Introduction: Who is Jesus and why did He come?

The Authorized Biography – John’s eyewitness account

- Will you **BELIEVE**?  Chapters 1 – 5
- Will you **FOLLOW**?  Chapters 6 – 10
- Will you **LOVE**?  Chapters 11 – 15
- Will you **TESTIFY**?  Chapters 16 - 21

The Context – Jesus’ last night on earth

- He washed the disciples’ feet.  John 13
- Judas left to betray Him.  John 13
- He institutes the Lord’s Supper.  John 13
- He explained His departure and promised return.  John 14
- He commanded them to:  John 15
  1. **ABIDE** in Him.
  2. **LOVE** one another.
  3. **TESTIFY** about Him.
What was Jesus saying to His first disciples?

1. He clarified their future role. John 15:26 – 27

2. He set their expectations for the future. John 16:1-4

3. He explained where He was going and the new role of the Holy Spirit. John 16:5-16

4. He clarified the timing and benefits of His death and resurrection. John 16:17-30

5. He affirmed their faith, predicted their failure, and gave hope for their future. John 16:31-33
What is Jesus saying to us today?

1. To **BOLDLY TESTIFY** about your relationship with Me.

2. To **EXPECT** rejection and persecution, and be prepared to **DIE** for your testimony.

3. To remember I am with you and **IN YOU** 24/7, to give you all you need.

4. To ask My Father for “**BIG THINGS**” in My name, because He loves you.

5. To be **STRONG** and **COURAGEOUS** when failure, trouble, and challenges overwhelm you.
Discussion Questions:

1. Google the word “testify” and discuss its meaning and application for you in your family, work, and relationships.

2. How does “testifying” about Jesus differ from “serving” Christ? When and how are they the same?

3. Discuss why Jesus said, “It is good for you that I am going away.” What were the advantages to the 1st century disciples and to us?

4. In what ways are you taking full advantage of the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life to testify about Jesus?

5. What’s your biggest challenge to testify of Jesus’ work of love and transformation in your life?
**Introduction: What time is it…**

… in our world?

… in our church?

… in your life?

**The Context – Jesus is preparing His disciples for His departure**

1. Their **mission**: TESTIFY

2. Their **future**: TRIBULATION

3. Their **resource**: The HOLY SPIRIT

4. Their **hope**: His VICTORY
Jesus’ final preparation for His disciples is prayer

1. He prays for **Himself**
   
   - Why?
   
   - What?

2. He prays for **His disciples**
   
   - Why?
   
   - What?

3. He prays for **future believers**
   
   - Why?
   
   - What?
How does that apply to me today?

1. How should I pray for *myself*?
   - Why?
   - What?

2. How should I pray for *others*?
   - Why?
   - What?

3. How should I pray about *the future*?
   - Why?
   - What?
Discussion Questions:

1. What unique circumstances in our world indicate “now is the time to testify?”

2. What new insight did you receive from this message about:
   - God?
   - Prayer?
   - Your role in His plan?

3. What two things did Jesus pray for His disciples?
   -
   -
   - Who needs you to pray that for them?

4. What did Jesus mean when He prayed we would be “one,” even as He and the Father are one?
   - How is that working out in your life?
   - Relationships?

5. Why is it so important to live out our “new life” and love one another?
Introduction: Courage or Cowardice?

Why do we do what we do?

**Courage**: The ability, regardless of fear, danger, or difficulty, to do or say something that’s right, or good, or of help.

*Synonyms*: brave, daring, heroic

*Example*: A person who acts in accordance with one’s beliefs, especially in spite of danger or criticism.

**Cowardice**: The inability, due to fear and excessive self-concern, to do or say something that’s right, or good, or of help.

*Synonyms*: weakling, milksop, namby-pamby

*Example*: A person who refuses to risk personal health or safety when faced with a decision or need.

“I was born for this purpose…
to testify to the truth.”

“Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me.”

Jesus of Nazareth – John 18: 37
The testimonies from John 18:

- Jesus’ arrest  
  John 18:1-11

- Jesus before Annas  
  John 18:12-14

- Peter before the servant girl  
  John 18:15-18

- Jesus before the High Priest  
  John 18:19-24

- Peter’s 2nd and 3rd denials  
  John 18:25-27

- Jesus before Pilate  
  John 18:28-40
The lessons from John 18:

1. **Question:** What kept Judas and Annas from listening to the truth in Jesus?
   
   **Answer:** GREED

2. **Question:** What kept the religious leaders from listening to the truth in Jesus?
   
   **Answer:** PRIDE, POWER, & POSITION

3. **Question:** What kept Peter and Pilate from listening to the truth in Jesus?
   
   **Answer:** FEAR

4. **Question:** What empowered Peter to listen to the truth in Jesus initially?
   
