

## **Season 4, Episode 1: John's Gospel: Glorious Jesus**

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**Sarah:** This podcast is sponsored by 10offthose.com. 10offthose.com handpick the best Christian books that point to Jesus and sell them at discounted prices. We're starting off with the Book of books to recommend this season. It's the Bible itself. I've been really enjoying my journaling Bible over the last year and I can't recommend enough the value of having space and notes and the freedom to highlight, scribble, write questions and all the rest. Ten of those have a great selection of journaling Bibles on their website. Why not start the new year by picking one up? You really won't regret it.

**Felicity:** Hello and welcome to season four of Two Sisters in a cup of Tea. My name is Felicity and I live in the US and this is my sister Sarah, and she's in the UK.

**Sarah:** Hi, everyone.

**Felicity:** Hi, Sarah. Look at this new season. Yes. 2022. Here we are. Have you got a full cup and a biscuit in hand in celebration?

**Sarah:** So good to be back at it. It's so good. I've got a full cup of well, the kids very excitedly gave me some light up tea bags for Christmas. Turns out it's not actually the tea bags that light up the case. It's like a Christmas Christmas task, basically. But they were absolutely insistent that I came with the tap to the recording right now and the tea is all right.

**Felicity:** That is tepid praise, if there were many.

**Sarah:** I'm drinking it.

**Felicity:** It's okay.

**Sarah:** How are you? What have you got?

**Felicity:** Well, actually, I had a great Christmas present as well. A friend kindly gave me a whole array of teas from Taylors of Harrogate, no less, and he was here in America, so he did some proper research. And I'm drinking a black Assam tea with a dash of it. It's good, actually. It's very good.

**Sarah:** Are you meant to drink it with milk?

**Felicity:** I don't know. It said black tea on it, but it's always better with milk. This one, I mean, I hate this one, as if I've had it before, but it is a new experience. I went for a Fox's crunchy cream. The class.

**Sarah:** Nice. Yeah. So it's a new season for those who are tuning in for the first time. Flipsy, why don't you just introduce yourself a bit more? Tell us what you get up to when you're not sat in front of this microphone.

**Felicity:** Yes, I am living in Illinois, in America with my husband, and he is busy selling books and I am often with him doing that. If not, I'm looking after my two little boys, our two little boys who are four and five, and that takes up a lot of my time. And when I'm not doing that or podcasting, then I like to teach the Bible in a Bible study setting. What about you, Sarah?

**Sarah:** Nice. I live in London with my husband and our three children. We've only been here, what, two and a half, three months now. So most of my time, I feel like I'm just trying to make friends, whether that's at the school gate that's the church with basically anywhere, just trying to get to know people. Yeah, it does take time, isn't it?

**Felicity:** Hard, hard game.

**Sarah:** So we're digging into John's gospel this season. Flisty we're really excited, aren't we? And I feel we're kind of daunted and humbled and awe struck. There's so much involved as we've been kind of prepping for it and just kind of yeah, starting to read it for ourselves. Tell us. Tell us not. Tell us, tell our listeners why we have decided to dig into John's Gospel.

**Felicity:** Yes, we're not doing the whole gospel. We're going to go for the first five chapters because John's Gospel is fairly big, but we're thinking that we talk a lot about Jesus at

Christmas time. We talk about the baby Jesus born in the stable. But what about taking Jesus on into the new year and digging into what his life was actually like, his adult ministry before he then went to the cross and for the resurrection? And so gazing on the glory of Christ at Christmas time. Emmanuel, God with us, but how about continuing to gaze on the glory of Christ as we get into John's Gospel together? I'm just really excited. It's been great to just begin to walk slowly through it, hasn't it?

**Sarah:** It's been amazing. And I wonder whether, having had our hearts kind of in Esther, I don't know. I've been more attuned to seeing the long awaited Messiah and the introduction of Him at the beginning of John's Gospel than I have ever seen that before. I haven't really I don't know. I haven't really anticipated it in that way. And as I've been starting to read it, I wonder whether because we've kind of been seeing all these shadows of Jesus in Esther, it's just kind of helped me to long for them seeing more of Him in the flesh as we started to read. I don't know whether you found some lee.

**Felicity:** Yeah, I think that's very true. I think going through Esther, but then before that, we got Habakkuk, and then James is kind of like looking back at Jesus and talking about what he said, but we haven't kind of paused and just taken in the full breath of Jesus. I think that's been the thing that I've just been enjoying so much, is just the kind of complete technical or vibrant Jesus that we have in Christ. And you kind of forget, of course, that's what the gospel is about. But then, I don't know, my gaze slips so easily onto other things. So I've been really enjoying really just the kind of stop and look at Jesus.

