

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

with Pastor Joe Meyer

PART 3

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“God So Loved”

**A Study of the Gospel of John—
Chapters Eleven through Seventeen**

**Pastor Joe Meyer
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church**

Chapter 11 “God’s Love for the Grieving”

Read John 11:1-16.

Initially, John tells us something very interesting when he writes in **John 11:5** “He loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus?” Doesn’t that seem like an odd statement? By that, I mean, doesn’t Jesus love everyone? Is He closer to some than He is to others? Look at the Transfiguration account found in **Matthew 17:1-13** and consider who was with Jesus besides Moses and Elijah.

In this segment, we’re told two extremely important things: 1) In verse six, we’re told in **John 11:6**, “So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.” Jesus knew Lazarus was going to die and He stayed put? Why would Jesus do that? Well, the answer to that is the second important thing: 2) Look at verses four and fourteen in that regard. After doing so, read again **John 9:1-3**. Both the story of the man born blind and Lazarus speak into how God thinks and acts...what do I mean by that?

In **John 11:11**, we’re told: “After saying these things, he said to them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.’” Those are very important words! First of all, what do they say to you about Jesus? Second, what do they say about our own death and the way the Lord looks at death? Look at **John 5:19-24**.

Read John 11:17-27

In this segment of John, we’re reminded that the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, are very much alike. In **verses twenty-one** and then again in **thirty-two**, we’re told that the sisters say exactly the same thing, namely: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Was that a true statement? Check **James 4:13-17** and **1John 5:14-15**.

Very few people do not know **verse twenty-five**. What a verse, yes? **John 11:25** “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...’”. It’s important to note here that Martha did believe that Lazarus would rise at the end of time, that’s verse twenty-four. But Jesus reminds her of a “resurrection” that happens when believers die...namely, “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live!” We know it. We believe it. But often...we act as if it’s not true. Let me remind you here, your loved one who has passed is quite ALIVE! In that regard, check **2Corinthians 5:1-10**.

Read John 11:28-44

In **verse thirty-five**, we’re given the shortest verse in the English Bible, namely, “Jesus wept...” Why did Jesus weep? He knew full well that He not only could raise Lazarus but that He would raise Lazarus...so...why weep? Think about what happened in God’s heart when Adam and Eve transgressed His command in the Garden of Eden: **Genesis 3:1-11**.

Reading **verses thirty-five through thirty-seven** together, it’s clear that the Jews mentioned by John did not understand why Jesus was weeping. In other words, their question about Jesus, “Could not He who opened the eyes of a blind man also have kept this man from dying?” would be answered best by saying, “Yes, He COULD have kept him from dying.” Why didn’t Jesus simply heal Laz of his illness rather than letting him die? There are two answers: 1) As we’ve already said, the Lord wanted to glorify Himself and show that He had authority over death...but...2) He wanted to die and rise Himself! To get at what I mean, read the last segment found in **John 11:45-57**. In this segment, we’re reminded that Jesus was pushing the buttons of the Jewish leaders to get them to kill Him. Why did the raising of Lazarus clinch that future for Jesus?

In **verse forty-eight**, notice what the Jewish leaders were concerned about! How sad is this? They know Jesus just raised a man who was four days dead! And all they are concerned about is retaining or even restoring their authority and power? Read **Matthew 16:21-23** and note Jesus' rebuke of Peter which could have been spoken in this situation to the Jewish leaders!

Amazingly, Caiaphas prophesies about Jesus' death! Remember that God can use anyone to speak His truth, even an unbelieving High Priest. Take note of the story of Balaam's Donkey found in **Numbers 22:22-41**.

Chapter 12 “God’s Love for the Thankful”

Read John 12:1-10

What immediately comes to mind for most folks reading this segment is the other anointing narratives that speak of a woman weeping at Jesus’ feet and anointing Him. Check and compare these passages: **Luke 7:36-39; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9.** Differences? Similarities?

