

## The Gospel of John

# The Gospel of John

## Lesson #39

### The Journey

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## The Gospel of John

John 4:27 **Just then** his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” 28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.

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# What is God doing in your life?

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- **The Providence of God** – Genesis 22:8 Abraham said, “God will **provide** for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”
- The Hebrew word for “provide” is “raw-aw” and it means to **see in advance**.
- We ought to be so in tune with God that we would see the word “provide” and know intuitively that God will not just see, but “**see to it**” whatever the need.

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Little things to us like the timing of the return of his disciples .... “just then” ..... and how it coincided with Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well are not little things to God. Had the disciples come back sooner than they did it may have interrupted Jesus’ conversation. What are the chances she would have been as forthcoming as she was with 13 men listening instead of just Jesus?

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And if she is not as forthcoming as she was, what are the chances Jesus is unveiled to her as their conversation progresses? And if Jesus isn’t unveiled, what are the chances the village of Sychar would have been affected as they were by Jesus on that day? Is it really possible to tie all that to two words, “just then”?

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- Let us not miss the providence of God that verse #27 points to – remember that God divinely superintends all things.
- There are no “chance” or “accidental” meetings in this world – **there is really no such thing as luck or a coincidence in a universe where God rules.**
- Just think of the implications of living in a world where the Chess Master is moving the chess pieces according to his will. (The Piece Mover gives us peace)

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**Only God sees the whole field and sees all the possible outcomes of all the people set to collide socially and interact. And on this day, unbeknownst to this woman when she awoke that morning, she is going to meet the Son of God. She is going to speak with him and respond to him thus eternally changing her life and the lives of many others in her village.**

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- In Genesis 50:20 there is an event identified, a sin, that was “meant” for two competing purposes.
- **“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”**
- How can it be that God can ordain the use of sin for His purposes without commanding it or approving of it?

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**What Joseph could have said,  
“You sold me, but it was God who  
sent me.”**

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- When Jacob decided for whatever foolish reason he may have had, to favor Joseph over his brothers something was set in motion.
- When Joseph chided his brothers with his dreams of them bowing down to him more was set in motion.
- When Potiphar selected Joseph and then saw his management skills and put him in charge of his house even more was set in motion.

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- When Joseph resists Mrs. Potiphar's advances and was imprisoned for his righteousness still more was set in motion.
- When Joseph meets the butler and the baker in prison another piece of the puzzle was set in motion.
- When God gives Pharaoh a very disturbing dream, he is now directly active in setting things in motion.

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- When Pharaoh's butler told him of a man who interprets dreams Joseph is summoned to the royal palace and the motion is advanced further still.
- When Pharaoh sees the gift Joseph has to interpret dreams, he made use of it.
- When Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams he is elevated to the Prime Minister of Egypt.

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- When Joseph puts a plan together to feed Egypt, and indeed most of the known world, another part of God's plan is put into motion.
- When the famine comes and Jacob and Joseph's 11 brothers are in danger of starving, right as planned from the special coat, Israel is spared.
- Every piece of the plan was willed and executed by humans without God even suggesting the steps – he didn't execute it, but he worked it all together like a great concert for Israel's good and his own glory.

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**A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.**

**Proverbs 16:9**

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- Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to **work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**
- Words matter whether they happen to fit into our self-constructed doctrinal boxes or not.
- God “**causes all things to work together**” does not mean He causes **some things to work together**, it means all things.

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- Eph 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.**
- Here again we see it – God works “all things after the counsel of **His own will**” (not ours).
- This means that God uses all of the activities in the universe to achieve His purposes.

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- Please do not recoil at this doctrine because you cannot understand it. 😊 Even Solomon looked around in his day and concluded God is bigger than our minds can know.
- Eccl 8:16 I tried to understand all that happens on earth. I saw how busy people are, working day and night and hardly ever sleeping. 17 **I also saw all that God has done. Nobody can understand what God does here on earth.** No matter how hard people try to understand it, they cannot. Even if wise people say they understand, they cannot; no one can really understand it.

