

John's Ministry of Recovery: The Absolute and the Ultimate

by Stephen Kaung

The ministry of John emphasizes the importance of returning to the very beginning, to God and Christ, to experience life and love.

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Scripture: John 3:35

Topics: "Recovery"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the ministry of John, emphasizing three characteristics. Firstly, John's ministry is centered on life, specifically the life that comes from above and transforms. Secondly, the ministry of John is characterized by love, which conquers all and overcomes even the most abnormal situations. Lastly, John's ministry is marked by an absolute perspective, where he sees things in black and white. The speaker highlights that John's Gospel presents Jesus as a heavenly and spiritual figure, emphasizing his divine nature and the heavenly realm he brings to earth.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to John, chapter 3. John, the third chapter, verses thirty-five and thirty-six. Chapter 3, thirty-five, thirty-six. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in His hand.

He that believes on the Son has life eternal, and he that is not subject to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him. 1 John, chapter 2. We begin with verse three through verse six. And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

He that says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar. And the truth is not in Him. But whosoever keeps His word, in him verily the love of God is perfected.

Hereby we know that we are in Him. He that says it abides in Him ought even as He walked, Himself also so to walk. Chapter 3, verse 7, through verse 10.

Children, let no man lead you astray. He that practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that practices sin is of the devil, for from the beginning the devil sins.

To this end the Son of God has been manifested, that He might undo the works of the devil. Whoever has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in Him. And he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God.

In this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God. And he who does not love his brother.

That's all we'll read for the time being. We have been sharing together on the ministry of John the Apostle. We mentioned again and again that the ministry of John is the ministry of recovery.

And because His ministry is the ministry of recovery, it is most relevant to our days. I think we all agree that we need to be recovered. I think we all agree that the testimony of Jesus needs to be recovered among God's people.

As we are approaching the end, this recovery is a must. And therefore the ministry of John is very essential to our days. The ministry of John has certain characteristics.

Number one, His ministry is the ministry of the beginning. In the gospel according to John we find He begins with in the beginning was the word. And then in the first epistle of John He said that which is from the beginning.

And then in the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus Himself testified. I am the first and the last and the living one. And behold I became dead and am living forever and forever.

And have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore we find this ministry of John is the ministry of the beginning. When things are not what they should be, the only thing to do is to return to the very beginning.

It is not enough just to go back ten years. It is not enough to go back a hundred years. It is not enough to go back even to two hundred years.

To the very moment which is a great moment in church history. It is not enough to go back to the 16th century. To reformation.

It is not enough even to go back to the church fathers. We have to go back to the very beginning. And it is only when we go back to the very beginning.

Then things will be corrected. Will return to God's original purpose. In the beginning was the word.

In other words in the beginning you do not have any other thing. You do not have things. You do not have people.

You do not have teaching. You do not have doctrine. You do not have form.

You do not have system. You do not have ritual. You do not have ceremony.

In the beginning you don't have anything. But you have the word. God manifested.

God expressed. God revealed. This is what we have.

So dear brothers and sisters. We must go beyond things. We must go beyond people.

We must go beyond even teaching and doctrine. However accurate it may be. We must go beyond everything.

And go right back to the beginning. To God. To Christ.

To the one who declares the Father. In the beginning was the word. And the word became flesh.

Full of grace and truth. Grace is what he does. Truth is what he says.

And there you find in the gospel according to John. It is always something he did and then he said something. What he did was grace.

What he said was truth. And this is what we must return to. Now the second characteristic of the ministry of John.

Is his ministry is the ministry of life. John is not interested in things. He is only interested in life.

Therefore you find the gospel according to John. Chapter 1 verse 4 said. In him was life.

And a life was the light of man. Here in his gospel you find a life. A life that comes from above.

A life that touches death on earth. And when that life touches death. It swallows up death.

It heals. It changes. It transforms.

And this life is now in you and me. Because in 1st John you find this word of life. Is the life that we see, we hear, we touch, we contemplate.

It is in us. And because this life is in us. We need to return to life.

The problem today is. We are concerned with many things. Except one thing.

Life. Our question is always whether it is right or wrong. Whether it is good or evil.

As if by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We can solve problems. But we are told very definitely.

On the day that you shall eat thereof. You shall surely die. And that is the reason why you find there is death all around.

There is death among God's people. Because we are concerned with right and wrong. Good and evil.

