

Faith Builder Series

THE THE GOSPEL GOSPEL OF JOHN



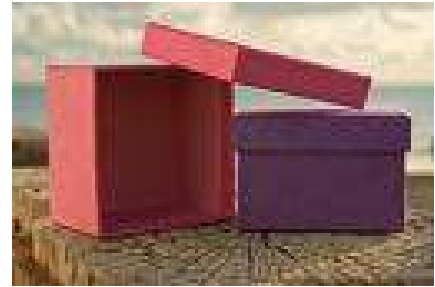
Life changing and impacting studies through the Gospel of John –
with the *soul* purpose of strengthening and building your faith and
trust in God!

11 – John 8:12 to 59

Ps Roger Spackman
Entire series of Bible Workshops freely available from
www.TeAtatuBaptist.com

Before we watch the video of today's chapter from the gospel of John.

I want to ask you a question: Who can tell me what this is???



Yes, it is a box.

Now, I need to ask – has anyone here today ever seen – or put God into a box like this?

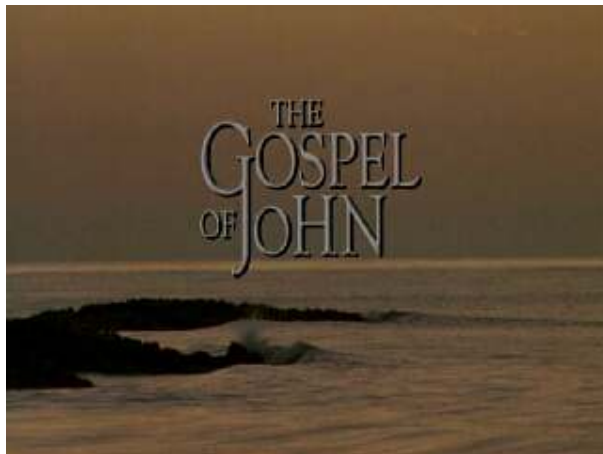
Why – why not???

What about a BIGGER box???

Slide # 1 - Video – Gospel of John 8:12-59

Start video at 1:05:40

Stop video at 1:13:00



Slide # 2



Original Meaning What it meant 2000 years ago!

The setting of our Bible chapter today, is the Feast of the Tabernacles – symbolised by what *two* items.

The *first* symbol is what?

Water!

The priests and the people would form a procession in Jerusalem, and walk to the Gihon spring where the priests would fill seven golden jugs with fresh water.

The whole procession would then carry it back to the temple,

...singing psalms and then pouring the water over the altar,

... while praying for God to bring the Autumn rains so their crops may grow and their water supply be replenished.

And the second symbol that represents the equinox in the heavens?

Light !

As well as the Feast of the Tabernacles, *another* ceremony was taking place at the same time, usually on the seventh day – known as the Feast of the Dying Sun.

What Biblical and world history have revealed, is that during these feasts – the priests and people would read from Zechariah, and for hours the people would chant Zechariah 14:7 *as a prayer*:

‘On the day of the Lord, it will be a unique day – without day-time and without night-time – a day known to the Lord. And, when evening comes, it will be as light as the day!’

Let me tell you *why* this was so significant.

At *exactly* this time, a strange phenomena was taking place in the heavens – known as an *Equinox* – when the full-moon and the sun shine for exactly the same length *for this one day*.

On this one night, the heavens would glow with translucent multi-colours, illuminating the heavens and the earth as if it was the middle of the day!

Where the inhabitants of Israel would rejoice and dance and sing into the night, with multitudes of candles and lamps decorating every nook and cranny!

The Mishnah says, and I quote; ‘Those people who have never seen Jerusalem at this festival – have never beheld such a wonder as this scene!’

So – at this exact time, the Bible tells us that Jesus was standing in the Court of the Offerings.

This is important, because the Mishnah tells us that this area was also the Court of the Women.

This is significant in itself, as Jesus was teaching not just the *men*, but also the women – which was forbidden, and unheard of during the days of Jesus.

And in this court, there were four large stands, that *each* held four large bowls.

These sixteen bowls – which were reached by ladders – were filled with oil, and the used under-garments of the priests were used as wicks.

When they were lit, as the rabbis said, ‘all Jerusalem was illuminated.’

In a world that did *not* have public lighting after dusk – the setting was nothing short of divine!

With crowds walking around in the middle of the *night* as if it were the middle of the day!

With the stories of the exodus ringing in their ears – when God led the people by a *pillar of fire* at night.

With the phenomena of the equinox all around, with the lights of the heavens displaying the majesty and brilliance of Yahweh,

...with the people chanting Zechariah 14:7 –

...with the night as bright as the day - Jesus stands up and says these words:

***I Am* the Light of the world – he who follows
Me will never walk in darkness *again!*’**

What is even more important – is that Jesus wasn’t talking about physical light, but of *spiritual* sight!

And, what does it mean to ‘walk in the Light?’

