

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Fourth Sunday After Trinity, June 27, 2021**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)  
Hymns: 1, 283, 204, 210, 16:4.  
Lessons: Isaiah 43: 10-21, 1 John 5: 1-5, John 20:19-31.  
Sermon Text: John 21:24-25.  
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

When you think about all the things that have ever been written – books, magazines, newspapers, and just about anything else that is printed – you may wonder “Why was this written?”

Saint Paul in writing to Timothy reminds him *“how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”* He then goes on to assure us that *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (NIV) *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)

Today, we look especially at

**WHY JOHN’S GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN**

1. Was John trying to “prove” something?
2. It wasn’t written just to tell us about Jesus’ miracles.
3. It was 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.”*

Our Gospel lesson tells us that Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them on the day he rose from the dead. A week after Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas saw Jesus and the wounds in his hands and side and he acknowledged Jesus as *“My Lord and my God!”* The Word of God as recorded by John, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says: *“Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”* John 20:28-29.

What did it take to prove to Thomas that Jesus did what he said he’d do? Thomas had to see him in person. Thomas was privileged to be with him for his earthly ministry. And then, when Thomas saw Jesus, Jesus told him what he had said about putting his fingers into the nail holes in Jesus’ hands, and putting his hand into the spear-wound in Jesus’ side. This personal display proved to Thomas that Jesus had risen from the dead.

But we can’t see Jesus in person to have him convince us that he rose from the dead. It will be only from the word of God, *“beginning with Moses and all the Prophets”* Luke 24:27 (NIV) that we will be convinced. It won’t be persuasive arguments of men. It won’t be my pounding on the pulpit to emphasize what God has written. It won’t be the charismatic personality of the man in this pulpit. It will be the Word of God. We believe God when he tells us that *“faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”* Romans 10:17 (NIV)

We can’t prove everything that God says in the Bible in a way satisfying to those relying upon human reason and logic. We proclaim, we tell, we preach, we teach the Word of God. We report and say ‘this is what God says’.

At this point in his Gospel, John goes even further. He tells us that he could have recorded many other miracles Jesus did. *“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.***” John 20:30-31 (NIV)

There are only about 33 miracles of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels. Of course, this doesn’t include a couple of his greatest miraculous deeds: his resurrection from the dead and his ascent into heaven. This doesn’t include every act of healing Jesus did while he was on earth. What would it take to prove something to you? If you could read of many other miracles that Jesus did would that make you believe in him as your Savior?

Let me ask a question that you may think is silly: Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin? Of course you do. Isn’t that part of your confession? Isn’t that why you are here today? You aren’t here today to make some business contacts, or merely to socialize. You are here to join in worship of the God who created you, redeemed you and sanctified you. That is the work of the Triune God, whom we publicly, out loud, confessed that we believe, just a few minutes ago. We didn’t just recite some words about him, we confessed him. We made a confession. We said – I said, and you, too said – “I believe” in him and his work.

You have come to know about God, and especially his only-begotten Son, Jesus the Christ, and his life, death, and coming to life again. You know that he ascended into heaven and from the Word of God – in fact from John’s Gospel – you are assured that he tells us ***“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”*** John 14:2 (KJV)

So you know what is waiting for you after you die. Life. More life. Better life. Eternal life.

That’s exactly what John says in the Word of God today: ***“these [things] 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.”*** Yes, that you may have life! That means that after you die, your Savior Jesus Christ will take you to heaven to live with him there.

So how is it that you came to believe in Jesus as your Savior?

If you are like me, you probably cannot remember a time when you didn’t know about Jesus Christ. So what proved it to you that he is your Savior? Was it miracles that he did?

It was the Word of God that brought you to faith. God could have done that miraculously, but God chose to use his own means to bring us – and any human – to faith, to believe in him. God uses what we call the Means of Grace, the gospel in the Word and the gospel in the Sacraments. And you know that the gospel is the message of salvation.

Everyone who believes was brought to faith by the working of the Holy Ghost, as we confess in Luther’s explanation of the third article of The Apostles’ Creed that ***“I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers. On the Last Day he will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.”***

Most of us were probably brought to faith in Jesus Christ at our baptism, when ***“water used by God’s command and connected with God’s word”*** was applied to us. We further believe, because God tells us, that baptism ***“works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe. It is not the water that does them indeed, but the Word of God which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts this Word of God in the water.”***

So we weren’t brought to faith by learning about Jesus’ miracles. But just coming to faith wasn’t the end of it. Jesus tells us: ***“If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples.”*** John 8:31 (HCSB) Peter ends his second letter with this warning and encouragement: ***“be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*** 2 Peter 3:17-18 (NIV) We must continue to feed our faith with God’s Word!

John’s Gospel wasn’t written just to tell us about Jesus’ miracles. John didn’t try to write down every significant thing that Jesus did while he was with the disciples. But everything he wrote has a purpose for his readers’ lives – for our lives. John wasn’t trying to impress us with Jesus’ miracles. Here John calls them “signs.” They point to something, to someone beyond the events themselves – they point to God’s Son, the

promised Messiah – the Christ, our Savior. These signs point us to life eternal. John only records about 10 miracles which Jesus did while he was on earth.

The miracles Jesus performed while he was on earth each had specific purposes. For example, they proved he had more power than any mortal human. They proved he had power from somewhere or something else. They proved he could do what he said he could and would do. They proved he had power over Satan and evil spirits.

So the theme – the main point – of John’s Gospel is summarized in these words: ***“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.”*** John wrote these things by the power of the Holy Spirit so we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we might have life in his name. What we read in this Gospel strengthens our faith and guides our lives as Jesus’ children, as sheep of his pasture.

John’s Gospel was not written merely for the purpose of enriching our theoretic understanding or for gratifying speculative reasoning, but with a purely practical purpose: our redemption and salvation.

But isn’t this the main purpose and goal of the other Gospels and of the entirety of Holy Scripture? Our redemption and salvation. So that we might believe. So that we might have faith. God’s Word even tells us what faith is, in a most emphatic way: ***“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*** (Hebrews 11:1 NIV)

You and I haven’t seen Jesus. But by the power and grace of God we have come to faith. That is the work of God, just as surely as any miracles Jesus did when he was on earth. That, in a sense, is surely a miracle, too. We were ***“dead in trespasses and sins.”*** Ephesians 2:1 Our sins separated us from God. But in his love, he saw to it that we could have eternal life by believing. And he saw to it that we could believe by giving us faith.

The purpose of John’s gospel is clear: It was 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.”***

And then John’s very last words in his Gospel tell us even more. ***“This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”*** (John 21:24-25 NIV)

John testifies that all that he has written is true. And Jesus did many more things. And is John exaggerating when he talks about the world not having enough room for the books that would be written if everything Jesus did were written down? Today, we might think so. But this is God talking to us. And when did Jesus start his works? Look at the first words of John’s gospel: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”*** (John 1:1-3 NIV)

Can you imagine writing down all that the triune God – or just the person of Jesus Christ has done? Some novelists have a style of writing which records every single action and even every thought of a character. In such writing, an entire book may cover only a few hours of a person’s life.

But we have to be content with what God has recorded for our benefit. There is so much we don’t know, and even want to know about our salvation and what God has done. But what has been recorded is what is necessary for our salvation.

And John wrote it down so that you may have life in Jesus’ name. Thank, you John. Thank you, God. Amen.