

John 20:30-31

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Why do people write books? Sometimes, even though they don't tell you, you can guess. Often they simply want to write something entertaining, brain candy if you will, that will sell and provide them with fame and lots of money. Sometimes they have political agenda they want to promote, sometimes they want to create a record of some historical event or individual, sometimes they want people to adopt their program and way of life, and sometimes they just want people to listen to their opinions.

But why did the authors of the four Gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, write the books that they wrote? Given that we have just finished going all the way through the book of Luke (by the way, I looked it up, I preached the first sermon in January of 2003) it occurred to me that before we move on to the next book of the bible, especially since this is a gospel, it was worth spending just one sermon considering that question.

Well, clearly we can dismiss the idea that they were out to make money, there was no NYT bestseller list back when they originally wrote, and no copyright laws at all. They wrote their gospel accounts on scrolls which were then freely copied and distributed.

It's funny when you think about it, the Bible is the bestselling book in all of history, and yet the original writers didn't make a single cent from it. At least not in a *this-worldly* sense.

So what was it, was it a political agenda, or program they wanted to promote, was this the first edition of the *Purpose Driven Life*?

John, and ultimately the Holy Spirit who inspired and directed John, didn't want anyone to wonder why he wrote what he did. He wanted his readers to know why all of this stuff really matters. So he wrote his reason for writing into the Gospel. He left this note, which we call his *telic note* behind, from the word *telos* which is Greek for ends. Incidentally, Luke has a similar note, but he puts it at the beginning of his gospel. We'll read that as well.

But first he tells you what he didn't write. He didn't even attempt to set down everything that Jesus did. None of the gospel writers claims to give an exhaustive history of the earthly ministry of Christ. In fact John tells you no one could do that. The last line of his gospel says: "***And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.***" (John 21:25)

So he says, I didn't write down all the things he did, all the other *signs*, that is miracles that Jesus did. Now that's interesting to me, because normally when as other people have pointed out, when you are writing about a dead prophet, you tend to want to collect everything about him, every single story. That's what happened after Muhammad died for instance, first they put together his teachings and that became the Quran, and then they put together the Hadiths which were all the traditions about his teachings and actions. They tried to grab everything they could about him after he was gone. Because in the end that was all they had or ever would have.

But John doesn't feel the need to write that way, because he's not telling you about someone who is dead, he is introducing you to a living person, the Lord Jesus. And in a very important sense that is what the gospels are an introduction for you to meet Jesus, and so they give you the essential information you need to get know him. I hope you see that the gospel authors write as if you will have your own relationship with Jesus.

I mean think about it, you are introducing someone with a problem to an old friend of yours who you think could help them, you don't say "***John Smith was born in 1968 in the small town of Podunk, his earliest recorded memory was of the red swing in his backyard, friends remember him as a curious, but cheerful child, who would know that 30 years later that cheerful curious child would someday become an excellent doctor...***" and then go on for hours, while your friend is standing there. You say "I'd like you to meet John Smith, he's an excellent doctor who helped me when I had the same problem you have..."

That's really my job as a Preacher, to introduce people to the same Jesus I know. And that's why if I didn't know Christ personally myself, I couldn't preach. Beloved, I don't stand up here to tell you stories about someone long gone in the hopes that you will find helpful advice in their teachings. Not at all. What I do is essentially the same thing that John the Baptist did when he pointed to the living Jesus and said "***Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the Sin of the World! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'***" My primary call, is to be like John the Baptist, or Evangelist in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and to direct you to the Living Jesus.

Not just so you can ***know about Him***, but that you might ***know him***, really, and personally by Faith.

That's John's purpose in writing, to tell you what he and the other disciples experienced as they were with Jesus, these were some of the miracles that he did that proved to us that what He said, and what the Prophets said about Him was true.

