

# John's Ministry of Recovery

by Stephen Kaung

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*The ministry of John is the ministry of recovery, which is focused on restoring and recovering the testimony of Jesus as God originally designed, and it is centered on the life of Christ, which is the only thing that can solve our problems and bring us true life.*

**Duration:** 59:01

**Scripture:** John 1:4, John 3:16, John 10:10, John 11:25-26, John 14:6, John 20:31, 1 John 1:1-4, 1 John 4:9-10, 1 John 5:13, Revelation 1:17-18

**Topics:** "Recovery", "Life in Christ"

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## Description

Stephen Kaung emphasizes the significance of John's ministry as a ministry of recovery, focusing on the themes of life and light found in Christ. He explains that John's approach leads believers back to the beginning, where true life is found in Jesus, the Word made flesh. Kaung illustrates how John's ministry addresses the spiritual decline by restoring the testimony of Jesus through life, love, and light, urging the congregation to seek life in Christ above all else. He encourages believers to ask whether their actions and beliefs align with the life of Christ, as true recovery comes from returning to Him. Ultimately, Kaung reassures that life triumphs over death, as demonstrated in the book of Revelation.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to the gospel according to John chapter 1 verse 4. John chapter 1 verse 4. In him was life and the life was the light of man. Chapter 20 of John verse 31. Chapter 20 verse 31.

But these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing ye might have life in his name. First John chapter 1 verse 1 through verse 4. That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, that which we contemplated and our hands handled concerning the word of life and the life has been manifested and we have seen and bear witness and report to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has been manifested to us. That which we have seen and heard we report to you that ye may also have fellowship with us and our fellowship is indeed with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ and these things write we to you that your joy may be full.

And then chapter 5 verse 13. Chapter 5 verse 13. These things have I written to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God.

Revelation chapter 1 verses 17 and 18. And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead and he laid his right hand upon me saying fear not I'm the first and the last and the living one and I became dead and behold I'm living to the ages of ages and have the keys of death and of Hades. Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father we do take it as a great honor and privilege that we may gather around thy table to remember thee and to know that thou art not only the one who was crucified for us on the cross two thousand years ago but thou art the one who lives and lives in us and among us. Oh how we praise and thank thee that we can gather around thyself and to know thee in life. How we praise and thank thee thou are so living thou are so real to us and there is nothing that really is real except thyself.

We do praise and worship thee. Now this morning as we continue in thy presence we ask thee to open thy word to us and touch our hearts and lead us into thyself. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen. Over a month ago when we were together we mentioned that of the ministries the different ministries that we find in the New Testament the ministry of John the Apostle is very special and in a sense very needed for our time because the ministry of John is the ministry of recovery. When our Lord Jesus called John to follow him he was there mending the nets and this in a sense symbolizes the ministry of John.

Through Peter the gospel is preached and materials are being gathered together into the kingdom of God. Through Paul these materials that were gathered are being built up together into God's house. But then we know towards the end of the apostolic age the testimony of God the testament of Jesus began to suffer.

There were leaks there were holes in the nets and it was during that time that we find the ministry of John became very prominent. He came in to mend the nets. He came in to stop the leaks and he came in to restore and to recover the testimony of Jesus as God originally designed.

Brothers and sisters we are living at the end of this age and we feel a most urgent need of seeing the testimony of Jesus recovered in the church and for this reason we need to pay very special attention to John's ministry. Now last time we mentioned that the ministry of John the ministry of recovery has certain characteristics. Number one his ministry is the ministry of the beginning.

We find that John always leads us back to the beginning. The gospel according to Matthew begins with Abraham. The gospel according to Mark begins with John the Baptist.

The gospel according to Luke begins with Zechariah and Elizabeth or we may say begins with Adam. But it is in the gospel of John that we find he begins with the very beginning. In the beginning was the word.

You know whenever there is any problem, whenever there is any complication, whenever there is any confusion of any sort the only way to solve problems, confusions, complications is to go back to the root. We have to find our root. It is superficial if we deal only with the branches.

You do not deal with a problem as you see it on the surface. You do not try to entangle the complications as you find them and you do not try to solve the confusion because if you try to solve the confusion you are more confused. The only way to get out of all these things is to return to the very beginning.

And I believe that this is still true in our days. In the beginning. John always leads us to the beginning.

And when we are led to the beginning what do we see? In the beginning was the word. In the beginning was God expressed, revealed, manifested. In the beginning you do not find anything because there was nothing in the beginning.