Verses nine through eleven are absolutely unbelievable to me...and likely to you too! How depraved can you be to consider killing a man who had just been raised from the dead? And what would you gain if you did? At a base level, Jesus could just perform another miracle and bring him back! But what was their goal? And more importantly, why was this really happening? Check **John 10:11-18.** In other words, the raising of Lazarus was designed by God to bring glory to Jesus but also to do what?

Read John 12:12-19

This is what’s known as “The Triumphal Entry,” although more commonly called “Palm Sunday.” What was this event all about besides fulfilling Scripture, that is, **Zechariah 9:9** which is quoted here? What was Jesus doing and why? To begin with, let’s go back to the raising of Lazarus and remember that Jesus was pushing to get killed. Along those lines, check **Matthew 21:12-17** for what Jesus did just after this Palm Sunday event. Also consider what Jesus was saying about Himself on this donkey ride by reading **1Kings 1:28-40.**

Read John 12:20-26

This segment is a reminder of two things: 1) Jesus came to die and 2) Christians are called to die too. So, first of all, Jesus is pointing to His own death. The grain of wheat imagery is referring to His own death and resurrection and how it would bear much fruit in the world. Consider for a moment how many Christians started this “thing” vs. how many Christians are alive today!

What I mean by the second thing, namely, “Christians are called to die too,” can be found in the familiar words of **Matthew 16:24-27**. What does Jesus mean by “take up your cross” there? But in saying that, the call to the Christian is a willingness to actually die for your faith in Jesus if need be. Are you there? As we ask it in the Confirmation rite, “Are you willing to suffer all, even death, rather than deny your faith in Jesus?” Is Jesus the single most important thing in your life? Better said, is Jesus...your life? Check **Colossians 3:1-4**.

Read John 12:27-36

Let’s begin by defining what Jesus means by “lifted up.” Obviously we understand this to be the crucifixion of Jesus, but does Scripture back that up? Look at **John 3:1-14** and **John 8:21-30**.

So, Jesus is indeed speaking of His death on the cross...and...Jesus then says here that His death is why He came into this world. Check **Matthew 16:21-23** and **Matthew 26:47-56** for that information.

Read John 12:36b-43

This segment of John 12 can be rather confusing. After all, doesn’t God want ALL to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth? The answer is yes: See **1Timothy 2:1-4**. So why would the Lord blind their eyes to the truth of who Jesus was? Well...this is a “God’s Timing” moment. To get at that, check Jesus’ own words in **John 18:33-36**. Jesus didn’t come to be set on an earthly throne and so if everyone figured out who He was prior to His death and resurrection, they might have tried to stop that from happening. Remember again (from the last segment) then what Jesus said to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane: **Matthew 26:47-56**.

Read John 12:43b-50

This segment gets at Jesus' intimate connection with the Father. The best way to look at it is that the Trinity cannot be divided or torn apart. To get at that, look at Jesus' own words in **John 14:8-11**.

In **verse forty-seven**, Jesus says that He did not come into the world to judge the world but to save it. He said something similar in **John 3:16-18**. Why did Jesus say this when we know He is the Judge of the world? After all, He said that very thing in **Matthew 25:31-46**...He's sitting on the throne separating Christian from not...sounds like the Judge to me. So what does Jesus mean?

Chapter 13 “God’s Humble Love”

Read John 13:1-20

This is of course, the famous foot-washing event...but what was this event really all about? Since Jesus was always teaching them, what was He teaching the Apostles that day? Let’s begin that discussion by thinking about what John writes here: **John 13:1** “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” If you had to answer this question, what would you say: How does Jesus show His love by washing their feet? After you think about that, remember those overly familiar words from **Philippians 2:1-11** and before moving on, consider what **Philippians 2:3-5** say about our discipleship in Christ.

So, to the point of the last sentence above, this was not only to show the depth of Jesus’ humble love for the Apostles...but it was also to show them what Jesus expects of all of His disciples. Re-read **John 13:12-15** for that. Check **Mark 10:35-45** for a cross reference on this concept.

Read John 13:21-30

As an encouragement about prophecies being fulfilled, check **John 13:18**, spoken about Judas Iscariot, over against its prophecy found in **Psalms 41:9**. Can you think of other OT passages and their NT fulfillments? How do those fulfillments help us as Christians? Then check **John 13:21** alongside **John 17:12** to help you understand where Christ was at with Judas.

