

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 17TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

### THE BEGINNING (JOHN 1:1-5) THE WORD WAS GOD

John starts his Gospel with the beginning. In Genesis, we see God as the author of creation. Here, we see that Jesus was there and that He and the Father are one.

- **Knowing that Jesus is the Creator and that He has always existed is essential for understanding how much He cares for us.**

### LIGHT AND LIFE

Since the beginning of creation, Christ has been the one giving life to everything and light to anyone who would believe.

- The darkness could not overcome the light, but the darkness did still exist.
- **Darkness is our sin. Sin NEVER overcomes Christ, but it does overcome people.**

### OUR RESISTANCE (JOHN 3:1-12) NICODEMUS ASKED

The story of Nicodemus may be familiar, but do we identify with him?

- Everyone comes to Jesus from the darkness. We all come from a place of sin and brokenness.
- **We come with questions about Him and about us. He answers, but do we believe?**

### THE HARDEST THING TO BELIEVE

Nicodemus had a hard time believing that he could be “born again” because he knew he couldn’t do it himself.

- He had heard and seen what Jesus could do and was convinced that He was from God, but he still couldn’t believe it himself.
- **Our resistance is less about what God can do and more about what we can’t do.**

### GOD'S RESPONSE (JOHN 3:14-17) SENT

Since the fall in the Garden of Eden, people have resisted God’s offer of relationship with Him. In spite of all of this, God offered a final opportunity for restoration of the relationship He created in the beginning.

- God sent His one and only Son.
- **God clearly wants a relationship with us, and it is exactly what we need.**

### LIFTED UP

Restoring that relationship meant paying a price with the greatest sacrifice ever made.

- Christ would give Himself as a payment for the sins of everyone who would follow Him.
- **He endured the cost of sin on the cross so we wouldn’t endure it for eternity. What He did on the cross wasn’t duty or responsibility; it was love.**

### OUR RESPONSE JOHN (3:18-21) NOT CONDEMNED

Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned.

- Believing in Him is believing in His power to save us, forgive us, and love us.
- **Why do we still resist? He put everything on the line for us. Why are we still holding on to something that won’t last? Are we choosing condemnation?**

### FEAR

It may not be so much that we don’t believe in God or in what Christ has done for us—but we may fear ourselves and what may be exposed.

- **Can we hold up our end of the bargain? Can we stay clean? Can we really deserve a relationship with Christ?**

### WHEN WANTS AND NEEDS AGREE

**A relationship with Christ is the one relationship you have been looking for your whole life.**

- We want a relationship with Christ, but we feel like we don’t deserve it. God knows that we need it, and He continues to offer it.
- **We need the one relationship that only Christ can give: a relationship with our Savior.**
- **How can we get it?**

### WITHOUT JESUS

When we admit we are less than perfect, we begin to realize we are incomplete without Jesus. **We are lost without Him.**

- Until that point, our attempts to live have fallen short, and our earthly relationships have suffered too. **We are alone without Him.**
- It is hard to keep trying when we are lost and alone. **We are dead without Him.**

### JESUS IS FOR US

The Bible says that while we are at our lowest (sinners to the core), **“God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”** (Romans 5:8).

- **Christ did something we could not do: He paid the price for our sins.**
- His death, burial, and resurrection confirm that the price was paid in full.

### WILL WE BELIEVE?

Our part is to believe: *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation”* (Romans 10:9-10).

### BELIEVERS FOLLOW CHRIST THROUGH OBEDIENCE

**We know that what we do has not and cannot save us—only our Savior, Jesus Christ, can save us.**

- Our relationship with Jesus leads us to obedience as we show our love for Him.
- The Bible even tells us how: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength”* (Mark 12:30).

### OBEDIENCE

- As Believers, we want to do God’s will.
- **The Bible says, “Repent and be baptized”** (Acts 2:38).
- **Every step of obedience leads to more understanding. Sometimes, we do not understand simply because we are disobedient.**

### CELEBRATION

- Baptism is the outward symbol of our relationship with Christ.
- **We are no longer lost, alone, and dead. We have been given new life in Christ!**
- **There is only celebration and joy when a Believer is baptized.**
- **Our lives have changed. Our eternal destination has been set!**

### REPENTANCE

- It is a declaration that we have been **forever forgiven of our sins because of the work of Christ on the cross. What will we do today?**

### IT IS NOT THE END

- After baptism, we continue to **confess our sins and we take Communion to remember the body and blood of Christ which were given for us. The Savior who died for us still loves us and continues to help us change and grow.**