**Sarah:** Yeah, totally. Okay, so what do we need to know about the Gospel of John before we kind of get stuck in? What are some important things, do you think?

**Felicity:** Well, it's an eyewitness account written by well, he calls himself the disciple whom Jesus loves me, he's actually one of the disciples. And so he was very much there. He's actually written a little bit later than the other gospel accounts and he's the same John who wrote Revelation as well. And it's helpful to what's really great about John is he tells us exactly why he's writing it, which is just so great. You have to kind of skip on to the end of the book, chapter 20, verse 31. He says, Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

**Sarah:** I think that's so great. It's so clear, isn't it? Absolutely. It used to be like, I don't know whether you found this, reading it through, but just like that is definitely an evangelistic game, isn't it? Like he wants people to come to know Jesus themselves, to have life in his name. That's so clear. But I think also what you get in John is this extraordinary depth that you really like, genuinely, we could just spend each episode on one sentence and that would be enough. This kind of marrying of the both, isn't it, that wanting people to come and know Jesus and have life, but that comes with a real depth with it?

**Felicity:** Yes, I think that is so true. So for someone who has not yet encountered Jesus, they can see Jesus absolutely with clarity. But for those who have been Christians for even decades, then there's so much profundity, there's so much depth to dwell on and to meditate on it and as you say, each sentence. I think that could be one of our challenges in doing this season. We're going to be walking slowly, but we've got to make sure we don't go too slowly because I think as we've been talking to each other, it's been like, wow, that word.

**Sarah:** I know that sentence.

**Felicity:** I think that as you kind of summarize the whole gospel, this is a kind of sweeping statement. But this whole idea of come and see that seems to be kind of underpinning all of this from the very start. We see everyone pointing to Jesus and just come and see this Jesus.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I've been really struck by that in the first few chapters. So it's not only it's John the Baptist saying come and see, it's the disciples as they gradually get to know him, saying, come and see to each other. There's testimony from God the Father, there's the Holy Spirit at work and there's the miraculous signs. It's all kind of testifying to the truth of who Jesus is. It's all kind of laying that foundation of evidence that John gives us everything that we need so that we may have life in his name. And I think that's just so reassuring and

so beautiful and it's so heartwarming because you're like, this is what we've been waiting for and it's here and he's giving us everything we need for it and it's just brilliant.

**Felicity:** So just, as you say, everything we've been waiting for. Can you just anchor us in sort of Bible history? Where are we at in terms of the long wait that's been going on?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I think it's really important always to do that, isn't it? So it's really important to see these gospel accounts in context, rooted in history. And the history is that the last time God spoke to God's people was about 400 years ago. 400 years ago. I mean, that is extraordinary, isn't it? Like, that length of time. It's a dark period for God's people. And then how significant, how beautiful. In these opening verses, you get him described as the word that God speaking actually in the flesh is coming. That's kind of where we are. That's kind of on the timeline. Is that what you meant?

**Felicity:** Absolutely. I think that's really helpful just to especially that kind of the long wait in the darkness beforehand. So this is just a wow. And all the more significant things that you talked about as a light. So let's not get there yet. We're not there yet.

**Sarah:** Hold on.

**Felicity:** It might be worth just saying that in the midst of this as well, we have quite a lot of fulfillment of the Old Testament going on, don't we? So John seems to be making it really clear as we go through, and especially, actually in our section, chapters one to five, we get quite a few kind of Old Testamenty kind of things being fulfilled. So whether it be the wedding feast that's talked about in the temple and this idea of new birth, and then you've got these ritual jars, you've got kind of various things, and it seems that he's going through and saying, yeah, that was the old way, but there's a new way now. There's a new Christ. This is it. The Messiah's come, therefore there's a fulfillment of all that's come before. That's kind of like a bit kind of like complex, isn't it?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I was going to say, do you need to know that to be able to read John richly?

**Felicity:** No, I don't think anything and in a way, I think just what we've said just then is probably enough. Just that we realized that there was an old way, there's a new way in Christ. It's all about Christ.

**Sarah:** And how did you know that stuff? Where did you find that stuff?

**Felicity:** It's a good question. I am not an encyclopedia myself. I really value pointing. I know. I value the introductions to the books in a study Bible or I've listened to I've listened to John being read. I've listened to it being read all the way through. And in that, you kind of pick up on a few things. I haven't gone into great depth. You can obviously pick up commentaries and do that. But in terms of just getting into John, we don't need loads of that kind of stuff, do we? And if we want to know more, grab a study Bible, grab a commentary, listen to a sermon, we are really going to be just starting the conversation, aren't we?

