

## The World Itself Could Not Contain

April 11, 2021 Scott Gunn

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. —John 20:30-31*

I love the asides near the end of the Gospel of John. Near the close of chapter 20, Jesus says, “*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.*” And then we get the aside, in which the narrator speaks directly to us readers. “*But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.*” It’s a good reminder that the gospels have a purpose—to help us believe in Jesus and through believing in him, to gain eternal life.

There’s one more aside right at the end of John.

*This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. —John 21:24-25*

I love the poetry here, but I love the message even more. Jesus did so many amazing things that we couldn’t possibly write them all down. In this testimony, we pick up on a kind of exuberant joy mixed with unfettered gratitude.

What if we had this much joy and gratitude at knowing the transforming love of Jesus? What if we cataloged all the ways we’ve seen lives changed? What if we told all the stories we know of the blessings that come with knowing Jesus? What if our church normalized proclaiming the works of God in our time?

I think we might discover that the gospel writer was correct. We couldn’t possibly write down all the ways God has blessed us. And yet, in my experience, we don’t often tell these stories. I’ve heard people say that it might feel like bragging to tell how God has worked in their life. But, in fact, we’re just letting Christ’s light shine, bringing it out from under the basket of private knowledge.

Sometimes we forget that the scriptures are not musty old books that tell tales of things that happened in the distant past. We have not seen, so we forget to believe. But that first aside is written to us. Even if I have not seen, I have the witness of the scriptures. And even if I have not seen God at work in my life, wouldn’t it be great to tell the stories of how God has worked in the lives of others in the church?

May we all be quick to testify to what God has done. And let us all be quick to believe the testimony of others.