

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

28

TITLE

No More Suspense

SCRIPTURE

John 10:22-42



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Well, it's great to see you. If you're a guest here at Providence, welcome, we're glad you're here. If you're in this room or in the amphitheater, at home, welcome, we're thrilled that you've joined us this morning. I want to ask you to turn with me to John chapter 10 in your Bible if you brought one, if you didn't there's some near you. If you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift.

We love to gather together to worship, and it really is an important thing, it's not just filler in the service for us to sing to the Lord and to acknowledge what we believe and know to be true from the scriptures. What's interesting is that when we meet and when we gather corporately to worship the Lord, the intent from scripture and from the heart of God is that that experience together would only be the overflow of our individual worship throughout the week. The fact is, if we're not worshipping the Lord throughout the week, if we're not thinking about the Lord through the week, if we're not being confronted with the truth of His word, if we're not thinking about His greatness and His glory or His mercy or His compassion, and what happens is we come to this place and our tank is already empty. We're asking God to fill it so that we can give it at the same time and that makes it really, really difficult.

About a year ago, caring deeply not only about our corporate worship, but our personal worship, I asked Shawn, who is a great songwriter, to write some songs for us as a church family and to record those, and he did that. There's a CD, it looks just like this and if you did not get one last Sunday, they're out in the lobby, we're asking it's one per family, just family in it because ... If you're like a family of five that's just one, but our intent with this is that if you don't have music to listen to that really gravitates your heart and your mind to the glory and the holiness and the mercy of God, and the truthfulness of the gospel, then this is simply a tool for you. In fact, tonight there's even a CD party at 6:00 o'clock you can come to, and he's going to be singing some of these. That's it, 6:00 o'clock tonight, but our worship is important, I want you to know that.

If you would, let's just bow and let's pray together as we get started this morning. Father in heaven, we are amazed, we're amazed that we have a copy of Your Word that's been accurately translated in English, it's been copied and it's in our hands, and we thank You for it, and I pray, God, that You would do the miracle once again to speak Your weakness in the glorified Jesus, as You help us to understand what You have written here in Your Word. We thank You for John 10. We thank You for the picture that it gives of the supremacy and the serenity of Jesus in the midst of a storm, and pray, Father, that You would help us not only to take our case from Jesus, but God that you would even fill us with the spirit of Jesus, so that we can live with that kind of serenity in the storm in which we live. We ask that You would help us, be our tutor and our teacher, I pray in Christ's name, Amen.

Well, as I said earlier, I do believe that many of us in this room are troubled, troubled within our heart, in our spirit, in our thinking. I can see it on our faces, I can hear it in our voices, I can read it on your Facebook posts, I can feel it in our worship.

There is a lot that is concerning us, whether it's our marriage or a friendship that maybe broken, whether it's our children or their faith, whether it's our personal health or health of a child or a loved one, a family member or a friend, all the flooding that has really caused such havoc in our states, there are so many people who can't get into their homes right now. There's a big one right now and that's the, this big election that's so important and then it's going to be over. It's going to be over sooner than you can imagine.

There's angst about what to make up of the future Supreme Court's going to be and there's angst over social and racial injustice, and there's angst over protesting our anthem on a football field, and there's just a lot that seems to trouble us today in our world. Sometimes I imagine heaven, I think like this sometimes, but I sometimes can imagine heaven looking down upon us. If you've seen these movies like there's a jungle and there's a bunch of monkeys all over the jungle and there are some stressors. All the monkeys, they're all frantic, they're all screaming, and all of a sudden in comes the Alpha male and he beats his chest and he's like, "Guys, I got this. It's okay," and it kind of settles everybody down. Sometimes I feel like that that's exactly what needs to take place and what heaven is waiting for is for the Alpha male to literally come and the Alpha male did come.

It's interesting that He says that He's the Alpha and the Omega, He's the first and the last, and He came to this Earth. He literally stood on this Earth and He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God and believe also in Me, I'm here, I've got this," that's what He's saying. All the fretting and all the worry and all the anxiety about things that you cannot control and you don't know how it's going to play out in the future, He says, "Just believe in Me." In John chapter 10, in these last 21 verses, it's really interesting that Jesus, who is the Alpha and the Omega, who's reigning with absolute supremacy, what He shows us here is that because of His inexhaustible power and strength and might, is that we find Him with unusual serenity amidst the face of such an amazing storm. He's literally about to be stoned, murdered, and what you're going to see here is such poise that it's startling if you think about it.