Instead of going back to life. Therefore brothers and sisters the question that we need to always ask is. Is it life? If it is life.

It is of God. It will bring in life. If it is not life.

Even if it may be right. It may be good. It will produce death.

And I think the more we go on with the Lord. Individually and together. We will discover how true this is.

The ministry of John is the ministry of life. And then of course. The first ingredient of life is love.

John the apostle is called the apostle of love. Because he is the apostle who thinks in terms of life. And life is love.

In the gospel we find how love touches man and situations. There was a situation in Cana of Galilee. The wine was exhausted.

Joy was going to turn into sorrow. And here you will find love came in. Touched the situation.

And bring everlasting joy. And there you will find a Samaritan woman. Thirsty.

Deep in sins. And here love touches that person. To such a degree that she lay down that vessel for water.

And ran to the city. And testified. Love touched the situation.

And again and again through the whole gospel of John you will find. It is love that is touching. Touching people.

Touching situations. From the first chapter to the twelfth chapter. It is love touching the world.

And then from chapter thirteen to chapter seventeen. Or chapter sixteen you will find. It is love touching the believers.

How our Lord Jesus loved his own. And loved them to the uttermost. And because of that he was willing to wash their feet.

He was willing to do the lowest work. The work of a maid, of a slave. To serve them.

And because he loved us so much. His new commandment is that we love one another. That we do what he did to us.

And because of his great love towards us. He will not leave us on earth as orphans. He said I go.

It is for your profit. I go but I will send to you another comforter. And he will be with you and will be in you.

He will never leave you. And forsake you. And how he has provided the Holy Spirit to us.

To be our constant companion. And constant guide. And teacher.

That is love. And you will find this love is not only towards the world. Not only towards the believers.

But from chapter 18 to the end of chapter 20 you will find. It is love towards the Father. How he loves the Father.

To the extent of willing to lay down his life. To do his Father's will. Not my will but your will be done.

That is love. And because he has so loved us. The last chapter of the gospel of John is.

That we may love him too. And this is the only thing that he asks for us. He does not ask anything else.

He asks just for love. Do you love me? Do you love me more than these? Do you really love me? And this is the only thing that our Lord Jesus asks. So dear brothers and sisters.

As you come to first epistle of John you find the same thing. It is love. We know what is love.

Because God has given his only begotten son. To us. That is love.

He lays down his life for us. And therefore we ought to lay down our lives. For our brothers and sisters.

And even with these little epistles. The second and the third. Epistle of John you find.

It is love in truth. Love and truth are not contradictory. Love and truth are complementary.

Sometimes we think that if it is truth. There cannot be love. Or if it is love.

There cannot be truth. But here you find love in truth. Love because of truth.

It is not because you love. Therefore you compromise the truth. Instead it is love in truth.

And this is what you find in the three epistles. And of course the book of Revelation tells us. He loves us.

Washes us from our sins. And has made us kings and priests unto God. And how true it is.

When you come to the end of the book of Revelation. You find love overcomes. Love conquers everything.

Love divine. Love excelling. So brothers and sisters.

The ministry of John is the ministry of life. And the first ingredient of life is love. You know when things are more normal.

You can talk about authority. And you should. But when things are very abnormal.

Do you think talking about authority will help? It will bring you more rebellion. The way to deal with extremely abnormal situation is love. Love conquers the unconquerable.

And this is the ministry of John the apostle. Now this evening we would like to go into the third ingredient. The third characteristic of the ministry of John.

The ministry of John is the ministry of the absolute. You know John is such a person. He knows only black or white.

He does not understand grey color. With him it is always absolute. Now dear brothers and sisters there is a big difference.

Between absolute and dogmatic. To be dogmatic is of the flesh. To be absolute is of the spirit.

To be dogmatic is to be hard, cold, harsh, self-righteous, self-confident, self-assertiveness. It is a vice that we must avoid. Because it only divides and destroys.

But to be absolute is of the spirit. Because you see what God sees. And you stand with God for what He is.

It builds up. It edifies. And he who is absolute is not dogmatic at all.

He who is absolute he will be strict with himself. But he will be forbearing, sympathetic with other people. Take our Lord Jesus as an example.

Who is more absolute than our Lord Jesus? His relationship with God is absolute. You remember in the gospel according to John he says, The son can do nothing by himself. What he does is what he has seen the father doing.