In the beginning you do not have any doctrine or teaching. In the beginning you do not have any rituals or ceremonies, forms or systems. In the beginning you do not have any man.

Nothing. But in the beginning there was the word. As we are led to the beginning we see no one but Jesus only.

You know our problem is we see too many other men. Even the apostle Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration. How he saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah.

And God had to take away Moses and Elijah in order that he might see Jesus only. And the problem with the church in Corinth is the same. They saw Paul, they saw Apollos, they saw Cephas.

And Paul had to remonstrate with them and said, is Christ divided? Had Paul died for you, were you baptized in the name of Paul? Jesus. Jesus only. So brothers and sisters, when we want to come to this matter of recovery, we have to pass by all men, all teachings, all forms, all systems, all traditions, all things.

We have to pass by these things and go back to the present, something that we need to hang on. In the beginning was the word. And this word became flesh and dwelt among men, full of grace and truth.

Everything he says, everything he does is grace. Everything he says is truth. If we do anything and it is not Christ, it is not grace.

If we say anything and it is not Christ, it is not truth. Grace and truth comes and subsists in him. That is in Christ.

Now this morning we would like to come to the second characteristic of the ministry of recovery, as demonstrated, illustrated by John. And that is the ministry of John is the ministry of life. You see John is not energetic, aggressive as Peter.

John is more retired, reserved, quiet. John is not as strong as Paul. He seems to be very hidden in a way.

And yet you find with John, it is primarily a matter of life. You know when things begin to change, begin to fall away, if you try to correct a situation, say with preaching or with teaching, if you are strong in doctrine, you will find that you tend to divide than to unite. When things are abnormal, the only way to restore is to love.

And this is what we find in the ministry of John. As you turn to John's gospel, you find that it is life. Life is on earth.

And life begins to touch different people and different situations. In the world you find death everywhere. But here comes life.

And this life touches all the situations of death. And bring it to life. You find darkness prevail upon the earth.

And yet light comes. On the one hand to expose, and on the other hand to heal. And this is what you find in the gospel according to John.

Here was a situation in Cana of Galilee. There was a marriage. But then you find at the height of the joy of this marriage, suddenly came a great tragedy.

There was no more wine. It would be very embarrassing to the newlywed. And it also will hurt the whole atmosphere of this happy time.

Now that's death. Death began to come in at the very height of the joy of so-called life. But here you find our Lord Jesus was there.

He touched the situation. He changed the water into wine. And He gave joy to the family.

Then you find again there was death in the temple in Jerusalem. It was called by the name of God. It was supposed to be a place of worship.

But here you find it has become a bazaar, a house of merchandise. There is death. Death in the very place where life should reign.

And it wasn't until the Lord Jesus came. He cleansed the temple. He brought life back to the house of God.

Now there was another man, Nicodemus. He was a most moral and religious person. And yet he was dead.

He didn't know it. Until our Lord Jesus came. And life touched the situation and brought him to life.

Now the same thing happened with the Samaritan woman. No doubt there was death there. There was thirstiness.

And it was the Lord, the life, that touched the situation and gave satisfaction. Well, you can go on through the whole Gospel according to John. For instance, a man infirm 38 years.

That was certainly weakness unto death. But it was the Lord who restored life to that man. There were the people who were hungry, had nothing to eat.

And it was the Lord who gave them the bread of life. And there was a man who was in sin and transgressions. And according to the law of Moses he was condemned to be stoned.

He was condemned to be stoned to death. And the Lord gave life, gave forgiveness. There was a man who was blind from his birth.

He couldn't see. That was death. The Lord opened his eyes.

And there was Lazarus who was dead. And the Lord restored him to life. So brothers and sisters, you find as you read the Gospel according to John, you find he was showing us how there was life on earth.

And life in the midst of death. But this life came, swallow of death, and gave life to every situation. Well if you want to look at it from the viewpoint of light, you have the same thing.

Everything was pitch darkness. Now do not think that the Samaritan woman certainly was in darkness. In darkness of sin.

In darkness of ignorance. But even Nicodemus was in darkness. In darkness of intelligence.

You find that in the book of Isaiah chapter 50 we are told how we kindle our own fire and surround ourselves with the sparks that we have kindled. And what will happen to us, the Lord said, we will lie down in sorrow. In other words, the light that we consider as light is darkness itself.

Because only in Him was life. And the life was the light. You know often times we consider many things as life.

What do we think life is? Certainly marriage. The joy of a married life. Now that's life.

But is it life at the height of joy? There is sorrow. You know in China we have a proverb. We say the moon is not always full.