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**In his providence God never infringes upon our liberty nor does he absolve us of our responsibility.**

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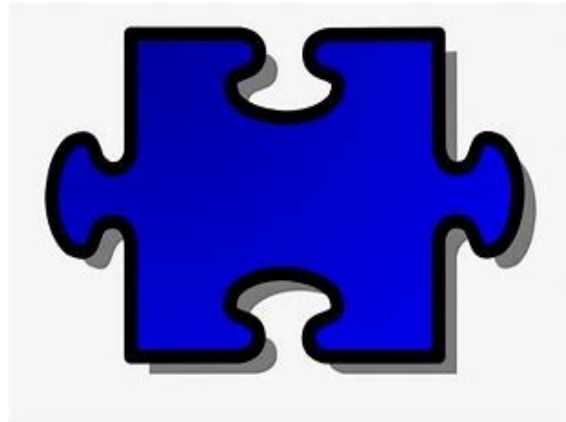
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**Do not look upon world events and think for even a moment things are out of control. Out of our control? Frequently! Out of God's control? Never!! Remember what Paul said, "who works all things according to the counsel of his will".**

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**Our lives are like jigsaw puzzles when viewed one small piece at a time and it is often not until much later that we can actually see what God has been doing.**



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**What is God doing in your life?**

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- When Nebuchadnezzar's sanity was restored we read the following words that he said.
- Daniel 4:34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; **He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"** NKJV

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- After regaining his sanity, this king who had seen the power of God, who had seen the wisdom of God, and had experienced the chastening of God, is now in a profoundly better place.
- So much so that he now sees God, not himself, as the Sovereign of the universe and so far above all others that not only can God do whatever he wants, but no one even has the right to question Him.
- Whatever God does is right whether we understand it or not. Moses wrote, "**shall not the Judge of all the earth do right**".

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- Does God really care about and superintend the small matters of life in the universe?
- **Matt 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.**
- A sparrow does not fall without Him noticing and God even keeps track of the hairs on your head – should we take these words literally?

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- Should we take these words literally? Yes, and not just literally, but seriously!
- Sparrows, hairs on our heads? This level of detail employed by God in managing the universe speaks far more about Him than it does sparrows and hairs.
- What kind of a mind must our God have if he is to keep track of all sparrows, and all hairs, plus, plus, plus ..... all other creatures and things that exist?

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- Do not focus on sparrows, or the hairs on your head as they are not the point, but only examples of the point.
- The point of Jesus' teaching is not that he is pre-occupied with sparrows and hairs, but that He is capable of keeping track of everything in the universe.
- He keeps track of sparrows, people, nations, and even the 30,000 skin cells you will shed in the next hour - nothing escapes his attention.

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If the one you worship is not capable of keeping track of every detail that happens every moment of every day in every pocket of the universe, then may I say that you are not worshipping the only one worthy of being called "God".

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Jesus is not elevating the importance of sparrows – he is elevating our view of himself!

To the one who says, “I don’t like it when God speaks of his greatness because it makes him sound conceited”, I ask only this question – if he didn’t tell us of his greatness how would we know?

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**Some wisdom from Andrew Murray**

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Our response to the providence of God, loved ones, is not quietism. It's not passivity. And don't make that mistake. Don't fall foul of the idea that the doctrine of providence means that you just sit in a big couch now for the rest of your life and he'll take care of everything. One of the grossest distortions of the sovereignty of God in his decree of providence is that of passive quiescence, fatalistic inactivity ... stoical indifference. This attitude of mind is notorious for its frequency, but it is disastrous in its results. So, when I'm uncertain about the mystery of God's work, then I want to hold most closely to his revealed will. In other words, I want to bring what I don't know into the light of what I do know.

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The Christian's "solace" is in this: "to know that his Heavenly Father so holds all things in his power, so rules by his authority and will, so governs by his wisdom, that nothing can befall unless he determines it." That involves the good, the bad, and the ugly.

And yes we will understand it all, by and by.

But probably not today. Most of our awareness of the providence of God we have learned by looking in the rearview mirror rather than looking through the windscreen in front of us.

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Well, gracious God and Father, in a multitude of words we pray that you would help us to navigate our way to a secure confidence in you, the providential governor of our earthly pilgrimage and our eternal destiny. All of us have things in our lives—past, present, and they will be there in the future—that are unexplainable. And I'm personally so very thankful that it is not the job of the pastor to explain the unexplainable but for us in childlike trust and believing faith to acknowledge: when we do not know, we still do know that you, God, know it all.

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You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

Job 10:12

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**“Just then his disciples came back”**

For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:6

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Questions?

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