The son cannot say anything of himself. He says only that which he has heard of the father. The relationship of our Lord Jesus towards the father is an absolute relationship.

There is no argument. There is no ground for compromise. Not my will but your will be done.

It is absolute. And again and again you find in the gospel that our Lord Jesus says, Verily, verily I say unto you. Truly, truly I say unto you.

Amen, Amen. I say unto you. There is no maybe, perhaps, probably.

No. It is absolute. When you read the sermon of the mount.

You find he said you have heard. What was told to the fathers. But I say unto you.

I say unto you. Because he is the way, the truth and the life. With our Lord Jesus everything is absolute.

He never needs to change his word. And said well, it may not be that way. He never compromises.

And when he testified before the Sanhedrin. And when he testified before the Roman governor. He did not compromise a bit.

He knew that if he acknowledged that he was the Christ, the son of the living God. He will be condemned to death by the Sanhedrin. But he said you said it.

And behold you shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of God. And shall come in glory in the clouds. And for this reason he was condemned to death.

And before the Roman governor. When the Roman governor asked him are you the king of the Jews. The Lord said you said it.

And he was condemned to death. By the Roman Empire. And even his enemies had to acknowledge.

You remember in Matthew. His enemies came to him and said teacher. We know that you are true.

And you teach the way of God in truth. You do not care what other people said. But you are always telling the truth.

And they tried to use that to catch him. But our Lord still tells the truth. He never compromised.

He is absolute in all his ways. But is our Lord Jesus dogmatic? Arrogant? Cold? Hard? Harsh? Never. He knows our frame.

Of course. Because he is absolute. He expects us to be absolute too.

And yet he knows our frailty. And how sympathetic, how tender he is. He is hard on the hypocrites.

But very kind to the sinners. So dear brothers and sisters. To be absolute doesn't mean that you have to be dogmatic.

To be self-righteous. Look down upon everybody else. As if you are the only one who is so absolute.

Not at all. You know look. At John the Apostle.

Naturally he had a very intense temperament. You know everybody's temperament is different. Thank God.

He makes everybody different. Not only our faces are different. Even our temperaments are different.

I often say temperament is the shape of the soul. You know your soul has a shape. And that's your temperament.

Some people's temperament are very tense, intense. Other people's temperament may be very relaxed. Some people's temperament is very quick.

Another is very slow. I mean these are just temperaments. Some people take things quite easy.

Other people are too serious. Very serious. You know these are temperaments.

Nothing wrong. Nothing wrong with temperaments. These are just your shapes.

That's all. They are neutral. Now.

John naturally has a very tense and intense temperament. He was an introvert. Meditative.

Contemplative. Looking inward. And that kind of person tends to be very tense, you know.

Was he absolute towards the Lord? He thought he was. He loved the Lord very much. And you remember once when the Samaritans were not receiving the Lord? Because his face was towards Jerusalem? You know actually these Samaritans were not against the Lord.

They were against the Jews. But because the Lord was facing towards Jerusalem. So this Samaritan village were not receiving.

And here you'll find John and James. The sons of thunders. Oh they were so absolute towards the Lord.

So they came to the Lord and said, Now Lord, how could these people not receive you? Do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up? As Elijah did, you know. And the Lord said, You do not know what kind of spirit you have. Absolute.

Dogmatic. And again in the same chapter. That's the ninth chapter of Luke.

John said, We saw someone casting out demons in your name. But he is not with us so we forbid him. The Lord said, He who is not against you is with you.

Don't be so intolerant. You know John, he thought he was absolute towards the Lord. Oh I love the Lord absolutely.

But he was dogmatic. He was narrow. Intolerant.

Self-righteous. It wasn't until the Lord did some transforming work in that life. That intense temperament, it was still there.

John remained an intense person. But that temperament was under the control of God. And when our temperament is under the control of the Holy Spirit, it is mellowed.

It is regulated. And then you'll find John is still absolute. He is absolute now.

But he is no longer dogmatic. He becomes very loving. Full of kindness.

But that's not weakness. Dear brothers and sisters, we all live in a days where everything is compromised. Truth is compromised.

Actions are compromised. The common notion of our day is, there is nothing absolute. Everything is relative.

And this is the theology of the day. Everything is relative. What it really means is, there is no absolute standard.

And do you think this is the time that there should be a recovery? A recovery to the absolute? Do you think this is the time that we should see there is one who is absolute? Our God is absolute. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. There is no shadow or shade with Him.

