



BEHOLDING **GLORY**

MEETING JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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“And the Word became flesh,
and dwelt among us,
and we saw His **GLORY**,
GLORY as of the only begotten
from the Father,
full of grace and truth.”

- John 1:14

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BEHOLDING **GLORY**

Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John

Dear Friends in Christ:

On the Sunday before Christmas, as we were making our way through the Overture to the Gospel of John, we focused on the climatic verse – John 1:14 – and the surprising implication of the coming of Jesus on which John focuses – “and we beheld His glory.” Of all the implications of the incarnation of God in the world, John holds before us the manifestation of glory, answering one of the boldest prayers ever prayed when Moses cried out, “Show me Your glory!” (Exodus 33:18). God does this in the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus His only-begotten Son.

In this series, we are going to join John in “beholding glory.” John constructs his gospel around this word, this glorious implication of grace. In chapters 2-11 he tells of a number of mighty deeds (or “signs”) Jesus performs, and brackets the whole section with “glory” – “and Jesus manifested His glory” (2:11) and “did I not say if you believe you will see the glory of God?” (11:40). Then in chapter 12 John moves us into the events of Holy Week, and begins with Jesus saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (12:23) and “Father, glorify your name” (12:27). John is saying that in the events of Holy Week we will see the glory of God as never before! John Calvin refers to John 12-21 (especially 18-19) as “the theatre of glory.”

As we make our way through the first half of John’s gospel (under the title “Beholding Glory”), and then approach Easter in the second half of the gospel (titled “Into the Theatre of Glory”), we will be asking the basic questions: how does this event manifest “glory”? What difference does it make for our lives and the life of the world in beholding this particular expression of “glory”?

We are in for a glorious time! In which we will, as the apostle Paul says, “be changed from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Your brother in Christ,

Darrell

FINDING STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

Abraham Han
John 3:1-21
January 18, 2015

Together, read John 3:1-22.

1. Share what particularly jumps out at you from this passage. What language, themes, or images are especially striking?

2. Imagine what must have been going through Nicodemus' mind in this exchange with Jesus. Considered an expert of the law, and beginning this conversation with what he 'knows' (vs. 2), what transition takes place in Nicodemus's posture before Jesus over the course of this passage?

- How does Jesus challenge what Nicodemus assumes he understands in vv. 10-12?
- What effect may this have had on Nicodemus?

3. Review the following words with double meanings that Jesus used in his conversation with Nicodemus:

a. *anōthen* - again; from above

b. *to pneuma* – wind; Spirit

c. *hypsōthēnaia* – physical lifting up; exaltation

- What is the importance of the double meanings in regard to Jesus' message to Nicodemus?

4. When in your life has Jesus brought you to a place of humility in order to grow your understanding of 'heavenly things' (vs. 12). Was this a difficult process? Is it ongoing?

5. Are there ways that it is difficult for you to relinquish a sense of your strengths or 'expertise' in order to listen better to Jesus' call on your life?

6. What is Jesus pointing to in verse 14? It may help to check out the original reference in Numbers 21:4-9. Why may He allude to this particular story?

7. Looking at verses 13-15, how does Jesus model the ultimate act of strength in weakness? What is the irony here? According to Him, why does He go through with it?

8. Take a moment to read John 19:38-42. After the crucifixion, by handling the body of Jesus, Nicodemus would have made himself ritually unclean and thus disqualified himself from participating in the Passover feast. What might this reveal about what was happening to Nicodemus?

Spend some time praying together in response to what you have discussed.

LOVE THAT JUMPS OVER WALLS

Darrell Johnson

John 4:1-26

January 25, 2015

John is such a great storyteller! That is because he has such a great story to tell!

Read together John 4:1-26.