Let's read it together, John chapter 10, starting in verse 1. It says "At that time the Feast of Dedication," or the Feast of Lights, "took place at Jerusalem, it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon, so the Jews gathered around Him, and said to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe, the works that I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me, but you do not believe because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

“The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father, for which of these are you going to stone Me?” The Jews answered Him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone You, but for blasphemy, because You, being a man, make Yourself God.” Then Jesus answered them, “It is not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? Now if He called them gods, to whom the word of God came and scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him, whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I am not doing the works of My Father, then do not believe in Me, but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

“Again they sought to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan, to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there He remained, and many came to Him and they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true,” and many believed in Him there.”

Now John tells us why he wrote all of these, why he recorded this and he says that it’s so his readers would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and then believing they would have life in His name. Three times Jesus looks at the Jewish leaders and He says, “You do not believe, you do not believe, you do not believe,” and then all of a sudden by way of, I guess comparison, He throws three verses in outside of the context of the story at the end that shows people, and the very last thing that we read is, “And many believed in Him there.”

It’s a beautiful thing and the reality is, you and I, we’re going to leave this room in one of these two camps, where Jesus looks at us and He says, “You do not believe in Me,” or we will be among those that says in verse 42, “And many believed in Him there.” It’s really, really important where you land on that, and because of the angst that we feel in our culture and I feel even in our body, I think it’s interesting that even though this passage is not necessarily about elections or our children or marriages or some of the stressors that we have, it really does show why we can rest in the storm.

There’s four truths about Jesus I want to show you, the first is that Jesus is clear in His claim to be God. I want you to think about this friends, that Jesus Christ came to this Earth and He said, “I am God.” Now that should have an impact in the way that the rest of us live our life if that’s true. It says that Jesus was walking in the temple with the feast, the Feast of Dedication or the Feast of Lights, and you say, “Well, which feast is this?” Well, this is Hanukkah, you go, “Seriously?” Yeah, it’s Hanukkah. This is important because what this feast celebrated was actually something, that at this point was only less than 200 years old.

There was a man, Judah Maccabee, and he led a revolt over Syrians that liberated the temple in the 163 BC, and what Hanukkah celebrates is this victory, it's the liberation of the temple. It's only been going on for less than 200 years and this is not a feast or a festival that God ordained in the Old Testament that's an annual feast, and yet this is just something that national Israelis picked up and they said, "We're going to celebrate this." They still celebrate it today, but what's really important that you understand about that, is that it helps us to understand where we're at in terms of the timing of when this took place. What this means is that in between chapter 10 verse 21 and chapter 10 verse 22, almost two months had elapsed. That was the feast of [inaudible 00:11:55] that we were looking at and that was in the fall, and now all of a sudden we're in winter.

It's amazing how fast John is progressing us to the last week of Jesus's life. In fact when we get done with chapter 11 ... 10, we will literally be about 10 or 11 days before the cross, and we're going to spend the rest of John in those days. It's an amazing concentration of time where John said, "Now this is the important part." It's so important that this is where we're going to spend most of our time. Almost two months have passed and the first time these Jews will see Him after two months, they come up to Him, it says they surround Him. Now you know that's an intimidating thing, is when enemies surround you, and it says that they surround Him and they asked Him and they say this, they say, "How long are You going to keep us in suspense? If You're the Christ then just tell us plainly." In other words, stop at the word pictures, no more metaphors, just straight up, "Are You the Christ?"

Jesus knew that they were not fact-finding. The reason is because in John chapter 5, 7, and 8, they've all tried to kill Him three times because of His claim to be the Son of God. What they're trying to do, is in a public place they're trying to get Jesus to say something that they can consider to be blasphemy to justify taking His life. It's interesting if you think at what's really taking place, they're at a feast to celebrate a man named Judah that liberated, a liberator, right? A deliverer, and here they are, they want to kill the deliverer.

