

SERIES: Gospel of John: Seeing is Believing?  
SERMON: *Seeing in 3-D*  
SCRIPTURE: John 2:12-25  
SPEAKER: Pastor Jeremy Krause  
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Some of you know that I like technology. I was working as an appliance delivery boy in High School when I first heard of High Definition Television—HDTV. I didn't realize the difference HDTV makes, but when I saw the high resolution images—I was hooked. But as all technology goes, HDTV has now taken a back seat to a newer technology HD in 3-D.

Though 3-D television hasn't caught on as quickly, it seems 3-D movies are becoming more and more popular. I want you to imagine with me what it might be like if we were to attend a popular Disney movie in 3-D. Let's say that we decided to go watch the movie "Finding Nemo." It's a visually striking movie with bright colors, great illustrations, and a compelling story line.

But imagine that you didn't want to put on your 3-D glasses. Instead you decided to watch the entire movie without them. You would likely get the idea of the plot and the story line. You might even be able to make sense of the weird images which are designed to be seen through 3-D glasses. Yet, you wouldn't be able to appreciate the depth, or the clarity, or the quality of HD in 3-D. In fact, instead of enjoying the brilliant quality, you might be getting a headache and begin thinking "I wonder what it's like to watch this with 3-D glasses on? I wonder what I'm missing?"

Similarly, I wonder how many of you might be sitting Sunday after Sunday in these pews, listening to the Word of God preached. Perhaps you've listened to every sermon that Pastor Josh has shared on this book of John—even downloading those you missed. But you've left wondering if you're really getting it. You've left noticing that others are appreciating it—but you're not sure that you are seeing the depth, clarity, and quality of these sermons. Today I want to invite you to put on your 3-D glasses. That is, I want you to be a participating member of this congregation and not miss a thing. I want you to walk out of here this morning and be able to say, "Wow, I really see it!"

Now, I want to make a disclaimer here: putting on the 3-D glasses is work. In some cases, it's hard work. But, I assure you it's worth it. Do you want to see John in 3-D? I sure want you to and I think you'll love it.

To see John in 3-D, you need to work to understand what John and God were trying to accomplish through this passage and book. Simply put, you have to read the book of John the way the authors intended it to be read. In doing that, you'll see the brilliant subtleties and details that give us a robust look into who Christ is. As Don Carson has said, "John's arguments in this book depend on the readers' grasp of subtle and detailed points of Old Testament history and Scripture." What I want for us is to see John in 3-D.

Keep in mind what John is trying to accomplish throughout this whole book. We know because he tells us plainly in John 20:31-32. That is, John wants us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name. So let's look how he accomplishes this purpose through this passage.

John first shows us that Jesus has authority over the temple. If you have your Bibles, and I hope you do, turn to John 2:13-17.

### **JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER THE TEMPLE (13-17)**

<sup>13</sup>*The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. <sup>15</sup>And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

Before explaining Christ's authoritativeness, I want you to put on your 3-D glasses by asking two questions: "What is the significance of Passover?" as well as "What is the Temple?"

The Passover was incredibly important to the original audience. Passover was a celebration which reminded Israelites how the Angel of Death "passed over" those Jews who put sheep blood on their doorpost (see Exodus 12). In the book of John we see Jesus taking three different journeys to Jerusalem for Passover, with the final journey culminating in the crucifixion. Crowds would have flocked to Jerusalem for this feast which should culminate in worship to God. And remember, John the Baptist has already announced that Jesus is the Lamb of God (see John 1:29). So, the significance of Passover is that Jesus will become our Passover lamb. But what about the Temple?

The Temple is of critical importance. John has already foreshadowed that for us by explaining in Chapter 1:14 that "the WORD" (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us." Literally, Jesus became a man and "tabernacled" with us. The Temple replaced the tabernacle and has similar significance.

The Temple was a visually elaborate building. But it was also much more than a structure. The temple served three primary functions. It was the place where God dwelt in the midst of people. Secondly, it was the place of divine revelation. Finally, it was the place where sacrifices were offered and atonement was made.

So, as we setup this scene, remember, that Passover is being celebrated and Jerusalem is inundated with people. It would have been something like the mall on a Saturday before Christmas. But, this wasn't just a building, this was the Temple—Divine Presence was there. This was a sacred place! So it is very significant that Jesus enters the Temple at this time and makes quite a scene.

Some scholars believe that the Court of Gentiles was the location for the animals and money changers. As you can see on the slide, the Court of Gentiles was a large area that Jews could walk through to the inner courts, but Gentiles could not.

But why did the religious leaders allow commerce to be setup in the Temple? Well, to be fair to them, at least initially, understand that selling animals and exchanging coins would have been a convenience for the traveler. Instead of having to haul animals from the farm and be sure to have the right currency, a worshiper of Yahweh could enter the Temple and have access to the appropriate animals and coinage. The problem is that the religious leaders had allowed them to set up shop IN THE TEMPLE.