1. Why does Jesus choose to go through Samaria, a “no-no” for most pious Jews of His day?

2. How does the fact that Jesus was “weary” speak to you?

3. What do we know about the woman from Samaria? Why was she at the well at noon and alone?

4. If you had been observing this event from the distance, what might you have concluded about the interaction?

5. What surprises the woman at the well? Why?

6. What walls has Jesus “jumped over” to reach this woman?

- What walls in our time does He “jump over”?

7. How do you understand the gift of “living water”? What is it? How does one drink it? What are the indications that one has in fact drunk it?

8. In the rest of the Bible, when a woman is at a well, a marriage proposal is about to take place. (Think Rebecca, Rachael, etc.). In what way is Jesus inviting this woman into a relationship?

- What does it mean to you that we whom Jesus loves are His bride?

How does all that Jesus reveals in this part of the story make you want to pray? Pray together.

WORSHIP THAT PLEASES GOD

Darrell Johnson

John 4:1-26

February 1, 2015

What a story!

This time read 4:1-26 again, but focus on verses 16-26.

1. Why does Jesus say to the woman, "Go, call your husband, and come back"? He knows the truth of the situation, so why say this?

2. What does the woman's response say about the condition of her soul as she is relating to Jesus?

3. Why does she raise the question of worship?

4. According to Jesus, what are the implications of the phrase "God is Spirit" for understanding worship?

5. What does “worship in spirit and truth” (4:23) mean to you? When do you feel you are actually doing it? How does the way we worship at First help you do it? Are there ways it hinders?

6. How do you respond to “for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers”? Do you see this happening in your world? Do you experience this in any way?

7. In verse 26 Jesus literally says, "I Am He, the One Who is speaking to you." What is Jesus claiming? And how does this affect our understanding of worship?

How does all that Jesus reveals here make you want to pray?

Spend some time in prayer together.

COME AND SEE: THE CALLING OF BEING GRIPPED BY GLORY

Darrell Johnson

John 4:27-42

February 8, 2015

Read John 4:27-42.

1. Together, review what has preceded this part of the story in John 4.

2. What are the signs that the woman did in fact drink “living water”? (Clues – verses 19, 28, and 29).

3. Look at her little “speech” to her fellow citizens in verse 29. It has three parts. What are they? What does this suggest about our little “speeches” to our contemporaries?

4. Why did the woman emphasize, “told me all the things I have done”? If you had been her, what would you have emphasized?

5. Suggest three affirmations you want to make when you share Jesus with others?

“Come see a man who . . .”

1.

2.

3.

6. What do you think the people of our city are most longing to hear from the followers of Jesus?

7. How did the woman's contemporaries come to the conclusion that Jesus is the Saviour of the world (4:42)?

- What will help our friends and neighbours come to this conclusion?

How does all this make you want to pray?

Pray in response together.

GLORY THAT TRIUMPHS OVER DEATH

Darrell Johnson

John11:1 - 46

February 15, 2015

Here John is the master storyteller! For here he has a truly amazing story to tell!

Read together John 11:1-46.
So much to talk about!

1. Why do you think Jesus did not immediately go to Bethany when He heard that Lazarus had died? What is your response to this?

2. How do you respond to what Jesus says in verse 4 – “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it”?

3. Why do you think Martha was able to say and believe what she “blurts out” the moment Jesus arrives (11:21)? Ever felt that way?

4. What is Jesus referring to when He says, “Your brother will rise again” (11:23)?

- How would that have felt to Martha?

5. Look carefully at the great "I AM" saying of 11:25-26. Who does Jesus claim to be? And what are the implications for us who believe Him?

6. In particular, how do you respond to "live even if he dies" and "shall never die"?

7. As Jesus moves toward the tomb, what stands out to you about Him? How do you respond to “deeply moved in spirit” (v. 33), “wept” (v. 35), and “deeply moved within” (v. 38)?

8. Simply by speaking Jesus raises Lazarus! How does this speak to you and the issues you are facing?

How do you want to pray in response to what Jesus reveals in this moving event?

Spend sometime in prayer together.