And the flower is not always fragrant. Now that's what life is. You know the life that we consider as life on earth is no life at all.

It's only when we come to know the Lord Jesus as life. Then we begin to know what life really is. Sometimes we think that being moral, being religious, that's life.

Now certainly Nicodemus thought that way. But being moral and being religious is not life. People can be very moral, very religious and there is no life in them.

Only the Lord Jesus is life. And there is none else. Now with a Samaritan woman, she may think that life is in gratifying the flesh.

Giving in to the love of the flesh. Then you have life. You enjoy life.

But did she enjoy life? Not at all. She was thirsty. Very thirsty.

It wasn't life at all. Or some people may think if you have health there is life. But life is not in sickness or in health.

Life is not in prosperity or adversity. Life is not in all these things. Only in Him, that is in Christ, there is life.

Brothers and sisters, the ministry of John is the ministry of life. He wants us to see life. And nothing really matters but life.

Whenever there is any problem, whenever there is a need for recovery, go back to life. Ask the question, is it life? You know how easy for us to feed upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was what happened in the beginning.

Our forefathers, instead of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead of the tree of life. And this continues on even to our days.

Not only during the days when we were unsaved, but even after we are saved. How easy it is for us to turn to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead of turning to the tree of life.

Often times we find we are in a situation and whenever we are in a situation our question always is, is it good or is it evil? Is it right or is it wrong? Immediately you find we are involved with reasoning, with arguments, with knowledge. As if knowledge, reasoning, arguments, good or evil, right or wrong, will solve our situation. Not at all.

If we go to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we find death. The more we feed upon that tree, the deadier we become. For recovery, you do not go to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For recovery, you go to the tree of life. In other words, you only ask one question, is this life? If this is life, that is, if it is Christ, then this is something that we must yield to. But if it is not life, if it is not Christ, even if it is good, not to say it is evil, of course, even if it is good, even if it is right, it is not something that God requires of us.

The one thing and the only thing that God requires of us is life. Is it life? And that is the whole theme you find in the gospel according to John. I recall a situation that happened in China.

There was an assembly there in China that the Lord blessed very much. There was not only the numbers, hundreds, thousands gathered together. But there was also some deaths.

Those who gathered together in those days, many of them really knew the Lord in quite a deep way. But then the enemy began to attack. The enemy used all kinds of means, trying to destroy the testimony, both from within and from without.

And if I am free to tell you what had actually happened, it may frighten you. But the enemy tried everything to destroy the testimony of Jesus in the assembly there. And he succeeded.

The whole assembly was disbanded. God's people were scattered. They could not meet together.

There was such distrust. The whole thing seemed to go to death. But then, thank God, gradually the whole assembly began to recover.

And you know, the reason why the testimony of God was gradually recovered was because God raised up a brother. I knew him very well. He was not a strong brother.

He was not strong in doctrine at all. Probably he was not too sharp on doctrine. He was not an aggressive person.

He was more of a retired, reserved kind of person. But the Lord gave him a special ministry. A ministry of life.

When he ministered the word to God's people, it was always on life. And life was something that he knew in his own personal life. He knew life.

He knew what life was. He knew the life of Christ in him. And when the whole thing came entering to death, God raised up that brother.

And he began to minister life to the people. And gradually the people began to reassemble. And coming together.

And there was a wonderful recovery. And when the recovery came, actually, it raised the level of the assembly even above that which was before. How were the problems solved? They were not solved by right or wrong.

It started with right and wrong. They were not solved by good and evil. It started with good and evil.

They were not solved by figuring things out, reasoning things out, having things explained, argued. No. The result was the problem was never touched.

Life rises above the problem. And it's solved. It is solved.

Now brothers and sisters, we have to remember that in the ministry of recovery, it is life that will solve all the problems. Do not get more complicated by trying to clear up the complications. But only return to life.

And of course, where is life? Life is in Christ. You have to return to life. Return to Christ.

As you return to Christ and let his life reign and rule over you. Brothers and sisters, you are above your head. Our problem is our head.

Our head always gives us problems. And the more you try to attack the head, the harder the head will be. The only way is to return to the heart.

And that is to return to life. To the life that is in Christ. Brothers and sisters, the more you turn to the head, the more you turn to yourself.

You just sink within yourself. But when you turn to life, you turn to Christ. You forget yourself.

You are lost in him. And this is the only way that the testimony of Jesus may be recovered. It seems strange, isn't it? But this is the only way and it always works.