John says it was winter, I think some of what he means there maybe symbolic. Everyone knew it was winter, I think what he means is was really chilly inside the heart and outside of the heart. Jesus says to them, "Guys, look, I told you and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's Name they bear witness about Me." In other words what He's saying is, "Guys, I have been so clear about this. I have told you and I have shown you." In other words, this is not about you being stuck in a state of suspense, this is about you being stuck in a state of unbelief. Some of you maybe in this room, that's where you're at. You're at a place where you do not believe Christ. If that's the case what I'm about to show you, I hope it's not offensive, I hope that you literally fall on your knees, whether physically or not, and you put your belief in Jesus Christ this morning.

But for those of us who have already trusted Christ, you need to understand that God has called us to go into the world with the gospel to tell people about Jesus. Some people are not going to believe and it's important for us to have perspective as we're going in to the world with the gospel. That when people don't believe we have to ask the question, "Why don't they believe?" Because when I read John and when I'm talking about Jesus, it seems so simple to me that I'm like, "How can you not believe that this is the Christ? How can you not believe that He died and rose again?" Because I believe. It's really, really important for us to just take a step back and say, "Now what's the cause of all these unbelief?"

We're telling people about Jesus and they're having to believe the gospel that they hear from our mouth. These people were looking into the embodiment of deity, Jesus Himself, after Him saying, "I am the Christ, I'm the Son of God," and they still did not believe it. What's the cause of all disbelief? There's three reasons, one or the letter A, is unbelief is the result of our love of sin. When we're not believing Jesus is because we love sin. You see, in the eyes of Jesus, who searches the depths of our heart, unbelief is really not an evidence issue, it's a preference issue.

This is how Jesus says it in John chapter 3, Jesus says, "This is the judgment," meaning, "I'm the judge, I could look into your heart. I can see why you're not believing and this is why, because the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, for everyone who does wicked things hates the light, and does not come to the light lest its deeds should be exposed." Unbelievers, they resist Christ shining His light upon their sin because they prefer their sin. Instead of pulling the weeds of sin that's in the heart in favor of Jesus, they protect the weeds in their heart by resisting the light of Jesus.

One thing I just want you to know, friends look, I'm a great sinner, I really am. I confess, I'm the worst that I know, and one thing I can tell you is this, is if you're not believing in Jesus because you have a preference towards sin, I just want you to know that you're confused. You're not stupid, you're not ignorant, it's just sin feels so satisfying, but let me tell you something, Jesus is better than your sin. He is more satisfying, He is more pleasurable, Jesus is better than sin. Sometimes we can't see it, and particularly when we're in it, but when we repent of our sin and experience the refreshment in our soul from being made holy by God, and we are near God, in a relationship with Him, we can hear Him speak to us and we can talk to Him and we have a friend that sticks closer than our brother, it's better. It's better than sin, it really is.

Well, there's a second reason of why we have unbelief and that's unbelief is the result of apathy, it's a result of apathy. Some people hear Jesus say, "I'm the Son of God," some people hear you say, "Jesus is the Son of God," and they say, "Who cares?" Why is that important? This is modeled by Jesus Himself. When we get to John chapter 18 we're going to find the mob that brings Jesus to a man whose name is Pilate, sort of like a governor. Pilate, He's on trial, in his house, just Jesus and Pilate, they're in the house. Pilate still hasn't been told what He's done wrong, it's just the mob brought Him. He takes Him out of the mob and instead of saying, "What did You do wrong? How come all these people are mad at you?" The first question that comes out of Pilate's mouth is this, "Are you the King of the Jews? Are you a king? Where are you exactly?"

Jesus gives an answer and it's interesting, Jesus answers ... He doesn't answer, instead what He does is He presses down on the wound. He says, "Well, let me ask you something. Do you say this of your own accord or did others say this about Me to you?" It's interesting what He's saying here, He's saying, "Are you asking it because you overheard a discussion and you're curious or because you see something personally at stake in me claiming to be the king? Is this really about worship or amusement? If I say that I am God, Pilate, do you plan to smile and be amused or you plan to get on your knee and worship?"

You see, there's a lot of people that treat the claims of Jesus, that He is the Son of God, much like when people live on the coast and some governor calls for a mandatory evacuation and people are out surfing, and they just stay, and all of sudden we hear of all these lost of life. It's the same thing that's happening, many people choose to suspend judgment about Jesus because they don't see anything personally at stake in His claims to be God. This is one of the reasons that people don't believe. One is we love sin, second is because we just don't think it's all that important to us, but then in our text, Jesus gives us a third and it's this, is that unbelief is the result of not being part of God's flock. Now this is a hard one because the first two really deal with our responsibility, and this one deals with God's sovereignty. Jesus says, "You do not believe because you are not part of my flock." What a statement.