And what was it that Jesus said about himself and that the disciples and the prophets said about Him? Exactly what John states in verse 31 – Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. That He is the Messiah, Great David's Greater Son, "the Mediator between God and men, the Father's supreme ambassador, the only restorer of the world and the author of true happiness" – ***Calvin***.

But this Jesus John wrote of is no mere man, not the earthly Messiah John wrote of, He is also the Son of God. The Incarnate Word, Who in the beginning was and who was with God and who was God, he is the Second Person of the Triune Godhead.

Now some people at this point will say, wait a minute, John might say he is God at this point, but Jesus never did. But friends, anyone who makes that claim doesn't know the Gospels. Jesus clearly said He was God, Let me just give you one big "for instance" of that:

***John 8:56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."
57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"
58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."
59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.***

Why did the Jews want to stone him? Because death by stoning was the penalty for blasphemy, and when Jesus said, *Before Abraham was I AM* they knew exactly what he was saying. They knew that God had identified himself as I AM "Thus **you** shall say to the children of Israel, '**I AM** has sent me to **you.**' " (Exodus 3:14)

And that is good news, not only because only if Jesus really is God could he have risen from the Dead and still be alive today, but only if He is God can We have life in His name.

Now when John says Life in His name in verse 31, yes he means the abundant life that those who know Christ and have been born again will live here on earth, but much more importantly than that He means spiritual life – because outside of Him we are dead in our sins, and eternal life because without him – we have no hope of heaven.

Only Jesus who is the Son of God, could do this for you, when it comes to eternal life no earthly prophet could help men like you and me, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Now kids, when I was a child I had a Hamster, you all know what a Hamster is right? Well I loved my Hamster, even though he spent his entire life trying to escape from his cage. Well my Hamster got sick, believe it or not, I know what a Hamster sneeze sounds like, and then one day I noticed he wouldn't come out of the little ceramic barrel he slept in, so we grabbed the cage and my Mum drove us to the animal doctor and I said to that doctor "my Hamster is sick and he won't come out of his barrel." And the doctor reached in and grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and he pulled him out, and my Hamster wasn't moving or breathing. He had died, and I remember I had tears in my eyes, and I said *Can you do something for him?* But of course, there was nothing that Doctor could do, because he was only a man and he couldn't bring a dead Hamster back to life no matter how much I wanted him to.

No man can do that. They can't bring Hamsters to life, when they are dead, and they can't bring people to life when they are dead. But you know what, Jesus can bring dead People back to life, because he isn't just a man He is the Son of God, and God can do anything.

Only Jesus could live a sinless life, Only Jesus could die on the cross and pay for you sins, only Jesus can take out a stony heart, and put in a new one. And give us faith, so that we can know Him, and then Justify us by that faith alone, washing our sins by his blood, taking away the filthy rags of our own imperfect righteousness, and giving to us, imputing to us, his own perfect righteousness. Only Jesus can do that.

And that is the Jesus that Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, want you to believe in, want you to know, want you to have life in and that is why they wrote what they did.

And so here is the application of all this to you: We've spent three years going through a book that Luke says way back in Luke 1 that he wrote to tell us what happened and what eyewitnesses saw that we might "*know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*" That is that your faith in Jesus might be established. Certainly if you've been listening you will know things *about Jesus*, but that hasn't been my purpose, neither was it John's or Luke's or Mark's or Matthew's. They wrote not that you might know about Jesus, but that you might know Jesus.

Because on the last day, merely knowing *about Jesus* will not save anyone. What is critical is that you know Him and that He knows you, that you believe in Him and have a relationship with Him. You can know about Muhammad, you can know about Buddha, but you can't have a living relationship with them because they are dead. But you can *know Jesus because he is alive*.

So ask yourself, *do I know Him?* Do I believe that Jesus is the Christ? Do I believe He is the Son of God? Have I been Saved through Faith in Him? Do you fear not. Well know that it is not too late, but some day it will be. Run now, accept that introduction now, meet him now, today this moment. Do not wait another moment ***to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that believing you may have life in His name***