He never changes. His name is the same. He is the absolute one.

His truth is absolute. His righteousness is absolute. His justice is absolute.

His love is absolute. His forgiveness is absolute. When you touch God, you touch the absolute.

With God there is nothing relative at all. With God it is just absolute. And unless we are delivered from the sense of being relative, in other words, knowing ourselves, we have to acknowledge that we are not absolute as we should.

Now if anyone thinks that he is absolute, he is not absolute at all. He deceives himself. He is dogmatic.

If we really desire to be absolute before God, we know we are not absolute. That is our whole feeling. Only I put it this way.

God being absolute, Christ being absolute, His love towards us is absolute, His truth given to us is absolute, of course He expects us to be absolute towards Him. Or if you like, you can change to another word, utter. He is absolute to us, therefore we must be utter towards Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, the more you draw near to Him, the more you realize you are not as utter as you should. And because of this sense of our weakness, we tend to accept relativeness as the norm of life. In other words, we try to lower the standard.

But God will never lower His standard. He is absolute. On the one hand, we need to acknowledge that we are not as absolute, as utter towards Him as we should.

Yet on the other hand, we will not ask God to lower His standard to meet us on our level. And He will not. We still have to look to Him for the absolute and not for the relative.

Now this should be our attitude. You go back to the Gospel according to John and you find how absolute is what the Lord says. In the first passage we read, the Lord said, He that believes in the Son has eternal

life.

But he who is not subject to the Son has not eternal life, but the wrath of God is upon him. Now that's an absolute sentence. There is no in-between.

Either you believe in Him and have life, or you don't, and the wrath of God is upon you. Either life or death. Either life or wrath.

And then you remember again the Lord Jesus said, If you do not believe that I am, you shall die in your sin. Very absolute. There is no maybe, probably, perhaps.

If you do not believe that I am, you die in your sin. And in the whole Gospel according to John you'll find He declares Himself as the Great I Am. When God appeared to Moses in the wilderness, in the thornbush, Moses asked Him, What is your name? That I may tell the people.

And God said, I am that I am. And here you'll find in the Gospel according to John, again and again the Lord Himself declares that He is the I am. Before Abraham was I am.

The Jews understood it. So they wanted to stone Him. And even when they came to the garden to arrest Him, the Lord said, Whom are you seeking? They said, We are seeking Jesus of Nazareth.

And the Lord said, I am. And they fell back and fell to the ground. To our Lord Jesus there is no doubt.

There is no shadow, no shade. He is the Great I am. I am.

I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the good shepherd.

I am the doer. I am the true vine. I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the way, the truth and the life. In other words, here you'll find our Lord Jesus is the I am. In other words, He is the absolute.

He is the truth, the I am. And because He is the I am, what should be our attitude towards Him? Our attitude towards Him should be that seeing that He is the I am, then He is all in all to us. That is being absolute towards Him.

Either He is all and in all to us, or He is not our Lord at all. That's the absolute relationship that He demands of us. And you know, it is for this reason that in the gospel you'll find again and again He says, if anyone comes to Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.

He that does not forsake all and follow Me cannot be My disciple. His demand towards us is absolute. Because He is absolute in His way with us.

Now brothers and sisters, so far as our experience goes, we know we are not absolute. We are relative. But it should be relative in absolute.

God is absolute in absolute. And we are relative in absolute. Need I explain it? In 1 John you'll find the apostle John said, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of God's Son Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins.

If we walk in the light. As we explained yesterday, this is not outside light. This is the light of life.

We have this light of Christ in us. And this light, this life, is the light of man. It will emit light within us.

If we walk in the light. Now suppose, you are a newly born believer. You have the life of Christ in you.

But because you are a newly born believer, the light of life that shines upon you is just one candlelight. It's a very small light. It cannot be compared with God who is light.

May we say a hundred candlelights. There is vast difference in degrees. But they are the same in kind.

If we walk in the light. What light? The light of life you have. Now the light of life you have is only one candlelight.

But if you walk in the light, that is to say you are not walking in the shadow. You are not walking in the shade. You are not walking in the twilight.

You know many Christians are borderline Christian, twilight Christian. You know? But if you walk in the light, now however small that light may be, God expects you to be hundred percent obedient to the light of light you have today. That is absolute.

That is your absolute. It is true, your absolute is relative to God's absolute. But you have to be absolute in that relative light.

