

## Season 10: John 6-12

### Episode 2: John's Gospel Round 2: Jesus the Promised One

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**Felicity:** This season we're really thankful to be sponsored by Crossway. Songs of Suffering by Johnny Erickson Tada is a balm to the soul, beautifully presented and rich in wisdom and real life. Walking with Jesus Johnny takes 25 hymns that give her comfort in her extraordinary suffering and helps the readers see how these rich words and the truths they convey can help us walk more closely with Jesus. Even when life is hard. It made me want to commit these songs to memory, to be able to cling to these truths all the more. Grab a copy from Crossway.

**Sarah:** Welcome to Two sisters and a cup of tea. My name is Sarah and I live in the UK and this is my sister Felicity and she lives in the USA. This week we're kicking off our season in John's Gospel Round two, where through the course of this season we're going to be looking at chapters six through to twelve. We're going to be giving a quick recap today on the first five chapters that we delved into a couple of years ago and then thinking through some of the themes of this next chunk too. But before we get there, Felicity, why not introduce yourself to those who are new to listening along with us?

**Felicity:** Hello, everyone. Isn't it great to be back, Sarah, and welcome. If this is your first time listening along. I am Felicity. I live near Chicago with my two boys who are aged six and seven, and my husband and we've been over here for about four and a half years and my active boys keep me busy. But along the way I'm trying to introduce Americans to as many cups of tea and English biscuits as I possibly can. What about you, Sarah? Tell us a bit more about you.

**Sarah:** Very good. I'm married to David, we've got three children, we live in West London and I too. And I'm enjoying the tea and biscuit chat, generally. Quite surprised that we're still here. Ten seasons in, still talking about it. That's a feat in itself, I think.

**Felicity:** I know. Who would have thought that we could keep it going for this long? But genuinely, I feel like our enjoyment of tea and biscuits has increased alongside, obviously, the main feast of what we're about. We definitely have been enjoying being in the word together more and more each season. I feel so. We're very grateful.

**Sarah:** Absolutely. And that is the biggest gift, isn't it? I love tea and biscuits, but actually I'm really glad it's not the main bulk of what we're talking about. We're talking about God's word and we drive it to our hearts each time we open it up. Over these 20 minutes episodes that we do today, we're getting into John's Gospel, and I'm really excited to be back here. I can't really believe it's been two years since we were here before, but we're getting back into it. Felicity, give us a bit of a recap on where we got to last time and what chapters one to five hold, as we're really aware that we're kind of jumping in partway through the Gospel.

**Felicity:** Absolutely. So the best thing to be doing, really, would be to go back and listen to our season in chapters one to five. But as a quick recap of that, the first thing to do is actually to head to the very end of John's Gospel, because this is one of those brilliant books in the Bible where he tells us exactly why he has written it. So if you were to go to chapter 20, verse 31, you'd hear these words, he says, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name. So that is John's overarching purpose for why he's written this book. He wants to introduce us to Jesus, that we might believe in him and therefore have life in his name. And in the first five chapters, we encountered Jesus. I feel like we were introduced to Jesus. It was kind of like that first prologue we had at the very start, this kind of great big introduction setting up basically the whole book, but very much making it clear that Jesus is at the heart of everything that John is writing about. I feel like the first five chapters have a more intimate, kind of on an individual basis kind of introduction to Jesus. We had things like, we have the John the Baptist kind of encounter, we have him meeting his disciples. We have the woman at the well, and we have two signs, but they happen in fairly small contexts. We have the water being turned into wine, and then we have the healing of the

official son. And that all happens in a kind of relatively low key. I say low key. I mean, we're talking about Jesus doing miracles. But I think by the time we got to the end of Chapter five, we were really persuaded that Jesus. Well, we were kind of on our way to being persuaded that Jesus was the Messiah, that he is the Messiah. And we saw that life is being given through him, through these miracles. And he's beginning to get into more extended kind of explanations of that and conversations with people. So as we hit chapter six, I think what we're going to see is then that this context grows and Jesus kind of grows in our view, and it's going to be even more mind blowing than what has come before.

**Sarah:** Nice, brilliant recap. Thanks for so, so helpful and really enjoy that. The kind of contrast between the kind of more personal and intimate kind of meetings with Jesus. And as we see in these next chapters, it really does kind of expand, the context expands and the circumstance and the situations that he walks into. That's really helpful.

**Felicity:** And I think that one of the ways in which it expands, Sarah, is through this idea of promise, isn't it? And I wonder whether you might help us consider a bit of what else is going on as we get into these chapters.