Now do you remember the word picture that we looked at last week in the first six verses of John chapter 10? Jesus talked about a sheepfold, a pen, and this would be very, very common in villages, and it would be a pen that would be used by all the shepherds. They didn't all have separate pens, there was, normally in most of these small villages, just one. The shepherds would go out all day with their flock and let them eat and graze and then they bring them back for the evening, they put them all in one common sheep pen. Then they would hire a gatekeeper who would stay up all night to protect the sheep from thieves and robbers and wolves, and then the shepherds would go sleep. Then the next morning those same shepherds, they would come back out, but now all the sheep, they're all mixed together, but because they know the unique voice and inflection of their shepherd, he calls them by name and the right sheep follow the right shepherd out and they go back out into the pasture.

This was Jesus' word picture of what's taking place spiritually in their lives. This is why Jesus says in our text, He says, "My sheep hear My voice, I know them and they follow Me." When we were back in John chapter 8 and they were not believing in Jesus, if you remember what Jesus said to them then, it's very similar to what He's saying now. He says, "Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." It's an amazing thing what He's saying here. He's saying that there is a sovereign purpose in salvation that you cannot get around.

If you remember when we were back in John chapter 3, Jesus had a conversation with one of the Pharisees and He said, “Nicodemus, if you want to go to heaven you must be born again.” Poor Nicodemus he is like us, he recognized the impossibility of that task, “How can I born myself again?” He asked, “What? Do I have to get back in my mother’s womb?” Almost sarcastically like, “How is this suppose to happen?” Jesus says, “Well, you know, that’s true, it is impossible, but it’s not impossible to God,” and then He talks about a second impossibility that has to take place in order for someone to be born again. He said, “Hey Nicodemus, look at one of those trees, what’s blowing those trees?” He says, “It’s wind.” You know what’s interesting, you don’t know where the wind came from. You don’t know where it’s going, but you see the effect in the trees, and so it is with the spirit of God among those who were born again.

Jesus gives him two impossibilities, He said, “The only way for you to get to heaven is for you to be born again, and the only way to be born again is wind has to blow upon your heart.” “I can’t born myself again and I’m not the controller of wind, so how is this suppose to happen?” Jesus is saying that you and I, we’re all responsible to believe and we’ll be held accountable for our lack of belief, but just like sailors that are stranded on a raft with a makeshift sail, we’re absolutely helpless unless the wind blows. This is why when we were back in John chapter 6 verse 44, Jesus says, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.”

Now I realize that you and I, that we struggle with sovereignty of God because it means that we’re not in control. We find some affinity with the rationale of the first two, because what it means is we’re making a decision, and this third one, part of salvation what it says is, “God has to make a decision.” No one comes unless He calls. That puts us in a unique place to where we’re very, very dependent, aren’t we? We don’t initiate new birth, but friends listen to me, if the opportunity to respond, if there’s an opportunity that’s put before you and your heart recognizes it, there is a decision to make about Jesus that is proof that the wind is blowing upon you, it’s proof that God is literally drawing you to Himself. It’s proof that God by His spirit is literally blowing His spiritual wind in your heart and calling you to believe upon His Son.

I would just exhort us as a church family by way of application, let’s believe in Jesus and find salvation and strength. To those of you who have never trusted Christ, to believe in Jesus and His accomplishments in dying on the cross and rising from the dead, to be saved from your sin. For those of us who’ve already trusted Christ and are already saved, to remember in the midst of the storm, during elections and Supreme Courts, and floods and everything else, that Jesus Christ stood on this Earth and He says, “I am God,” and we can believe in Jesus and find strength He is God.

The second thing that we learned here about Jesus that allows us to rest in the storm is that Jesus is strong in His ability to shepherd us home. He is strong in His ability to shepherd us home. Notice what He says at verse 28 to 30, He says, to His flock, to His sheep He says, “I give them eternal life and they will never perish.” Now that’s not physical perishing, that’s spiritual, meaning, “That they will never be separated from Me for eternity.” His sheep, Jesus speaks of assurance for their sheep, and this is why He says the next sentence, and He says, “Look guys, no one will ever snatch them out of My hand.”