And it is only when we are walking in this way, our fellowship with God is not interrupted. Suppose you have two candlelights. And you walk only under one candlelight.

There is a path in shadow. Immediately you find you are not absolute. Your absolute is relative, that's true, but you are not absolute.

And because you are not absolute, your fellowship with the one who is absolute is interrupted. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the way we grow in the Lord. This is the way we grow from little children to young people and to fathers.

We have to be absolute in our relative light. Because God is absolute, He will have nothing to do with people who are not absolute. He cannot.

He requires an absoluteness. But of course, we have to acknowledge our absolute is relative. But we cannot be relative alone.

Thinking that, well, we cannot be absolute, therefore, just be relative. No, the Lord will not allow that. And this is what you find in the epistle of John.

It is true even our righteousness is in the same way. If our heart does not condemn us, and God's heart is greater than our hearts, we can have fellowship with God. Think of that.

You know, when I read this verse, I often think the logic is not right. If our heart does not condemn us, but God's heart is greater, is bigger, that means it puts me in a very bad position. And yet, we are abiding Him.

And He abides in us. Now, what your heart does not condemn you, it doesn't mean that God's heart does not condemn that thing. Maybe your heart does not condemn you.

Now here, the heart means conscience. Your conscience may not condemn you. May not condemn you as wrong.

As if what you do is right. And, you know, that's our experience. When we are young Christians, you know, there are many things we do.

Our conscience do not condemn us. And because we have a clear conscience, we have fellowship with God and there is no problem. Now, it doesn't mean that God does not know there is still something wrong with us.

Certainly He knows. But He overlooks. He overlooks.

Why? Because we can only walk in that relative absoluteness. There is no way for us to be absolutely absolute. You know? But still He requires that absolute.

So our conscience judges between right and wrong. And it is related to our life. When our life grows, the sensitivity of our conscience also grows.

So, that's the reason why we should never be another person's conscience. What you are conscience will not allow you. You should never be the judge of another person.

Because his life may not be on that level yet. You know, the righteousness in that person is not in the same level as the righteousness in you. Because of the different levels of life.

But each one has to answer to God to their conscience. The same thing is true with love. How the Lord demands that we love one another as He has loved us.

It is absolute. The way our Lord Jesus loves us is absolute. He gave His life for us.

He lays down His life for us. And that's the reason why in 1 John you said if we love our brother, we should lay down our life for our brother. It is absolute.

But again, oh, we know. We know our love. And because of that, we need to look to the Lord continuously that His love may so fill our hearts that we may love as He loves.

It has to be absolute. And then, of course, when you come to the book of Revelation, you'll find in the consummation of time everything is bound to be absolute. There is no grey color.

No borderline. There are those who are in the city, full of light. And there are those outside of the city, in the lake of fire.

There is no borderline. There is no twilight. Because our God is the God.

So dear brothers and sisters, as we are drawing close to the end, we feel very deeply that not only the world is trying to say there is nothing absolute. Everything is relative. But even among Christians we find this began to be the theology of the day.

How we need the minister of John. How we need to return to the absolute. But again we say, to return to the absolute does not mean that you need to be dogmatic.

You know, often times we think we are absolute. And we always feel that other people are not as absolute. So we began to look down upon them and criticize them.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we are doing that, it simply shows that we don't know what absolute is. We are just being dogmatic, that's all. It's destructive.

It's divisive. It does not help. If you really are absolute before the Lord, you know how you feel.

You know you are not absolute as you should. And because of that you will be most sympathetic. And forbearing.

Take Peter as an illustration. Peter thought he was absolute towards the Lord. Not only in Matthew 16 how he confessed the Lord in such clear terms, but also in John chapter 6, when the disciples of the Lord began to leave him and said, the word is too hard.

And the Lord challenged the twelve and said, do you want to go too? And Peter said, Lord, you have the word of life. Where can we go? His testimony was clear. And when the Lord began to share with his disciples that he will go to Jerusalem and will be killed, and how all the disciples will be as sheep scattered when the shepherd was smitten.

And Peter said, no. If others were free, I will not. I will die with you.

He was absolute towards the Lord. Oh, how he must look down upon the other disciples. But after the resurrection of the Lord, on chapter 21 of John, when the Lord Jesus asked him, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these? It's very simple.

Do you love me more than these? The fire, the food, the companions. Do you love me more than these? Peter said, Lord, you know I'm attached to you. I cannot say I love you.