And this is the ministry of John the Apostle. Then when you come to his epistle, you find in his epistle that this life that once walked on earth and overcame all death, this life is now in us. We who believe in the Lord Jesus, we need to know that we have this eternal life.

In other words, this life is now in us. It was on earth two thousand years ago and had demonstrated its power and its beauty. But now this life, this very same life is in us, in you and me.

And because this same life is in us, it is expected of us that this life should be manifested through us. Now brothers and sisters, how do you know that you have this life? If you have this life and if you really live in this life. Now of course we say for me to live is Christ.

It's no longer I, but Christ who lives in me. Now of course, that is our testimony. For me to live is Christ.

But this is not something that we just say it. This is something that we have to prove it. Now how can we prove that we are living in the life of Christ? It is in his life that we live.

How can we prove it? John said, you can prove it by this life has its nature. Every life has its nature. And this life of Christ has its new nature.

And what are the characteristics of this nature? In the gospel, in the epistle of John we find three things. God is light. God is righteous.

God is love. Now God is light. And there is no darkness in him.

This is his very nature. You cannot find any darkness in God. No.

He is light. He has no shade nor shadows. He has no turnings.

He is light. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all our sins.

God is light. And we have the light of life in us. You remember in the gospel according to John our Lord Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

If anyone should follow me, he will not be in darkness because he has the light of life in him. Now the life that we have received is the light of life. Gives the light of life in us.

And if we walk in the light, now by the light it doesn't mean if we walk in the light that comes from outside. It means if we walk in the light of life. We have the life within us.

And this life will emit light from within us. You do not walk by the light from outside. You walk by the light from within.

And if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all our sins. You know sometimes we say, we have a new light.

Now sometimes when we read the Bible, you know, and we find that suddenly some words begin to grow. You know, or glow. And we say, now God has given us new light.

Now thank God, he does sometimes give us light in that fashion. But when you go to the very basic, you find that it is not an enlightening of the word. It is not some information, something that you receive.

It is not. Light basically is from life. How do we walk on earth? Do we walk by the light that comes from outside? What we have been taught? What we are told? What we have learned? Even though they may be accurate, they are not life.

We have to learn to walk by the light of life. If we walk in the light that is not the outside light, it is the inward light. If we walk in the inward light, however small that light may be, we can have fellowship with God.

Even though God is in full light, and we are just in a little light, but if we walk in the little light that we have, we can have fellowship with God who dwells in the light and who is light itself. And of course, the blood of Jesus cleanses us. In his light, we see light.

We begin to realize wherein we are wrong. And thank God the blood is always available. And that is the way that we grow in the Lord.

That is the way to prove that we live by the life of Christ. That we are in life. It is very easy to discern.

You can know when you are in life or when you are not in life. How do you know you are in life? Well, if you walk in the light, you are in life. If you do not walk in the light, you are not in life.

And the same thing applies to righteousness. God is righteous. The light in us is very righteous.

Oh, to make it very simple, the light in us is right. In other words, whatever God considers as right. Is it not true that sometimes we think we are right? But the more we argue that we are right, the more within us we feel we are not right.

Isn't that true? You seem to have every reason that you are right. And yet, the louder you speak, the weaker you become within. Why? Because there within the life is condemning you.

God does not see this is right. Your course may be right, but your spirit may be wrong. And if your spirit is wrong, you are wrong in the sight of God.

Well, I have such experiences for several months, once in my lifetime. I was so right. And I was right.

It turned out that I was right. But my spirit was wrong. And during that several months, I was dead.

I was dead. I knew it. I prayed, routine.

I read a Bible, old. I tried to maintain an outward appearance. I still went to the meeting, but I could not participate.

There was death within me. At first I did not understand. I said, I was so right.

Why should there be death? Until the Lord showed me that this right is a matter of life. It is not a matter of reason. It is a matter of life.

My life is wrong. And until that is corrected, there is no life. Brothers and sisters, are we right? Are we in the right that is in the right of life? Does your life bear witness that you are right? Or your life is telling you something is wrong.

And then of course, life is love. God is love. And this love is God's love.

We love because He first loved us. We love because He has planted His love in us. Since He has loved us, we must love one another.

We must love the brethren. This love is not choosing. This love is not indulgent.

You know, we can love. I mean, we can love. And love can be very selfish.

And love can be very, very indulgent. You know, sometimes we love because we find that a certain person or certain thing is loving and lovable. Therefore we love it.

Or when we love, or in order to love, we are afraid that we may not love, and we try to love, and when we try to love, we are so indulgent. We love everything. We love sin too.