**Sarah:** Yeah. And particularly, this is a wonderful book to we say this about every book, it really is a wonderful book to pick up with someone else. And all these questions are a great way to kind of spark a conversation and go, well, let's go away and think about that and we'll come back and discuss what we've discovered about Temple language and what John means by tabernacles amongst us or whatever. It is like there's an opportunity for conversation to spark off a lot of this stuff, isn't there? Yeah. Christie, where do you think challenge will come for your heart as we kind of think through how this is going to drive to our hearts this season? What are your ponderings been so far?

**Felicity:** I think the enormity and absoluteness and the kind of completeness of Christ is already blowing me away and makes me think that I have a smaller view of Jesus than what is being presented here. And if I have a smaller view of Jesus, then what does that mean for where he is in my life or to what extent I'm listening to Him, to what extent my gaze is fixed on Him? How much am I distracted and looking elsewhere for my hope and my light? And I think that's going to be a big thing as we go through, because I think the more we read, the more he just gets bigger and bigger because that's the reality of who he is. What about you? Where's the challenge?

**Sarah:** Yeah, amen. All of that. There's a phrase that John the Baptist uses in chapter three of Jesus must become greater, I must become less. And I think that probably sums up my heart and my desire for reading through this, is that. And yet I so often fight against that and

I so often attempted not to listen to the word and not to make time for Jesus and therefore to diminish him and to kind of shrink him. And actually you can't do that here. I think what's really clear as you read through John's gospel is that you can't be neutral towards Him. You're either run towards Him in awe and kind of worship, or you turn away in grumbling and hostility and gosh, I just want my heart to be soft, that I would run towards Him and kind of give him the glory.

**Felicity:** Yeah. Such a big prayer. Such a big prayer, isn't it? But in there is then also the encouragement to keep receiving and following Jesus, isn't it? That's kind of the other side. It is really challenging, but it is also utterly compelling as well. And I think as we dwell on it, the more the heart just is more inclined towards Him.

**Sarah:** Yeah. And it's extraordinary. It's extraordinary what we're reading here, that these are the words of eternal life. Like Peter says, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life. What an encouragement. What a beautiful thing that as we read these words, as we do with the whole Bible but here we're hearing Jesus say it, and we're hearing Him describe Himself as the bread that's going to nourish us. And we're hearing Him just one with wonderful mercy, attending to people's needs and just seeing Him living out God in the flesh. Just all of it. It's so heartwarming, isn't it? And I think it's so encouraging, because of course you want to follow a God like this, of course you want to follow a man who treats everyone with such dignity and with such beauty and such mercy and yeah, it's wonderful.

**Felicity:** And I think just the reality that he has made himself known, that God makes himself known and therefore we have the revelation, like he's revealed Himself, and we have that. And so there's no guesswork in that. It's just actually, like, why not have a look at the revelation, have a look at what we can see in front of us and run with that. And I think that just to come back to the idea of reading this with someone else, that is a huge encouragement to actually pick it up with someone else as well. Whether that be an unbeliever or a believer, which is maybe something I don't know whether our listeners have thought about that before, just literally reading the Bible with an unbeliever, but actually this is the means by which they would get to know Jesus. It was through his revelation.

**Sarah:** Yes. Which is so encouraging, isn't it, actually, that as we open the Word, we know that God is going to be at work and yeah, we can trust Him to be at work in that. And that's in any sphere where we're going to wake up that word. Yeah, it's good. I'm excited and it's good to be back, isn't it? We felt like a bit concerned. It was quite rusty because it's been quite a break, but it's been a good break because our heads have been in this and that's been really valuable, wasn't it? Yeah.

**Felicity:** It's great to be back. Do you want to pray for us, Sarah?

**Sarah:** Yes, I love to hear. Heavenly Father, we just prayed you so much for the gift of time and we have to dwell on Your Word to open Your Word together and for our listeners to be thinking through the beginning of John's gospel with us. Lord, what a gift that we have, this testimony to Jesus living in the flesh on this earth, walking amongst those he created. We just praise you so much for the opportunity we have to dig into walking alongside John as he shows us Jesus. And we do pray for our hearts, Lord. Pray, please. Would you keep our hearts soft to your word? Father? Would you help us to be in awe and to give you the glory long that you would become greater as we become less? Amen.

**Felicity:** Amen. So first episode down. I'm sure lots of you got a newsletter have subscribed and said, if you haven't heard about it, go to our show notes and there's a link to sign up for newsletter. There's actually a bonus episode on there where we actually videoed. You can see us in the not in the flesh. That's not the opposite. You can see us rather than just listen to us sign up, have a watch, have a listen. And we're just really excited for this season, aren't we? So grab the John's Gospel, give it a read, and we'll see you next time.

**Sarah:** Yeah, all right. See you then. Bye bye. Thanks for listening to this episode. It's been sponsored by Tenovos.com. Check them out for great discounted resources that point to Jesus.