**Sarah:** Yeah, well, I think as we saw last time, and we interviewed Karen Sewell last time on John's Gospel, didn't we? We actually had a few different people we interviewed, but one of them was Karen Sewell, and she was really helpful at saying that you can kind of dip your toe in the water to John's gospel and get so much from it. But the more that you dip your toe in or the more you choose to swim in its waters, the more you'll want to kind of appreciate the Old Testament promise and the Old Testament kind of imagery behind what John is writing. And I think this kind of seems to kind of really come to a fore in the chapters that we are going to be looking at in this season. And I guess that idea of promise, really, it stems right back to Genesis three, doesn't it? I don't know whether you remember when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and God pronounces curses on them and on Satan, but he actually promises Gospel hope before he gives pain in Genesis three, verse 15. It's one of the most amazing verses where he promises that a seed of the women will eventually crush Satan. And so you're kind of primed, as you read through the Old Testament to kind of be looking out for this seed and looking for how he's going to fulfill this promise. And then we get kind of the promises to Noah and Abraham, the kind of more personal and relational kind of covenants that are first brought in that God makes between him and his people. And that is the kind of backdrop to so much of the Old Testament that we particularly saw in Deuteronomy when we studied that last year. And so what we see in John's Gospel at this point, and what particularly is striking is the fact that Jesus, with his own words and with his actions, seemed to be kind of steeping himself in a lot of the promises of the Old Testament and showing himself to be the fulfillment of them. And that's just really exciting, the fact that we're going to be getting into some of that. I think it's worth saying at this point as well that even if you know nothing about the Old Testament yet, looking and gazing at Jesus in this part of John's Gospel is still going to be good for your heart. But the more that you do choose to delve into the Old Testament promises, the more it will grow. Your view of Jesus here. And I'm excited for that.

**Felicity:** I think that's so helpful. And to just even catch a glimpse of the backdrop and Karen's illustration was so helpful, wasn't it? That idea of dipping your toe. And the deeper you swim, the more you're going to understand more and more of this. And that is something that we have been talking about in relation to this book, isn't it? To what extent we kind of jump in and to what extent we sort of just slowly paddle and then get deeper, deeper. And in our conversations I feel like we're kind of in and out of the water a bit and we're hoping that we'll be able to together kind of gradually explore a bit of that Old Testament context.

**Sarah:** Yeah, no, I'm really looking forward to that, Felicity. Let's actually kind of look at the kind of chunk that we've chosen as a whole. So chapters six through to twelve, and I wonder whether you can just give us a bit of a run through of the kind of big moments so that we can all get our bearings.

**Felicity:** Well, so it all kicks off with that mega miracle, the feeding of the 5000. It's actually the third one of kind of Jesus's big signs. And so we have this kind of big miracle that's followed quite rapidly by a second big miracle of Jesus walking on the water. So that's the kind of headline at the start. And then all throughout we have quite extended kind of

dialogue between Jesus and various different groups of people, really. So we've got the crowd, the crowd has definitely grown. So we definitely have a large number of people following him for whatever reason, maybe just to catch more sights of these miracles. We also have the disciples, those who are more in his inner circle, and then we do very much get the Pharisees, the religious leaders coming into play. But at the same time we have Jesus kind of, he's in and out of Jerusalem a bit, so he's kind of around the lake a bit and he's in and out of the temple and so things are kind of in terms of geography, he's in a few different places, but as we go forwards in the chapters, he gets closer and closer to Jerusalem and ultimately where he's going to be dying on the cross. So we go all the way through. We have these kind of dialogues between the different groups of people. And chapter nine, we get the healing of the man born blind, which is a big kind of moment. And at the very end of it all, we get the death of Lazarus and the way in which Jesus brings it back to life. And in the midst of it, in the midst of all these dialogues and these conversations, we get a number of very famous and very striking statements, like Jesus saying, I am the bread of life, or I am the living water, or I am the shepherd. These kind of things that go along. So it's a kind of big action, but also big statements along the way.

**Sarah:** Brilliant. Oh, it's good. It wets the appetite, doesn't.

**Felicity:** Let's. Sarah, let me ask you, that's a kind of rapid run through of those chapters. But as you've been dwelling in these chapters, what is it that you've been enjoying about Jesus?

**Sarah:** Great question. I think it might seem like a really simple thing, but the fact that he chooses to use pictures to describe who he is as a visual learner, just find this really helpful. And I'm really enjoying how Jesus is choosing to communicate about himself here and that they're pictures, that they work on the surface. Like, everyone knows what a light is or some bread is or a shepherd is, but actually, as you kind of grow and you delve deeper into their meaning, and you kind of bring the kind of Old Testament to bear on their meaning. So also, I'm enjoying growing in my understanding of Jesus and what he truly is saying. And I know I'm only scratching the surface as well, but I've just been really enjoying that particular part of how he's choosing to reveal himself in this way. How about you?