Isn't it interesting that Jesus' hand in verse 28 becomes the Father's hand in verse 29? He says, "My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand, I and the Father are one." In other words, "When you're in My hand you're in His hand, and when you're in His hand you're in My hand." That's why He says, "I and the Father are one."

Now this is really important because when we get to John chapter 17 you would think that when the Shepherd is hanging on a cross and He's dead and He's put into the grave that the sheep are in tremendous peril. This is why in John chapter 17 Jesus spends most of His time praying and He says, "Father, I give You My sheep, would you protect them." That God Almighty, Jesus and His Father, is that they are the holders of our salvation. Sometimes we think of it like an egg that's in an open hand and how we live our life, hopefully it just doesn't drop. Listen friend, your salvation is not in your hand, it's in His hand. If you are His then you are in His hand and He says, "I am faithful as a shepherd to get you home."

By way of application let's rest in Jesus' strength as our shepherd. You see, guys, if you know Christ and He is your shepherd and His duty is to get us home, and His ability will make sure you do get home. This is why Jude verse 24 says, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory." He's able to keep you from stumbling, I think of it like this picture right here, to where when we're little guys, we're just learning to walk, it's natural for dad or mom to put their fingers out just like this and we hold on, and all of a sudden we're starting to walk. We're wobbling around and things are hard and we're about to fall and yet dad or mom make sure we don't fall. This is what he says, he goes, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you before Him blameless when you get to heaven." You see, nothing can separate us from His love, not even your sin.

What about those who seemed to have one time been near and now they're not? What about those who seemed to have one time, they have confessed faith in Christ and now they confess that they do not believe in Christ? Well, the Bible gives us only two options, I believe, as to what's taking place in those individual's lives. First, is perhaps they were never born again, just like the parable of the prodigal son. There were two sons, and they were both far from God, one went away and looked like a sinner and one stayed home and looked like a son, but the son couldn't wait to leave. He was self-righteous, he was sanctimonious, he had the name, he knew where the bedrooms were and yet he wanted to be away from the house, he wanted to be away from his father. The Bible, even John himself, the same author writes another letter, 1st John chapter 2, and he describes the possibility, the reality that some people who are not near with us anymore, they prove that they were never one among us.

Look what it says, 1st John 2:19 says, "They went out from us, but they were never one of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us, but they went out that it might become plain that they are not of us."

Now the fact is, is that you and I simply do not know, our eyes can't see that. Our eyes cannot see the heart and that's why there's another option that the Bible points to, and that is that perhaps they are truly saved, they're truly born again but simply wandering in the field. They want to chew on their own grass and they're totally unaware that their good shepherd is not only strong, but He's coming. He is coming for them and He has the sovereign authority over every single thing in order to create whatever circumstance is necessary in order to bring that child back home. We don't know, but for those of us in Christ we can rest in Jesus' strength as our shepherd.

The third thing I want you to see about Jesus that allows us to rest in the storms of life is that Jesus is able to confound His enemies. Wouldn't it be discouraging if Jesus lost an argument? Wouldn't it be discouraging if He was not able to confound His enemies as the Son of God? He proves that He has strength. He also proves this abiding serenity in the midst of a storm. Once He says, "I and the Father are one," the Jews picked up stones to kill Him, and at that very moment He asked a question, He goes, "Now which of the good works that I've done is the reason why you want to kill me right now?" They say, "It's not because of any good works that you've done, but because you a mere man, are claiming to be God." All of a sudden we find how important it is for us to read our Bible, to know our Bible.

It's amazing what takes place in the life of somebody as they're interacting with life and they're able to see the scriptures and to really help filter everything that happens in life through a biblical lens. This is exactly what happens with Jesus, spontaneously He pulls a verse out of Psalm 82. Now, I get it, He's the Son of God so He has an advantage because He wrote the thing, but you and I can read the thing. We can read it. He wrote it, we can read it and we can both benefit from it. He benefits from it. It seems almost random that he's just going to pull this out of nowhere like, "Was this a diversion? What is it?" I think it was not only a diversion because they are about to throw rocks at Him, but I also believe it was an indictment.