Instead of sweet worship in the Court of Gentiles, Christ finds the makings of a petting zoo. Instead of a Gentile agreeing with Psalm 84:10 “For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere” they might have thought “The Temple’s sure big, but I wish it didn’t smell like poop.”

So what does Jesus do? He kindly smiles and says “Would you please stop it?” Nope, that’s wrong. Christ becomes enraged and makes a whip to chase out the animals and money changers. But why is He so mad?

Have you ever watched someone get REALLY MAD at something that seemed insignificant? It’s important to remember that if someone blows up about something, there’s often something going on under the surface. When my babies won’t stop crying, I can get really angry at them—there’s likely much more to the problem than my girls’ issues.

Here’s why Christ was so angry: the religious leaders had clouded the worship of God. They had taken the 3-D glasses away from the people—the Gentiles specifically. See, the temple, like all these signs in John, was to ultimately point to the glory of Jesus Christ. Religious leaders had allowed Jesus’ glory to be interrupted by commerce.

So, in cleansing the temple, Jesus sends the religious leaders a message. “Don’t disrupt the worship of God! Don’t obscure the worship of ME!” The court of Gentiles was to be used as God intended; not as a house of trade (v. 16).

In explaining these events, John references Psalm 69:9, “*Zeal for your house will consume me.*” By the way, whenever we read a passage in the Bible that cross-references another passage, you need to pay close attention. Why is John drawing our attention there? What is he intending to do?

Well if you read and study Psalm 69, you’ll learn that it’s a lament from David. David is upset that his foes don’t understand the deep passion he has for the temple. John see’s this verse as a subtle but definite arrow that points to Jesus’ deep commitment to the Temple! In this next section, we see that Jesus calls Himself the temple. That helps us as we try to understand why Jesus is so passionate about the Temple and why He wants

worship. He is the object that the temple is supposed to point to. He is the object of worship!

So we've seen that Jesus has come in and taken authority over the temple. So, how will the religious leaders respond? Follow along as I read aloud from 2:18-22

### **JESUS IS THE SUPREME TEMPLE (18-22)**

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*<sup>18</sup>So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

So once Jesus had cleared the temple, the religious leaders wanted some credentials. Essentially they were asking, "Who do you think you are?" "On whose authority are you acting?"

It's at this point that I must confess to you that I've been frustrated with this passage. I have come to this place before and wondered why Jesus was making it so difficult? Why didn't Jesus make it simple and clear? Why is He communicating so cryptically? I didn't know the answer to that question for a long time because I hadn't done the hard work of putting my 3-D glasses on.

I'm recognizing that John wants us to see Jesus' double meaning. Jesus is playing intentionally on the religious leaders misunderstanding. Jesus is affirming that He not only has the credentials, but He can prove it! All the religious leaders have to do is tear down the temple and He will build it back up. But John also gives us an editorial comment in verse 21. Jesus was speaking about His body which would be destroyed and then raised up in three days. John is wanting us to conclude that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the temple!

Are you getting these 3-D glasses in place? John wants us to know that Jesus not only has authority over the temple... but Jesus IS the supreme temple. Remember the three primary functions of the temple?

Jesus is the place where God dwells in the midst of people. See, He came to earth as a man and lived among us. He tabernacled among us.

Jesus is also the place of divine revelation. Jesus' words are the words of God! Remember 1:18? Jesus has made God known.

And Jesus is the place where sacrifices are offered and atonement is made. It is this Jesus who is the Christ. He goes to the cross as the perfect sacrifice. He is the atonement that we look to.

SO, JESUS IS THE SUPREME TEMPLE!!! Wow! Are you seeing with the 3-D glasses?

Well, what will we do with this realization? Naturally, we should ... believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing have life in his name! But now John introduces a very troubling idea. Please read 2:23-25 with me.

**BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION (23-25)**

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<sup>23</sup>*Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.* <sup>24</sup>*But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people* <sup>25</sup>*and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*

If John wants us to believe that Jesus is the Christ—and by that belief be granted eternal life—why does he include this troubling passage?

I've concluded that John wants us to understand that belief IN SIGNS is not sufficient for salvation. As Pastor Josh said last week, these signs are not an end in and of themselves. Rather, these signs and miracles point to Jesus being the Christ.

The word “believed” in verse 23 and the word “entrust” in 24 are identical in the Greek language. John is using a play on words here. He’s writing something like this “they believed in Him because of His signs; He didn’t believe their hearts.” Or “they trusted in Him because of the miracles; He didn’t trust in their intentions.”

So, we need to realize that we might say we believe and yet Christ might not believe us. You might remember from John 2:11 that Christ’s disciples believed in Him. But here, we see that some claim to believe and yet Christ doesn’t believe them! I think it’s interesting how these passages contrast one another.

