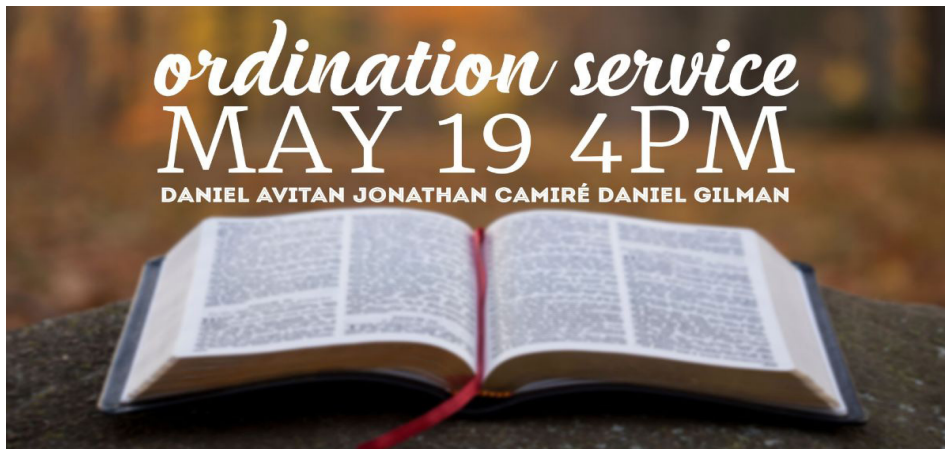




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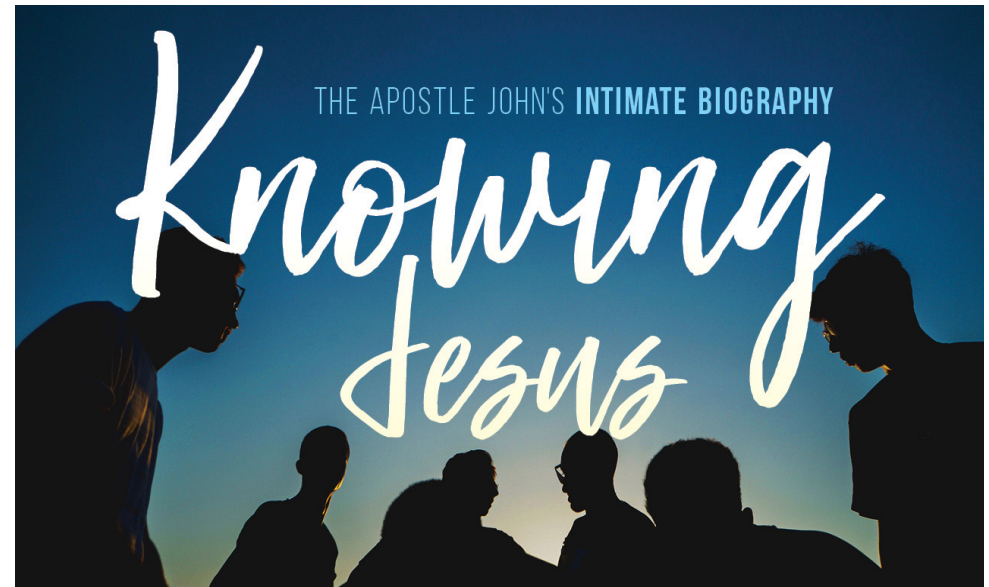


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Sunday, April 28th, 2019

Making disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, living for God's glory.



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GROWING IN GRACE

I need to develop godly attitudes.

- A) Pray for godly attitudes in general & certain attitudes in particular.
- B) Ask others to pray the same thing for you.
- C) Repeat the attitude to help it sink in. Do this in conjunction with A & B!

Attitudes.

- 1. In Christ I have been forgiven, am being forgiven, and will be forgiven.
- 2. I will ask honest questions and seek to know the truth.
- 3. A Gospel gripped mind is a mind being mended.

I need to grow in prayer.

A great way to do this is to learn to pray the Bible. Pray this prayer until you can pray without reading:

Almighty God, You have led me to a saving faith and new life in Jesus Messiah, Your only Son and my Saviour. By the power of the Holy Spirit please gro in me a humble, trusting, knowing that Jesus is the Saviour and Lord, and that all that He says is trustworthy, wise and true. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

I need to get God's word in my mind and heart.

"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."

John 20:30-31 ESV

I need to do something or start to do something.

Complete the following sentence: "In light of God's word, the Holy Spirit is leading me to _____."

A Locked Room Mystery

Dear Friends,

Twice in John 20, Jesus appears suddenly inside a locked room. For those of you unfamiliar with the Gospels, these appearances happened after Jesus' death and resurrection. They are two of a handful of resurrection appearances recorded in the four Gospels. I think it is interesting how people talk about these appearances. I think they often make a simple, unconscious mistake, when they try to "explain" some of the puzzling features of these stories. Why did Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and the two on the road to Emmaus not recognize Jesus at first? Why did Mary not recognize Jesus' voice right away?

The problem in our thinking can be seen if we compare cows, cats, and the resurrected Jesus. Even city dwellers like myself know something about cows. So if someone says they were walking along a road with some cows, but they did not realize they were cows until many hours later, we would think this was really odd. Especially if they thought the cows were cats at first. If someone said they thought it was a cat behind them, mewing, and then they realized it was a cow mooing, we would think this was really odd. If someone said a cow suddenly appeared in a room we would think this really odd. We know about cats and cows. We know how perception of cats and cows works. We know at least a bit about what they can and cannot do. When we come to the Gospels, we unconsciously treat the resurrected Jesus as if He is a cat or cow. In other words, we make the big mistake of assuming that we know all about resurrected bodies, and in particular Jesus' resurrected body, and therefore we have to come up with explanations for the stories. But we are mistaken. We know absolutely nothing about the resurrected body of Jesus except what the Bible reveals to us. We cannot use our experience of cats and cows to "critique" what the Bible records about the resurrected Jesus. All we can do is read carefully and learn. The Gospels give us true "data" so we can begin to know, not puzzles we must solve.

Let's think briefly about the resurrected Jesus appearing in a locked room and startling the disciples. We cannot be doctrinaire in our interpretation. Many say that the door must have been flung open and Jesus walked in. This is a good answer, especially if we cling to the idea that the resurrected Jesus was similar to a cat or a cow, and it might be correct. Some think that Jesus just appeared in the room. Since we are all "post Star Trek", it would be hard not to think of Jesus being "beamed in". This is a more popular option than thinking Jesus "walked through" the walls. Once again, either one of these options might be true, that He just appeared or that He walked through the wall. We cannot be doctrinaire. But I suggest that we have to be careful about making a different mistake. In this case, we think that the walls are very real, and the resurrected Jesus is "less real", less "solid" or "substantial". So He can "get into" the room by being less. But surely this will be an error. Jesus has defeated death. He is more "real" than anything else on Earth when He stands in that locked room. The room has already come to an end and our world will come to an end. Jesus stood in the locked room resurrected, eternal, already ready for the new Heaven and Earth. If He walked through the wall, He did not become less to "seep" through the wall, but the wall was like a mist to Him, less solid and real than Him as He walked. So with the "eyewitnesses" perception and interactions with the resurrected Jesus – He is too real for fallen, mortal eyes and ears to grasp unaided. He is risen! The first fruit of an entirely new creation, which we partake in through grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone.

George+