



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 135 - He Came to Camp Out (John 1:1-18)

A Very Different Gospel

Matthew, Mark and Luke each took a boots-on-the-ground look at events in Jesus' life and told the story of His salvation from their points of view, as the Holy Spirit led them along. But John's Gospel soars high overhead, giving us the big picture of who Jesus is and what He has done for us.

- Why is it important to be able to "walk along with Jesus" in the three synoptic Gospels?
- What is the value in having a fourth Gospel that shows us the big picture of who Jesus is and what He has done for us?
- Why is it good this Gospel comes from one of Jesus' closest disciples?

A Book of Contrast and Irony

Already in the opening prologue of John we are introduced to themes that will play out throughout the Gospel. Some are tremendous contrasts such as light and darkness; others are cases of irony such as creatures who fail to recognize their Creator.

- When you hear the words "light" and "darkness," what mental pictures come to your mind?
- Why are those terms so effective at presenting the struggle between good and evil, between Jesus Christ and Satan?

Clearly, John's Gospel presupposes its readers are familiar with the other three Gospels. Think back to certain events in Matthew, Mark and Luke, where Jesus quieted storms, walked on the Sea of Galilee or dealt with people possessed by demons.

- How did Jesus demonstrate His power as Creator and Lord of nature?
- How did He demonstrate His power over the fallen angels He had created?
- Why is it so ironic that nature and fallen angels recognized Jesus' authority and obeyed Him, but so many of His own people among the Israelites did not?

Jesus Tabernacled among Us

At Mt. Sinai God commanded Moses to build the "tent of meeting" or "tabernacle." It was a tent that surrounded the Ark of the Covenant—the symbol of God's actual presence among His people. Through the years in the wilderness the tabernacle moved from place to place among the people of Israel, and it led them into the Promised Land.

- What comfort could the people of Israel draw from the fact that the tabernacle was portable?
- Why do you think God waited so long before permitting David's son Solomon to build the stationary temple in Jerusalem?

Today our church buildings are more like the static temple.

- Why do we find it so easy to leave all thoughts of God behind when we leave church, as if He was trapped behind in the building?

The church building is static, but each of us is a living tabernacle filled with the Holy Spirit, going from place to place, carrying our gracious God in the midst of the people Jesus died to save.

- Why is it important to think of ourselves as tabernacles of the Holy Spirit, when we leave church to live and move in our world?
- How does this fit with Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25-34 for us not to be anxious about our lives: what to eat, what to wear, but to seek first the kingdom of heaven?