are facts.

*[Transition]:* Now, others will still argue, “Eh kahit pa, hindi na accurate ‘yong Bible. 2,000 years ago pa si Christ. Impossible namang accurate pa rin ‘yong nasa Bible ngayon. Malamang marami nang edited or mali dyan.”

## a2. The Scriptures must be old and inaccurate

Tama naman na hindi na na-discover (or hindi pa nadi-discover) 'yong original manuscripts ng Bible, 'yong mismong sulat ng mga apostles. Since iba pa 'yong sinusulatan noon, eventually nag-deteriorate 'yong mga manuscripts. Kaya ginawa ng early Christians noon, nag-gawa sila ng mga copies.

And archaeology affirms that we still have **reliable copies** of those original manuscripts.

For instance, the oldest New Testament manuscript discovered is dated around 150 A.D. Kung 'yong original ay sinulat ng 90 A.D., hindi naman sobrang layo ng gap do'n sa original manuscripts.

And these copies are so great in number.

**Trivia:** How many manuscripts of ancient Greek or Latin authors are found? (e.g., Aristotle, Homer)... Less than 20.

How about Scriptures?

- OLD TESTAMENT: Over 3,000 Hebrew manuscripts of the OT, over 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate, over 1,500 manuscripts of the Septuagint, and over 60 manuscripts of Aramaic version.
- NEW TESTAMENT: More than 5,700 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, and between 20-25,000 copies of the NT in other languages.

Gano'n karami 'yong existing old manuscripts of the Bible. And when scholars evaluated these manuscripts, there's only minor differences.

**Same contents. Same story. Same message. Same truths.**

Kaya 'pag binasa mo 'yong Bible in good English translation, you can have the assurance that it is still accurate. 'Yong mga nakasulat dito sa Bible patungkol kay Cristo ay pareho lang 'don sa mismong nangyari na na-witness 'nong original authors.

*[Transition]:* Now, others will still argue, "Kahit may historical evidence na, eh mahirap pa rin maniwala, kahit ang hirap isipin na pwedeng mangyari 'yong mga sinasabi dyan sa Bible."

## a3. The Scriptures cannot be true (inconveivable)

Many refuse to believe because what the Bible proclaims are hard to understand. Hindi maarok. (e.g., God becoming human, virgin birth, miracles, resurrection). And because these are not natural, they won't believe.

But just because something cannot be fully explained does not mean it is not true. (Hindi porket hindi natin maunawaan ang isang bagay eh hindi na 'yon totoo.)

EXAMPLE: Falling in love. Can I explain exactly how my wife fell in love with me? No. But I can believe it is true, because it is.

At hindi porket hindi natin nakita mismo si Cristo na nabuhay, namatay, at nabuhay muli—eh hindi na 'yon totoo at hindi dapat tayo maniwala.

EXAMPLE: You believe in gravity, right? But you cannot see it.

"Eh at least 'yong gravity, nao-observe mo. May observable proof." So is the Scriptures!

Scriptures say that is "all have sinned... no one is righteous." Look around! Look at yourself! There's enough proof. Only Scriptures give us an accurate explanation of our reality.

Scriptures say that because Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead, believers receive newness of life. Then, look around. If you're a Christian, look at yourself. Sinners get converted, we became changed. That is observable evidence that Christianity is true.

**Friends, the Christian faith is indeed beyond human reason... but it is not unreasonable. (Repeat)**

...

## **B. Implication: Sheer Unbelief**

Of course, people can raise many more objections to the truthfulness of the Gospel. But at the end of the day, it is sheer unbelief to deny the testimony of God's Word. (Kaya hindi matanggap ng tao ang mensahe ng ebanghelyo eh dahil sadyang ayaw niya lang paniwalaan 'to).

Yes, it is ultimately by the Spirit's work that man shall believe the testimony of Scriptures. And we will cover that as we go along the gospel. But what we need to establish here is that the Scriptures itself is

true. And it is sheer unbelief to deny it.

EXAMPLE: Why do believe the news, at least some of them? 'Pag may nag-report tungkol sa sinabi ng favorite politician mo, you believe. Kahit wala ka naman do'n. Kahit iba 'yong eye-witness.

If we believe the testimony of men concerning men, why don't we believe the testimony of men concerning God? Concerning Christ?

### **C. Apply: Scriptures are true, therefore embrace and believe it**

Friends, as John is saying here, the gospel is true. The Scriptures is true. These are facts about Christ and there are many witnesses, including John, who gives us a sure testimony that it is indeed true.

Proverbs 30:5 also reads, *"Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."*

Therefore, as Christ told Thomas, "Do not disbelieve, but believe." Because the Bible give us facts and truth, we can embrace it and believe it.

So before you read and while you read Scriptures, ask God for understanding and faith. Ask God to remove any doubts.

If there are any confusions, search diligently for answers. But even if there are things still unclear, settle in your hearts that the Lord will make it clear to you later on (i.e., as you mature, or once we finally see him face to face).

What's ultimately important is that you understand the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[TRANSITION]: And that's what John tells us next in this purpose statement. After the truthfulness of the gospel, *second*, John reveals...

## **Main Point 2: The Content of the Gospel**

John 20:31 - *"... but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus*

*is the Christ, the Son of God..."*

That's the overarching content of John's gospel account: It's about Jesus. He talks about Jesus so that people will know and believe in him as the Christ, the Son of God.

Take note: Faith here involves not just believing *in* Jesus in and of itself, but believing *that truth concerning him*—believing him for who he is, that he is *"the Christ, the Son of God."*

Ito 'yong dalawang designations or features na in-emphasize ni John throughout his gospel.