In **verse twenty-seven**, John tells us something that should send shivers down our spine. Why is that information important? How should we understand what both Luke and John tell us, namely, that “satan entered into him.” What? Also, if satan entered Judas to betray Jesus, “Was it satan that killed Jesus through the cross?” How would you answer that? Once you’ve thought about it, read **Isaiah 53:4-6**.

Read John 13:31-35

We come across two important items in these short five verses: 1) Jesus was glorified by His crucifixion. How is that His “glory”? Further, what does it say about our Lord and Master that He sees His glory being found in His death for us? Check **Psalm 103:8-12**. 2) Some of Jesus’ last words were about His expectations of us as Christians. We crossed this earlier in verses twelve to fifteen, but Jesus is explicit here: disciples of Jesus will be known by their love. Not by their doctrine? Not by their slick worship services? Not by their amazing facilities? No, Jesus’ disciples will be known by their love. What does that look like? Check **James 2:1-13**.

Read John 13:36-38

The last three verses also have two important parts to them: 1) This segment is a reminder that Jesus knows all and knows all long before it happens...namely, Peter’s denial of Jesus. See **Luke 22:31-34** for an even fuller and amazingly wonderful description of Christ’s prophecy here. 2) When Jesus says, “Will you lay down your life for me?” I think there are multiple reasons He said that. The first is obvious, Peter will initially deny Jesus. But I wonder if Jesus was also saying, “Nope, you won’t lay down your life for me...I will however lay down my life for you!” Lay down His life for a denier and a deserter? Yes, yes, thankfully, He will. He did so for Peter and He does so for us too! As a reminder, check **John 15:12-15**.

Chapter 14 “God’s Exclusive Love”

Read John 14:1-14

Needless to say perhaps, **verses one through six** are some of the most significant verses found in the New Testament. Not only is Jesus reminding us that He will return for us, but He’s also reminding us that He’s the one and only way to get to heaven. Having said that, we must remember that our society, our world, does not like the exclusive claim of Christianity as “the one and only way to heaven.” Why is that not our problem to fix? After discussion, consider other passages that say very similar things:

John 3:1-18:

John 16:27:

Acts 4:5-12:

Romans 10:9,10:

1Corinthians 3:10-15:

1John 5:11-13:

This segment of **John 14** also reminds us of what will happen at the Second Coming of Jesus. Many denominations have convoluted ideas about what Jesus will do, including setting up His Kingdom on earth for 1000 years. How does what Jesus said here dispel that myth? Jesus says “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” Sure sounds like we’re leaving this place at the Second Coming...yes? For more on that, check **1Thessalonians 4:13-18**. While we’re considering the Second Coming, read and interpret **Matthew 24:36-44**.

Read John 14:15-31

Verses fifteen through seventeen hold an amazing promise from Jesus for every Christian person. Jesus said something there that I think we take for granted, namely, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” Isn’t it true that we take lightly the presence of the Holy Spirit within our bodies? Let me say it this way, God lives in you! Consider that truth and look at **1Corinthians 6:18-20** and **Romans 8:9-11**. In this regard, consider Jesus’ words in verse twenty-three: “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’” How comforting is that? In fact, also compare **John 14:20** with **Galatians 2:20**.

Jesus speaks a lot in this segment about obeying His commandments. To begin with, remember that’s part and parcel of becoming a disciple of Jesus. Remember what **Matthew 28:16-20** says about that, but then also remember the above discussion of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your body. How does that help in regard to obeying Jesus?

In **verse twenty-seven**, Jesus speaks of giving us a peace that the world cannot give. Does the world give any peace at all? And what is the peace that Jesus speaks of here? Read **Romans 5:1-5**.