It simply means – as Augustine said - that we love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul and all our strength.

And having done this – we are actually free to do *anything* we want in life.

That’s freedom – and that’s the grace of God!

Slide #

Bridge over time
Timeless Truths
Universal Principles



I have mentioned before, that in the beginning – God made man in His own image.

And ever since that time, man has been trying to make God in *his* own image.

This chapter from John’s gospel - wasn’t the first time that God’s people failed to understand and accept God as He really is –

...in the new way He was revealing Himself.

It reminds me of the exodus from Egypt,

....when a whole generation of God’s people died in the wilderness –

...preferring to hold tight to their limited understanding and revelation of who God was in the past.

Not being able to accept how God was revealing Himself to the younger generation –

...and as a result – they died holding onto God as they knew Him –

...but never entered into the fullness of His promises and blessings.

Both the Israelites in the desert, and the Jews in the days of Jesus –

...they were absolutely convinced that they knew all there was to know about God –

...and they resisted believing that God might present Himself in a way they have never seen or known before.

And as I have studied world and church history over the last 2000 years...

...it has also become clear in hindsight, that *Christians* also – in almost every decade and generation...

...have also suffered from this same predicament.

And if history has shown this to be true – and that these people were not even aware of such a condition...

..then I just wonder - if it might also be *possible* for you and me here today.

This is what we can learn from history - that if we think we have God all sorted out,

...if we think we could never get it wrong – that our strength is in knowing the truth –

...it is then, that we are the most vulnerable, and like Peter who was over-confident of his ability to know Jesus –

...who said ‘I will never leave you!’ – because of this over-confidence, he left himself unprotected and open to attack.

And while I still struggle with communicating this, I do want to give it a try.

Now – let me state clearly, that each and every Christian – over time and history –

...*can* have, and indeed needs to **have a complete assurance of their salvation.**

And once this assurance is fully received – we are then able to wrestle with other areas where there is *less* certainty.

I call these things a *creative tension* – and yet many Christians would struggle to understand, let alone accept this reality.

Let me give you a recent example – from our pastor’s cluster a few weeks ago, we were having a discussion around a certain topic.

One of the pastors said, ‘This is what the Bible says on this topic, and there is no negotiation – we either obey God or we don’t, and if we don’t – we will not be able to look God in the eye on judgement day!’

What this pastor had failed to understand, that there are usually many different ways to understand and interpret Scripture...

..and if we are unable to understand or accept this reality – then we are short-sighted at the best, and arrogant at the worst.

I honestly struggle with people/Christians who say, ‘THIS is the absolute truth of God and His Word and we must obey it!’

Because while they proclaim to know the truth and expect others to see it likewise,

...they actually refuse to allow other people the same privilege they have awarded themselves –

...to believe absolutely, but differently than they do.

Many if not most pastors hold onto this dysfunction, and most without even knowing it.

And here's the really hard part to scares me to my bones.

Imagine a church – a meeting or a community in which the presence of Jesus was manifest,

...with the Scriptures being opened, miracles, healings, prophecies fulfilled and the presence of God upon everyone –

...even people being genuinely risen from the dead!

Surely in such an anointed situation like this –

...*everyone* would have an absolute clear picture and understanding of who Jesus is –

...the multitudes would be streaming to God for mercy and forgiveness - with an undefiled clarity of doctrine, theology and relationship with God.

Well – I need you to see that even in such a situation as this, people can get it wrong, deadly wrong.

Because what I have been describing to you – was the world into which Jesus walked – 2000 years ago.

And if they had to be careful to make sure they didn't get it wrong with Jesus physically in their midst,

...then we too – over all time and history – would be wise to do the same.

It takes the utmost Christian maturity to be able to say – ‘In all I think I know – I must know this – I might be wrong.’

It reminds me of a testimony I read –

...of one of the world's most accomplished theologians and authors – Dr Brett Mayor –

...having been a professor of theology at Dallas Seminary Institution in America for many years.

Having been diagnosed with terminal cancer – was laying on his death bed after years of fighting a losing battle.

One of his most loyal students and personal friends came to visit him during his last hours.

The student wanted to know the one nugget of truth, the single most powerful belief and doctrine this dying professor could pass on to him.

Pausing for a moment, the old man's face lit with a smile –

...and he gently began to sing; ‘Jesus loves me – this I know, for the Bible tells me so.’

Slide #



Application to today!
What it means to you and
me – right now!

There was once a group of people who started out on a long and difficult journey through the wilderness.

After many days tramping up the steep and difficult terrain, they reached the top of a summit –

...and there found a sign-post *pointing* them further towards their destination –

...through mountain upon difficult mountain.

Sitting down to rest and replenish, the group found the day drawing to a close,

...and with night falling, decided to built a small shelter underneath the sign-post – that *pointed* ahead, but now also *described* those resting underneath its shadow.

The next morning shone bright and clear –

...with many of the group thanking God for the new day, and worshipping Him for His goodness for protecting them thus far.