But I'm inclined towards you. I'm friendly with you. And even the Lord asked him three times.

He dare not. He dare not went beyond his measure. He knew his measure.

And because he knew his measure, the Lord said, feed my lamb. Shepherd my sheep. Feed my sheep.

In other words, here you'll find a person. Because he thinks he is not absolute, the Lord takes him as absolute. And the Lord can use such a person to help other people.

Dear brothers and sisters, the ministry of John is the ministry of the absolute. Well, of course, we can go on and on. The ministry of John has another aspect.

I will not dwell on it. Just mention it. It is the ministry of the ultimate.

The ultimate. It is not only the ministry of the beginning. It is the ministry of the end.

Of the ultimate. Why? Because our Lord Jesus is the first and the last. The Alpha and the Omega.

The beginning and the end. And you know, with the apostle John, he is never satisfied with anything but the ultimate. In his search for truth.

He did not stay with John the Baptist. Many disciples of John stayed with John. And never left John the Baptist.

But here you'll find John the Apostle. In his search for truth. First he came to John.

But when John pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God, he left John and followed Jesus. He always looked for the ultimate. And when he found the ultimate, he stayed with Him.

That was John. Always the ultimate. Never, never stopped short of the end.

And if you read his gospel, you read his epistles, you read the revelation, I think it is evident. Everything is the ultimate. In the gospel of John you'll find the ultimate of Christ.

In the epistles of John, the ultimate of Christians. In the revelation, the ultimate of God's purpose. You know, if you only have three gospels, and suppose you don't have the gospel of John, the full gospel, you know what will happen? Our understanding of the Lord Jesus will be half way.

Because all the three synoptic gospels show us that our Lord Jesus is the man, the Son of Man. The perfect man. He is the King.

He is the servant of God. He performs many miracles. He teaches many teachings.

But here you'll find, all you'll find in the three gospels is what He does, what He says, how He lives, as a man, among men. This is not the ultimate of Christ. If our knowledge of Christ is only physical and earthly, we misunderstand Him completely.

It is the full gospel that presents Christ being heavenly and spiritual. John is not interested in telling us events, miracles. All the miracles recorded are signs.

In other words, He is not interested in the work, in the miracle. He is interested, He records them because they are signs. They tell us something deeper.

And what is it? He is telling us that this Jesus comes from heaven. And even while He is on earth, He is still in heaven. It is heaven touching the earth.

He carries with Him a heavenly air. He is gathering us to Himself, to that heavenly realm. And you'll find it is intensely spiritual.

Intensely spiritual. He is dealing with the world. When the world comes after Him, for things of this earth, He withdrew Himself.

And in His lifetime with His disciples at the end, He speaks of I in you, you in me. Intensely spiritual. And after He was resurrected, He wouldn't allow Mary of Medelin to touch Him.

In other words, from now on it is a spiritual relationship. Intensely spiritual. Now, dear brothers and sisters, only that which is heavenly and spiritual is the ultimate.

The physical and the earthly are not ultimate. It is the heavenly and the spiritual that are the ultimate. And that's what John presents to us.

Christ, the heavenly and the spiritual. And that is the ultimate of Christ. And again, when you come to the epistle of John, you'll find it is the ultimate of the Christian.

Now, what is a Christian? A Christian is one who knows. You know, if you come to the end of the epistle of John, the fifth chapter, you'll find you will notice the word know many times. Know, know, know, know, know.

And the word know is not an objective knowledge. The word know is that subjective, conscious, experiential knowledge. The ultimate of a Christian is an inward, experiential, conscious knowledge of God.

We know we are of God. We know He hears us. We know we are in Him that is in His Son, Jesus Christ.

We know. Now, that is the ultimate of a Christian. And of course, Revelation is the ultimate of God's purpose.

The end. The end is the holy city, the New Jerusalem. God in man.

Brothers and sisters, we need the ministry of John. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we ask Thee, O Lord, that these may not just be words, but Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, Thou may reveal the truth to us and lead us into Thy truth. We know how helpless we are when we are trying to touch something which is the ultimate, the absolute.

Human words are just inadequate, impossible. But Lord, we know this is true. And we ask Thy Holy Spirit to make all these very real and very practical to us.

Do not allow us to live in words and theory and philosophy. This is not our intention. But Lord, we ask that we may live in that reality which is eternally true.

We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1780.mp3>

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