   **Answer:** Jesus’ PRESENCE and POWER
Discussion Questions:

1. What empowered the early Church to boldly testify of the truth in Jesus?

2. What hinders your testimony for Jesus? Explain
   - Greed…
   - Pride…
   - Power…
   - Social position…
   - Fear…

3. What specifically could you do this week to experience Jesus’ presence and power in order to boldly testify?

4. Who might you ask to help you with this “next step” to experience Christ’s presence and power in your life?
**Introduction: Summons to Jury Duty**

- **Attendance** required
- Role of the **Judge**
- Role of the **Attorneys**
- Role of the **Witnesses**
- Role of the **Jury**
- **The Verdict** – “Beyond a reasonable doubt”

**Case:** Is Jesus the unique Savior of the world?
Examining the facts:

- Jesus is *sentenced* to death John 19:1-16
  - Flogged
  - Mocked by soldiers
  - Rejected by His people
  - Declared innocent by Pilate

- Jesus is *crucified* John 19:17-27
  - Carries the cross beam
  - His crime is posted
  - His clothes are divided
  - His mother is provided for
  - A thief repents*

- Jesus voluntarily *dies* John 19:28-37
  - Darkness falls upon the Earth
  - Jesus’ final words, “It is finished.”
  - Veil of the Temple is torn*
  - His side is pierced

*Recorded in other Gospels
Evaluating the evidence

**The testimony of Jesus - LOVE:**

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**The testimony of Pilate - TRUTH:**

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**The testimony of Scripture - PROOF:**

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**The testimony of John - LIFE!**

*The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.*

John 19:35
What’s your verdict?

1. Is Jesus guilty of being the unique Savior of the world?

☐ YES  ☐ NO

2. Have you repented and received Jesus as your Savior and Lord?

☐ YES  ☐ NO

3. What implications are there for your family, friends, and coworkers, if you know this truth and they do not?

4. What of the evidence presented most moved you….
   - Intellectually
   - Emotionally
   - Spiritually

5. How will your “verdict” inform how you live, pray, and interact with others?
Introduction: Evidence, Hope, and Assurance

Four very specific scenes for skeptics and doubting Christians:

SCENE 1: The physical evidence

1Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put Him!” 3So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter who was behind him arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7as well as the burial cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. 8Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. *(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)*

**EVIDENCE:** The **EMPTY** tomb.

SCENE 2: The first eye witness

9Then the disciples went back to where they were staying, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 10and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 11They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” 12“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put Him.” 13At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 14“Woman,” He said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”
Thinking He was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.”

“Jesus said to her, “Mary.”
She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

“Jesus said, “Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’”

“Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that He had said these things to her.

**EVIDENCE**: Jesus is **SEEN**, **SPOKEN** with, and **PHYSICALLY TOUCHED**.

**SCENE 3: The skeptics – Ten fearful followers**

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ®After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

“Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” ®And with that He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ®If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

**What does Jesus do?**

1. He **COMFORTS** them.

2. He **CONVINCES** them.

3. He **COMMISSIONS** them.

**EVIDENCE**: Fearful followers become **CONFIDENT** believers.
SCENE 4: The irrefutable proof – One unreasonable doubter

“Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.”

“A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!’” Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.”

“Thomas said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

“Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

**EVIDENCE:** Thomas is **ALL IN** – “My Lord and my God!”

The Book’s purpose – Then and now

“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

Four timeless truths for honest skeptics

1. Jesus reveals Himself to different people in **DIFFERENT** ways.

2. Meeting the resurrected Jesus produces a total **LIFE TRANSFORMATION.**

3. The evidence is overwhelming (then and now) that Jesus **IS ALIVE.**

4. God’s desire isn’t a religious response but a real relationship, by **FAITH.**
**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does it mean to be an **honest** skeptic?

2. Discuss the four timeless truths (above).
   - Which one “hit home” for you?
   - Why?

3. How does Jesus’ response to Thomas encourage you?

4. How interested do you think God is in revealing Himself to you?

5. What specific action step would demonstrate a “step” of faith on your part toward Christ?
Introduction: The Power of Shame

Shame – A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior; a regrettable and unfortunate situation or action.

Restore – Bring back (a previous right, practice, custom, or situation), reinstate; return something or someone to a former condition, place, or position.

How do we overcome the shame of our past to fulfill God’s purpose for our future?
Restored to testify...

The context of John 21

- Waiting in Galilee
- Forgiven but not restored

Peter goes fishing

Jesus restores Peter

- The setting
- The three questions

Jesus testifies to this event
How does Jesus restore us?

1. He **MEETS** us **where we are**.

2. He **gently demands** we face the **TRUTH** about ourselves.

3. He **affirms our value and worthiness** by commissioning us to **SERVICE**.

**Why must we overcome our shame?**

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**Discussion Questions:**

1. What are some of the negative consequences of unresolved “shame” in our lives?

2. Hiding is the most common response to shame. In what ways do people tend to hide when “shame is not identified and dealt with?”

3. What about Jesus’ approach to restoring Peter was most encouraging?

4. How might you receive that kind of restoration from Him?

5. How could God use the mistakes of your past to testify of His grace to others?