Chapter 15 “God’s Constant Love”

Read John 15:1-17

Verses one through five remind us that the Lord is always working in our lives and that He is furthermore intimately involved in our lives as well. He is not an absentee Landlord! We crossed this bridge in our previous study, but it’s worth reminding ourselves of. Note that the Lord Jesus said, “my Father is the vinedresser” in verse one. What does that look like and what are the clues in the text about that “vine-dressing” work in our lives? Once discussed, consider **Hebrews 4:12,13** and **Ephesians 5:1-21** for our Lord’s handiwork of “vine-dressing.”

Let’s make sure we consider the fact that Jesus is talking about “bearing fruit” quite a bit in this text. In fact, you could make the case that the life of the Christian is a life of fruit bearing for the Kingdom of God. Is that how you look at your Christian faith? Is your life lived in a way that bears fruit for the Kingdom of God or for your little kingdom instead? Once you’ve thought about it, consider **Galatians 5:13-26**.

In fact, check closely **verses seven and eight**. **Verse seven** sounds very exciting, doesn’t it? “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” When today’s Christians hear those words, they begin to imagine that all we have to do is ask and God will give us what we want. And I can’t deny that Jesus does love you and loves the desires of your heart...look at **Psalms 37:1-5**. But there is a caveat to that truth. In fact, it’s better to say God will give you what you need and...according to His will...rather than He will give you what you want. For that, look at **1John 5:14,15**. There’s one more caveat to that however...He gives us what we need so that we can, as Jesus says it in **verse eight**, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” Notice: Ask whatever...it will be done...but to glorify God and to bear fruit for His kingdom. I’ll ask it again: Is that how we see our lives lived here on earth? To glorify God and further His Kingdom?

John 15:13 reads: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” This verse is often used to herald firefighters, police officers, military personnel and other professions where people put their lives on the line for others. As a “truth,” it can be used that way and of course, we love and admire all of the above named. But we don’t rip verses out of context and use them as pithy sayings for our own purposes. So, in context...who exactly is this verse referring to? Take note that Jesus calls the disciples “friends” twice, immediately after the saying “greater love...”. You have a similar situation with a couple of parables found in **Matthew 13:44-46**. In the greater context, who is the purchaser of said precious things?

Read John 15:18-27

Jesus further counsels His disciples by reminding them that a connection to Him is also a connection to persecution. Have you ever experienced persecution for your faith in Jesus? What happened? Why? Consider what others have gone through who have gone before us. You can google search “Christian Martyrs” and get an eye-full of just how bad things have been over the centuries for people professing to be Christians. Once you’ve discussed that, consider the admonition in **2Timothy 3:10-17**.

Verses twenty-six and twenty-seven take us right back to chapter fourteen and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Just as a reminder, look at **John 14:16,17 and 26**. How is this promise from Jesus helpful when we’re considering persecution? For that matter, how does it help in regard to being a witness for Jesus? In other words...are you doing this Christian-life “thing” on your own?

Chapter 16 “God’s Loving Presence”

Read John 16:1-15

Verses one to four are a wonderful example of Christ’s love for the Apostles, but Christ’s love for us all as well. He’s concerned that they might “fall away”! Can you hear the concern in His words? He is readying to go through the most horrific punishment any human being can go through at the Cross and yet...He’s concerned for His “kids”! With that in mind, read the familiar story in **Luke 8:40-48** and pay close attention to Christ’s compassion for the woman and then consider Jesus’ words from the Cross about His mother: **John 19:26-27**.

Verse seven is truly amazing...or it should be to us! In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was commonly called in Hebrew “Ruach YHWH,” or “Breath of God,” or “Wind of God.” Knowing that helps us to understand the Pentecost event better...read **Acts 2:1-4**. But the reason I bring it up is to remind you that this “Ruach YHWH,” so to speak, “belongs to God,” and yet Jesus says that He will send the “Ruach YHWH” Himself...thereby claiming to be God. Let’s first of all remember that the Holy Spirit is God by reading **Acts 5:1-6**. But remember again that the New Testament does indeed proclaim Jesus to be God, giving Him the authority He claims to have. Look at **Romans 9:1-5**. In fact, what do we say in the Nicene Creed that confirms Jesus’ authority to send the Spirit?