We need to know something about Psalm 82. Psalm 82 is written from God as a judgment upon the shepherds and rulers of Israel in the Old Testament. They had a specific job that we read about in the first few verses of Psalm 82. This is what it says, it says, "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?" They're not doing their job, He says, "This is your job, give justice to the weak and the fatherless, maintain the right of the afflicted, rescue the weak and the needy. This is your job." Then notice what it says in verse 6, in fact that's not up there, I'm sorry about that. What's in bold is actually verse 6, it says, "I said, 'You are gods, sons of the Most High.'" Now what's happening here?

The rulers in the Old Testament, they were failing to do their job, they were not protecting the sheep, they were devouring the sheep, and as a result of that society was shaking, culture was shaking. Jesus pulls this random verse, seemingly random verse in order to tell these Pharisees and these Jews something very important.

This is really what He's saying, He said, "Guys, as entrusted representatives of the one true God, just like those rulers in the Old Testament you are like gods, not the big G god, but the little G god. So you're gods, agents in the world entrusted with His word, but you're corrupt just like they were corrupt. Now if God called this Old Testament rulers little G gods due to their entrusted authority, then why do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I say that I'm the Son of God who came down from heaven?"

This is the picture that I envision when I think of the Jews right now, they're like, "Whaaat?" They're just totally stunned, no idea what to do with this at all, but what's interesting is Jesus uses this diversion to do something that you and I probably wouldn't do. If we're out sharing the gospel and people start picking up rocks in order to throw, and all of a sudden we throw a verse out there and they're like, "Wooh, that's interesting." That's our time to run, right? Instead what Jesus does is He uses that moment to give one last invitation and it would be the last invitation. John tells us that Jesus gives to these Jews to come to Him, believe and be saved, and He says to them these words, He goes, "Look, I know you don't believe Me, but at least believe the works and maybe if you start to believe the works that God Almighty will work in your heart and you'll be saved." All of a sudden He leaves. He leaves.

By way of application this third point is let's rely on the power of God's Word. Listen Providence, let's read our Bible. Let's read our Bible. If you're not reading your Bible you're trying to walk without a map. Read your Bible, it affects your life. I watch people who read their Bible and I watch people who don't read their Bible, and it's a remarkable difference in the way that they think, that they respond to the world, it's amazing. There's such a resource here in the scriptures and so read the Bible.

I guess, here's to the last thing is that is this, is that Jesus is able to live up to the truth claims about Himself. He's able to live up to the truth claims about Himself. You see, John could have just moved on. He could have left it right there and picked up with Lazarus in chapter 11, instead what He does is He tells us that Jesus went away for His last three months before He comes back to die on the cross. Where did He go? He went to where John the Baptist started his ministry, where he was baptizing at first, in a sharp contrast to what we've seen from the Jews that we're told here that many people believed in Jesus there.

Now I just want you to notice the beautiful simplicity of belief here. This is really important, they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." In other words, the soil in which faith springs up and grows needs no miracles and no signs, it needs only the truth about Jesus's spoken in love by sincere believers and witnesses. Then Jesus does the rest, Jesus proves Himself worthy and Jesus lives up to the truth that's spoken about Him, and Jesus draws sinners to Himself, and Jesus validates this truth, and Jesus confirms by His spirit that He's the Son of God and Jesus saves.

By way of application, Providence, let's be faithful to tell people about Jesus. Just like John the Baptist, we don't need new signs, we don't need new miracles and wonders, we speak about Jesus, truth claims about Jesus and then we allow Jesus, the Son of God, to be able to validate those truth claims Himself. You don't have to validate Him, He will, you just need to speak them. Let's be faithful to tell people this week about Jesus, even as we're going through storms.

Let's pray together. Father in Heaven, thank You for Your love for us. Thank You for the truth of Your Word, for the amazing picture that it gives us in Jesus, in His supremacy and His peace, and I pray Father, for those in this room who have yet to trust Christ, would You, please God, show them the greatness of Jesus and the pleasure of being near Jesus, and we pray that they would be saved. God, please, just as you did my life when I was 16, would you open up people's eyes to help them to see salvation is available through Jesus. For those of us who already have known Christ, I pray that you would use this to encourage and strengthen us. I pray Father, that as we would have a moment to just reflect over what You have written in Your Word, what You've spoken this morning, as we give and as we sing to You, we pray, Father, that these offerings would be pleasing to You and You would use them to expand the glory and the name of Jesus Christ. We love You and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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