**Felicity:** I feel like we just get this kind of bigger and bigger kind of view of Jesus. I'm enjoying the kind of more than he's more than I thought he ever was, and he's definitely more than the people thought. I feel like throughout this whole chunk, people's minds are being blown left, right and center. And the response to that is interesting. You get people who walk away and you get people who run towards him. It's been challenging to me. I think, as I've seen Jesus reveal himself, that he's more than I thought, and it makes me think, have I just had him kind of boxed up before? I feel like my view of Jesus is being kind of recalibrated a bit by these verses. As I encounter him as he really is, I wonder whether part of that is that some of these stories are quite familiar. And so I kind of have a bunch of assumptions that go with it, or I kind of skim over it. And as I've been reading slowly through it and reading it as a whole piece, I think I'm having my view of Jesus dismantled and put together a bit. And as it's been put together, it's like, oh, exponentially bigger than I had thought before. And part of that is the Old Testament stuff, and a part of it is just sitting in the text and just letting God do his work, I think. So it's been enjoyable, hasn't it? I feel like I'm looking forward to these conversations.

**Sarah:** Yeah, me too. How would you say that has then impacted your heart as you've started to kind of let it sit, so to speak?

**Felicity:** Yeah. There's something in seeing Jesus for who he is and him being bigger than I thought, I think I'm more persuaded that he can meet my every need rather than just certain needs maybe I really love. In chapter six, there's a verse that says Jesus talking about his words, and he says that they are spirit and life. And it just reminds me of that kind of, you know, this word is my life, and I really enjoy that idea to mean life to the full, and therefore my whole life sits under the Lordship of Christ. This has implications for every aspect of my life, and that is just really shaping in many ways. What about you?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I think kind of carrying on with the kind of picture language that I was talking about, beginning to let those pictures just kind of impact the way I'm seeing Jesus for myself. I guess it's similar to what you've been saying, but actually to grasp more of what it is that he is my bread of life and my good shepherd, my light, my life, I don't know, I feel like

I'm only at the beginning of this journey and really kind of letting this impact my heart. But just to be able to kind of begin to consider each one of these phrases in turn and to see them in context as well, I think often it's easy to kind of, we know these I am sayings. It's kind of a Sunday school thing that you could go through them, isn't it? But actually to see them in the context of the kind of situation that he's speaking into. And then just to appreciate the depth of what he's saying. As he says these things both for me today, but also for people everywhere around the world. This is true for anyone who chooses to trust and believe in him. And there's a lot of emphasis in his words, isn't there? On believe my word, trust that what he's saying is good and right and true and worthy of staking your life on. And I think just letting that kind of begin to really take a hold on my heart. I'm enjoying it, and I'm also just, like, anticipating, yeah, I think there's going to be some stuff to wrestle with there. I don't think it's going to be easy to hear all this stuff either. So I am really looking forward to it. So as we kind of begin to wrap up this episode, Felicity, a couple of tips for making the most of this season, what would you say?

**Felicity:** Well, I mean, we always say this, but one of the antidotes to finding reading the Bible hard is then to sort of proactively look for ways to do it with others. The beauty of the Christian life is that we're not on our own, and that is true when we open up our Bible as well. So it would be great, it'd be really helpful if you were able to ask someone to track through John's Gospel with you as you listen to this. So why not message someone, ring someone up, grab them at church on Sunday, saying, yeah, I'm really wondering about getting into John's gospel with these sisters who like tea. Do you want to be that person for me? And I just think that would really help. It doesn't have to be in person. It can be over the phone, it can be voice messages. It can be all sorts of different ways. That would be a good start. Sarah, you want to hit us with another tip?

**Sarah:** Yeah. We have discussion questions. So for each episode on our website, there are three or four questions to dig into over a cup of tea, to just take these conversations, which are very much a starter. The questions are there to kind of take it a bit further for you, to help you, to continue to drive God's word to your heart. So we really do kind of emphasize on labor the point that this is just the start of a conversation. And we pray that our conversations will overflow in a much bigger way as you then take them forwards. But we write those questions and we hope they're a help to you. We pray that they are. And again, they're just another way that you can relate to someone else, and I guess bring some intentionality and accountability to studying the Bible and letting God's word shape your heart together. So that would be my top tip.

**Felicity:** Yeah, great. So give it a go. Why not? It's totally worth it. Sarah, I think we need God's help, whoever we ask and however shown up questions we have. So would you pray for us as we kind of begin to think about getting into John together?

**Sarah:** I'd love to. Our Heavenly Father, we just thank you so much for the gift of your word. We thank you so much that we can open it for ourselves and we can begin to understand it with your help. We thank you that Jesus so clearly reveals himself to be your son in these chapters. Lord, we're excited to get into it. Lord, please would you give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may know you better through these chapters in John? And we pray for your glory and in your name. Amen.

**Felicity:** Amen. So we will be looking forward to being in your ears next time around. In the meantime, is there someone that you could intentionally read through John's Gospel with? What would it look like for you in this season to make the most of reading the Bible alongside or with someone else? Why not pray about it right now and we'll look forward to seeing you next Friday as we get stuck into John. Chapter six, verses one through to 21. See you then.

**Sarah:** See you then.

**Felicity:** This season is sponsored by Crossway. You don't.