Finally, what does the Holy Spirit do for us? Jesus says He convicts the world of “sin, righteousness, and judgment.” But Jesus also says that He will “guide us into all truth.” Take note that the work of the Holy Spirit in this world is one of “sanctification”...but what does “sanctification” mean? Consider what **1Thessalonians 4:1-3** says about that. Also, how does the Holy Spirit “guide us into all truth”? Consider **Psalms 119:105**.

Read John 16:16-24

In this segment, we once again experience the deep love and compassion that Jesus has for His children. The entirety of these nine verses is helping the disciples understand not only what is coming Jesus' way at the Cross, but also that He will rise again from the dead and rejoin them. Jesus is essentially saying, "Yes, you'll be distressed and you will grieve, but don't worry, you will see me again," or in Jesus' own words, "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy!" (**Verse 20b**). Indeed, this is the life of every Christian person. In this broken world we will have sorrow now, but our "momentary" sorrow will be turned into joy when we see Jesus face to face. Read **2Corinthians 4:13-18**.

Last but not least, Jesus also likens His death and resurrection to the process of birth. How is that helpful? Think about what women go through with the birth of their child. Interestingly then, Jesus uses the same imagery for our "newborn status" in Him. Read and remember His words in **John 3:1-6** and what Peter wrote in **1Peter 1:3 and 1:23**.

Read John 16:25-33

In this segment, **verse twenty-eight** reminds us of the truth and the awe-inspiring nature of the Incarnation of Jesus. When you explain the Virgin Birth, how would you go about it? What would you say to someone who is trying to understand Jesus the Christ being born of a woman? We can certainly lean on **Galatians 4:4-7** which reminds us of His "born of a woman" status. We can also turn to Gabriel's speech to Mary found in **Luke 1:35**. But how do you get at explaining how Jesus came to be in Mary's womb?

Verse thirty-three is one of the most important verses in this section of John 16. Jesus reminds us first of all that He, so to speak, "never promised us a rose garden," to quote the old song. But Jesus also reminds us that in Him and through Him and by Him...we can have peace in this world. In fact, look at the familiar verses in **Philippians 4:4-7** and take note of the wording about "peace" in that text. But what is it that gives us that peace?

Chapter 17 “God’s Love for His Children”

Read John 17:1-26

This is what’s called “The High Priestly Prayer.” Why do you think it’s called that? Think about what the High Priest did in the OT via **Leviticus 16** and then consider what **Hebrews 9:11-14** has to say about Jesus.

Verses one through five get at the exclusivity of Christianity yet again when Jesus says, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” Read again **Acts 4:5-12** (we looked at these verses in chapter fourteen). Why is the truth that Jesus is the one and only way to heaven not only Biblical but also logical?

Jesus also talks here about His pre-incarnate state...or His “Christ-nature,” that which He had prior to coming into our world and which is for all time and eternity. Talk about His “two parts,” Jesus the human-being and Christ the eternal God. Check **Philippians 2:9-11** and **Romans 9:5**.

Something else to consider here is that Jesus...the “flesh-guy”...is now forever united with Christ, the “God-guy.” That means what? Does Jesus still have a physical body? Look at **John 20:24-29**. But Jesus is also eternal...consider His promise to ALL Christians at the end of **Matthew 28:18-20** and also consider the fact that though He has a physical body...His Body and Blood are on the altar at communion at every church week after week...check **1Corinthians 10:16**.

Jesus prays in **verse seventeen**, “Sanctify them in truth, your Word is truth.” This is such a significant part of this prayer. The Word of God, the Bible, is the truth that our world needs and the truth that the church must heed. In today’s Christianity, Christians are making up the Christian faith as they go along. They are deciding for themselves what they have to believe and what they can ignore. But cover to cover...Genesis to the Revelation...His Word is truth.

Verses twenty to twenty-six highlight the unity that our Lord and Master wants for His church. First, take note of the fact that in verse twenty Jesus was praying for us! Isn’t that an amazing truth? Second, what does unity in the church look like? No denominations? No arguments over doctrine? No disagreements? Or...something else? Check **1Peter 3:8-12** and **1Corinthians 12:1-11**.