We endorse it. We encourage it. We strengthen it.

But that's human love. Human love is not perfect. But the love of life, that is of the life of Christ, is entirely different.

On the one hand, you'll find that love is of such nature that you can lay down your life for your brethren. And that is what God expects of us. We must be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren.

Because He has laid down His life for us. He has shown us what love is. And yet, on the other hand, it doesn't mean that you can be indulgent.

Love abhors evil. The cleave. Well, we know whether we are in life or not.

How do we know? When there is love. And this love is the love of life, of His life. When we have the love of His life in us, we know that we are in life.

But when we try to love or to hate in ourselves, in the flesh, there is death. There is death. You know, I'm afraid, dear brothers and sisters, sometimes we misunderstand what love is.

You know, sometimes we misunderstand it. We think by love means, well, just be loving, whatever it may be. You know, not discerning anymore.

Love discerns. And yet, on the one hand, it condemns. On the other hand, it's self-sacrificing.

Now, that is the love. So, the first epistle of John actually tells us what love is. In other words, we see the love in Christ, in the gospel of John.

But now, we see the life manifested in the believers, in the first epistle of John. Now, that is life. Wherever there is life, real life, there is always light.

You do not grow up in darkness. And when light comes, it exposes. It exposes the real situation.

It hurts. It slays. It kills.

But thank God, it heals. It saves. It recovers.

And whenever life is there, there is always that right before God. And wherever life is there, there is always that love there. So, you can prove life very easily.

You can see it very easily. And this is something that must be recovered among God's people. And finally, when you come to the book of Revelation.

Now, Revelation actually shows us the battle of life over death. You see, death is a power. No doubt about that.

And even in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, you find Paul says, the last enemy to be destroyed is death. In other words, death has tremendous power. Death is the greatest power on earth.

And Satan used that power to hold people in his grip. And through the ages, you find there is the battle of life over death. It is always a battle of life and death.

The battle of the life of God over the death of Satan. And this is what you find in the book of Revelation. Here you find the battle rages.

And the battle is very intense. And the battle increases in intensity and in scope. One fourth destroyed.

One third destroyed. And you find the whole thing came to an end. And what do you find? You find life overcomes death.

Life triumphant. Life triumphant. So when you come to the end of the Revelation of God, you find the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

It is a city full of life. You find a tree of life. You know, in the midst of the city there runs the river of life.

The river of life comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And it flows through the city and on the two sides and in the midst of the river, the tree of life. In other words, the tree of life is everywhere.

It is a picture of life triumphant. And where is death? Outside the city. Defeated.

Forever overcame. Satan and those who follow him are there in eternal death. So dear brothers and sisters, the ministry of John is the ministry of life.

How we need to return to life? We need to focus our attention on this one thing, life. We need to ask only one question, is it life? If it is life, it is Christ. If it is not life, it is ourselves.

If it is ourselves, our light is darkness. Our right is wrong. Our love is selfishness.

So may the Lord help us. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee that in the days of spiritual declension, the way to recover is through life.

For we do pray that we may not be involved in many things, but we may only be involved with life. That this may be our question all the time. At any occasion, we pray that we may just ask, is it life? Is it Christ? Lord, if it is not life, if it is not Thee, it is something that we will reject.

But if it is Thee, it is of life. Even though sometimes we may not understand, but Lord, help us to submit to Thyself. We pray that, O Lord, that as we minister to one another, that we may not minister death to one another, but we may minister Thy life to one another.

We ask Thee, O Lord, that Thou will not allow us to go in the light that we kindle ourselves, that we may not lie down in sorrow, but we may walk in the light of life, and we will never stumble. We pray that we may not stand on the ground of our own righteousness, because there is none, but we may see the right of life, that we may always be right in life, O Lord, that we may minister that to our brothers and sisters. And we pray that we may love one another with Thy love.

Not with our love, which we try to manufacture, but Lord, with Thy love. The love that is so self-sacrificing. The love that is willing to lay down Your life, but the love that cannot endorse evil.

O Lord, we pray that we may minister such love to one another. This is love indeed, and this is the love that builds. O Lord, help us.

We do praise and thank Thee that even though in this path of life there is conflict, there is always this battle, the battle of life over death. And oftentimes we think as if death has prevailed, but how we praise and thank Thee, Thou art the first and the last, and the living one. And behold, Thou hast become dead, and is living forever and ever, and has the keys of death and Hades.

Thou hast overcome, and we shall overcome. And one day we shall see life in triumph. Praise the Lord, in Thy precious name.

Amen.

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