## **A. Jesus as "the Christ"**

That Jesus is "the Christ" means he is the Messiah, the anointed One promised since the Old Testament. Siya 'yong inaasahan ng mga Hudyo na darating na Tagapagligtas. So throughout the gospel, John shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

Take for instance:

- John 5:39 - Jesus said to the Jews, *"You search the Scriptures (i.e., OT Scriptures) because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me..."*
- John 8:56 - Jesus again said, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."*

So the gospel of John will prove to us that Jesus fulfills God's saving promises since the Old Testament.

## **B. Jesus as "the Son of God"**

That Jesus is "the Son of God" means he is the self-revelation of God. In the person of Jesus, sa pamamagitan ng Kanyang pagkakatawang-tao, ang Diyos mismo ang nagpakilala sa'tin at nakipag-ugnay sa'tin.

Take for instance:

- John 1:18 - *"No one has ever seen God; the only God (i.e., Jesus, the Eternal Word), who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."*
- John 14:7 - Jesus said to Thomas, *"If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."* In **verse 9**, he said to Philip, *"... whoever has seen me has*

*seen the Father"*

Again, Jesus is the self-revelation of God (Hebrews 1:1-2 also affirms this).

[*TRANSITION*]: We'll be able to discuss these particular texts along the way, but here's the point we establish for now...

## **C. Implication: It's all about Jesus Christ**

The gospel is about Jesus Christ. That's the content of John. It's about Christ.

In fact, the whole Scriptures is ultimately about Jesus Christ. At ang pinaka-layunin ng Banal na Kasulatan ay para makilala natin ang Diyos, para ipag-balik-loob tayo sa Diyos, at para magkaroon tayo ng ugnayan sa Diyos **sa pamamagitan ni Cristo**.

It is in Christ and through Christ alone that we get to God. John 14:6, *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*

So from Genesis to Revelation, it's reveals Christ and points to Christ so that we will believe in him.

Paano natin makikita si Cristo sa kabuuan ng Salita ng Diyos (both in the OT and NT)? Briefly speaking, some portions of Scripture...

- **Predict Christ:** E.g., The sacrifices in the temple predict that the ultimate and perfect sacrifice will come
- **Prepare for Christ:** E.g., The marriage of Boaz and Ruth gives way for the coming of Christ; the judgments against sin gives necessity of a Savior
- **Result of Christ's work:** E.g., The Christian's justification by faith is a result of Christ
- **Reflects Christ:** E.g., The duty of believers to fight sin and obey God reflects Christ in us.

You see, there are many ways that Scripture reveals Jesus Christ, his person and work.

[TRANSITION]: Kaya nga po, pag magbabasa tayo ng Bible...

## **D. Apply: Pray for Christ-focus, and greater riches about him**

Pray for wisdom to see Christ in whatever you read. Pray for increasing knowledge of Christ.

Long not only to read words, but that the Spirit will reveal to you greater riches and deeper truths about Christ so that you will be more and more in awe of him.

That is the content of John's gospel account: For us to know Christ more. Not just to have a basic knowledge of Jesus, but to know him for who he really is—the Christ and the Son of God.

[TRANSITION]: Now, *third*, in this purpose statement, John reveals...

## **Main Point 3: The Aim of the Gospel**

John 20:31 - *"... 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."*

"Life" here refers to eternal life (buhay na walang-hanggan). But this life is certainly not only reserved for the future, but also something believers have now.

So the aim, the purpose, the objective of the gospel is to reveal Christ to us so that by faith in him we shall be saved from our sins and the wrath of God both here in this life and the next.

As Romans 10:13, 17 *"... everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved..."* and *"faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."* (word concerning Christ)

## **Implication (Believers): Knowledge of Christ, not simply for knowledge's sake**

Brothers and sisters, the gospel of John gives us knowledge of Christ. And as I mentioned earlier, it is **more theological** than other gospel

accounts.

But we don't study it and gain knowledge just for knowledge's sake. (Hindi tayo nag-aaral ng theology para lang ipakita sa iba na marami tayong alam, para lang mananalò tayo sa mga debate natin sa iba).

We study theology, God gives us knowledge of himself, so that we will have eternal life in him. So that we will find salvation in Christ and enjoy that salvation now and until eternity.

## **Implication (Unbelievers): Seek the Lord, and you'll have life**

And in case you've not yet believed in Christ, or perhaps haven't truly known Christ yet—let me tell you this: Knowledge of Christ and faith in him will give you nothing less than salvation and eternal life. Let that encourage you to seek the Lord, and long that indeed you will know Christ for who he truly is.

I hope that as we go through this sermon series, you'll listen and meditate on God's Word with us. And by the mercy of God, may his Spirit grant you faith in Christ leading to eternal life.

## **Conclusion: Are you thankful for the gospel testimony?**

Friends, God has given us the sure testimony of Scriptures so that we will know Christ and believe in him and have eternal life.

Are you thankful for it? Are you thankful for your Bibles? Or do you take it for granted? (e.g., opening it only on Sundays).

By the **grace and sovereignty of God**, you were born here in this place and time where you access to the Bible. (Imagine those places where people have to smuggle their Bible, just to have one).

O may we be so thankful that we possess this **written testimony of the gospel**.

In your hands are life-giving truths. Read it, meditate on it, believe in it.

As we go through the book of John, may such be our attitude. And

surely, the Lord will indeed give us life and strengthen our life in Christ—according to his promise. Amen.