This past week, we were studying this passage in staff meeting when Pastor Dick drew our attention to Matthew 7:21-23, “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*”

See, look at verse 25 again. Jesus knows what’s in man. Jesus knows your heart. And He knows my heart. So, I want to ask you: “Is Jesus Christ supreme for you?” Think honestly and deeply, because we can say it with our lips and yet not believe it in our hearts.

As we see this book of John with more depth and clarity, we realize that it’s not only about belief in the signs; it’s about belief in what the signs point to. It’s about the object of belief. We also realize something about Christ. Though we see deep, He sees deeper.

We see His signs; He knows if we see the significance of the signs. I'm inviting you to see in 3-D. Christ sees us in 3-D.

### *So What?*

So John wants us to clearly see the signs he's presenting here in Chapter 2. Jesus has authority over the temple and is the supreme temple. And we must understand what John teaches at the end of chapter 2—a person can “say the right things” and not be saved. A person can say one thing with their lips and yet not mean it in their heart. Let me explain.

I am a fan of the Denver Broncos. Every now and then, someone will come up to me and claim to be a fan. I'll ask them a question or dialogue a bit about the Broncos only to find out that they don't really follow Bronco news. In fact, they don't really cheer them on. They don't know if they won or lost. I'm not convinced they're a fan—or at best they're a fan in the loosest sense of the word. See, I'm subscribed to Bronco blogs. I wear the gear. I watch the games. I'm legitimately flustered when they lose. I'm a fan because I not only say it—but I'm actually committed to them. I've embraced them. The Broncos are my team.

Similarly, some of you might claim to believe in Jesus' name. You remember saying a prayer, but you're not committed to Jesus. You've not embraced Jesus. See? This is a Lordship issue. Believing in Jesus' name... believing in the Gospel demands a commitment to Him.

Please don't misunderstand my meaning. I'm not talking about legalism, which is adding anything to the completed work of Jesus Christ. Rather, I'm begging you to understand the difference between “believing in His name” as used in John 1:12 and John 2:23. Those in our passage believed in the signs without understanding what the signs pointed to—that is Christ. They believed what He did without embracing HIM!

Well do you believe the Gospel? For those of you who aren't sure what the Gospel is, allow me to explain this good news. The Gospel is the main message of the Bible. It is the epic story line that is traced from Genesis to Revelation. See, the Bible teaches us that in the beginning, God created the world and it was good. Man was in the garden IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD! But two chapters into the Bible and man is banished from God's presence.

You and I have sinned. To be clear, we could not have failed God more miserably than we have. But God has always had a plan for our redemption. And from the beginning of this great book we begin looking for a Savior.

The Bible traces this story from Adam and Eve to the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to Egypt where the Israelites became slaves. Then Moses leads the exodus of the Jews that includes the Passover we spoke of earlier. And we see with these 3-D glasses that Passover was a sign that would point to Christ. We continue to trace this story line as the Israelites wander in the desert and the tabernacle is built. We see the tabernacle as

a sign that points to Christ. We read how the Israelites moved to the Promised Land, and Judges, and Kings—including King David who we spoke of earlier. And we see King David as a prefigure of Christ. And on and on it goes until Jesus comes to earth—the Messiah that we have all been waiting for.

God sent His son to earth as a man to be a substitute for all who believe in His name. Jesus lived a perfect life—one that fulfilled the law in every way. And yet He chose to be crucified for our sin. Christ rose again on the third day proclaiming victory over death and offering us redemption. So, for those who believe in His name a great exchange has taken place. Christ, who deserved everything received the punishment we deserved. And we, who deserve nothing, are adopted as children of God.

So I want to ask you. Have you believed this Gospel? Have you EMBRACED this Gospel?

### *Now What?*

My guess is that some of you might need to sell-out to Jesus Christ. You might be realizing that though you've said you believe with your lips, your heart has not committed to, nor embraced Jesus Christ. You need to confess and repent. Jesus, forgive me a sinner. I only know of one response to the Gospel—it is authentic and radical commitment. It is absolute surrender. It is complete Lordship. "God do whatever you want with me. You can have it all!" Andy and the music team are going to lead us in the song "Take My Life" as a response. I invite you to make the words of this song a prayer to the King and dedicate yourself to Him. Allow the Holy Spirit to impress upon you any and all sin that needs to be confessed. Admit it all and turn from it. Commit to Christ.

My guess is that some of you might really be sold-out to Christ. You're sitting there knowing the Gospel and embracing it—the best a sinner can. You realize it's all or nothing and you've made your decision; you're all in. To you I want to say: Keep on! Hold tight to Christ and His cross. Renew your commitment again this morning that all of your life is dedicated to Jesus Christ and His glory! Make the Gospel central in your heart, your devotions, your decisions, your relationships, your life. Keep on!

My prayer is that this church would be full of people who believe the Gospel and have radically committed themselves to the Gospel.

Jesus, take our lives. Take our hands, our feet, our minds, our hearts. Take it all. We consecrate ourselves to You.

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