In need of a food supply to last the rest of the journey,

...the group decided to stay in that place a little longer,

...to even plant a small garden that could grow fresh vegetables for the long journey ahead.

So, the crops grew and were harvested, and during this time many other shelters were built beneath the sign-post that *described* who they were.

Soon *other* travellers came and enjoyed the blessings of the group – always thanking God for His bountiful provision.

Days seemed to turn into decades, and God's blessing remained.

Children were born and families established.

Generation after generation were told of the greatness of God and the journey He was leading them on.

The sign-post *still* stood strong, describing the group and their identity as God's chosen people.

The trouble is, that the sign was never meant to *describe* and *identify* the group who had built their life around it –

...it was meant to point the way for the *next* stage of the journey.

The sign post is the Jewish culture into which Jesus was born 2000 years ago.

Now – don't get me wrong, I am not advocating 'replacement theology', but what I am saying,

...is that the Jewish religion was never meant to stand still –

...it *was* meant to grow, to adapt – to listen to the fresh voice of God speaking in new ways –

...ways, that He had *never* done before.

The trouble is, that the Synagogue leaders struggled to let go of the past and embrace the future – the *new* voice, this *new* thing God was bringing about.

But – the scary thing, is that this story is also just as much about the Church of Jesus Christ today.

Like the Children of Israel as they journeyed towards the promised land – the church was never meant to be *static* and *stationary*.

Like Lott and his wife fleeing from Sodom and Gomorrah, we were never meant to walk forward while looking *back*.

Jesus said those most profound words in John

For I know where I have come from, and I know where I am going.

The challenge for the church, is that we know where we have come from – and yet we can find it more comfortable to stay there – instead of moving forward, changing, adapting and progressing.

Change is *really* scary – especially embracing things we don't personally like or agree with.

That's *exactly* what the believers in God found hard – as they stood in the crowd and listened to Jesus.

This can't be of God! God would never tell us to embrace these unclean things – to welcome sinners and gentiles into our religion.

And while the Jews had their Mishnah, their book of interpretations and additions to the Bible and ways of God – that prevented them from embracing the new thing God was calling them into.

We too have a Mishnah. It's just that most of us haven't written it down, but have memorized it in our hearts and in our minds – often without even knowing it exists.

Sometimes as followers of Jesus, as children of the King – we are tempted to look back and protect our *heritage* –

...rather than look forward to claim our *inheritance*.

For each of us here today – and for all Christians for all of time – there *will* be distractions – sometimes very *beautiful* attractions...

...maybe even like that night in Jerusalem – with the festivity and party atmosphere – where the very sky around us - seems to explode with brilliance and magnificence...

...the joy and celebration of friends and family *offering* security, stability and identity...

Maybe even the sparkle of relationships, the flashing lights of the latest gadgets,

...or even the excitement and adrenalin rush we crave from the latest Christian experience or manifestation.

And all these things seem to fight to take our attention, to seduce our senses and desires...

..to distract us from the real source of Life and Freedom.

Because, just like that magnificent night in Jerusalem - there in the midst of all this noise and excitement – is Jesus.

And it's not that God is against these things, or that He wants us to stop having fun.

It's just that He wants to be a part of these things in our lives.

Actually, He wants to be *Lord* of them.

Now – as we close today's Bible Workshop, I want to ask you a very important question:

How has God spoken to you today from the Bible?

Notice I haven't asked *if*, but *how*.

Let's pray

Faith Builder Series



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|-----|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Introduction | Magic Eye pictures! |
| 2. | John 1:1-18 | God with skin on |
| 3. | John 1:19-51 | Learning to love God |
| 4. | John 2:1-25 | Party time |
| 5. | John 3:1-36 | New birth |
| 6. | John 4:1-54 | Eternally satisfied |
| 7. | John 5:1-47 | Ministry to the suffering |
| 8. | John 6:1-71 | Bread of heaven |
| 9. | John 7:1-52 | Standing up for Jesus |
| 10. | John 7:53 – 8:11 | Caught in the act! |
| 11. | John 8:12-59 | Caught in tradition |
| 12. | John 9:1-41 | Now I can see |
| 13. | John 10:1-42 | The Good Shepherd |
| 14. | John 11:1-57 | Come forth! |
| 15. | John 12:1-50 | The hour has come |
| 16. | John 13:1-38 | Getting ready to leave |
| 17. | John 14:1-31 | I won't leave you alone |
| 18. | John 15:1 – 16:4a | Staying connected |
| 19. | John 16:4b – 33 | Led by the Spirit |
| 20. | John 17:1-26 | Inspirational prayer |
| 21. | John 18:1 – 19:16a | The Passion! |
| 22. | John 19:16b – 42 | Golgotha and Glory |
| 23. | John 20:1-31 | Unless I can touch Him... |
| 24. | John 21:1-25 | Breakfast on the beach! |

Part One
The Book of
SIGNS

Part Two
The Book of
GLORY