

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL · PRINT EDITION

A Voice in the Wilderness

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 04 · October 4, 2026

JOHN 1:23 (ESV)

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

HOW THIS WORKS

- Five days, Monday through Friday — about ten minutes each. Every day has a prayer to open, a short reading, something to think about, one action step, and a prayer to close.
- Keep a pen with it. The lines are part of the devotional — the name you write on Thursday is the one you act on Friday.
- Prefer your phone? The same devotional is online each week at thesummit.life → The Gospel of John → Reading Plan.

THIS WEEK

Sunday we met the man God sent ahead of Jesus. After four hundred years of silence, John the Baptist broke the quiet with one message: get ready, the King is coming. When the religious leaders asked who he was, he told them who he wasn't. He was just a voice, pointing to Jesus. This week you will take that one day at a time: the God who keeps His word, the freedom of not being anyone's savior, the job of a voice, the One standing in the crowd, and the person God has put in your life.

DAY 1 · MONDAY

The Silence BreaksISAIAH 40:3 · MALACHI 3:1

Opening prayer

Lord, there are seasons when You feel quiet. Remind me today that You always keep Your word. Amen.

Read Isaiah 40:3. A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Then read Malachi 3:1. “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.”

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. After it, God’s people waited four hundred years without a new prophet. No fresh word. Just the promise, and a lot of time for religion to settle into routine.

Then a man in the wilderness started preaching, and the silence was over. John the Baptist was proof God had not forgotten. Isaiah’s promise was seven hundred years old when the voice finally showed up. God is never late, even when He is quiet.

Reflect

Where has God felt quiet in your life lately? Write it down. Then write one promise of His you are still holding onto.

Today’s action step

Read Isaiah 40:1–5 today. Notice how it starts: “Comfort, comfort my people.” Before the voice ever said “prepare,” God said “comfort.” Thank Him for both.

Closing prayer

Father, You kept Your word after four hundred years of quiet. Help me trust You in the silence and listen for Your voice. Amen.

DAY 2 · TUESDAY

I Am NotJOHN 1:19–21

Opening prayer*Lord, I carry a lot of weight that was never mine to carry. Show me what I can set down. Amen.*

Read John 1:19–21. The most respected religious leaders in Israel sent a delegation twenty miles into the wilderness to ask one question: “Who are you?” John’s answer is strange. He tells them who he is not. “I am not the Christ.” “I am not.” “No.”

He had the crowds. He had the attention. He could have taken any title they offered. Instead, he handed every one of them back.

There is freedom in that. Some of us live like we are the savior of our family, our friends, our workplace. If they are going to be okay, it is up to us. John shows a better way. You are not the Christ. You never had to be. That job is already taken.

Reflect

Where are you trying to be someone’s savior? Name the person or the situation.

Today’s action step

Say it out loud today, maybe more than once: “I am not the Christ. Jesus is.” Then hand the person you wrote down back to Him in prayer.

Closing prayer*Jesus, You are the Savior and I am not. Thank You that the weight of saving anyone was never mine. Amen.*

DAY 3 · WEDNESDAY

Just a VoiceJOHN 1:22–23 · JOHN 3:30

Opening prayer*Lord, I want my life to point to You, not to me. Show me how. Amen.*

Read John 1:22–23. Frustrated, the leaders pushed: “What do you say about yourself?” John answered with Scripture: “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness.”

Think about what a voice is. Nobody walks away from a phone call talking about the sound waves. A voice is not the point. The message is. John was content to be heard and forgotten, as long as people saw Jesus.

Later he said it even more plainly: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). That is not low self-esteem. It is the right size. When you know how big Jesus is, you don’t need to be the main character.

Reflect

Where in your life do you want to be seen more than you want Jesus to be seen? Be honest.

Today’s action step

Look for one chance today to give credit away, to God or to someone else. Let someone else be the point.

Closing prayer*Jesus, You must increase and I must decrease. Make my life a voice that points to You. Amen.*

DAY 4 · THURSDAY

One You Do Not Know

JOHN 1:24–27

Opening prayer

Lord, open my eyes to see You, and to see the people around me who don't know You yet. Amen.

Read John 1:24–27. The leaders asked John by what right he was baptizing. His answer turned the attention off himself again: “Among you stands one you do not know.”

Jesus was right there. In the crowd. And the experts who had studied the Scriptures their whole lives missed Him. You don't recognize a person you're not expecting.

John said he wasn't worthy to untie that man's sandal strap, a job for the lowest servant. The people around you are standing in the same crowd. Jesus is near them, and they don't know Him. Someone has to point.

Reflect

Who is one person God has put in your life who doesn't know Jesus yet? Write their name.

Today's action step

Pray for that person by name today. Ask God to open their eyes, and to give you an opening with them before Sunday.

Closing prayer

Father, thank You for the person You put on my heart today. Let them see the One standing among them. Use me to point. Amen.

DAY 5 · FRIDAY

Be a VoiceJOHN 1:28 · ROMANS 10:14

Opening prayer*Lord, give me courage today. I want to point someone to You. Amen.*

Read John 1:28. These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan. A real place, a real river, a real man telling real people what he knew about Jesus.

Now read Romans 10:14. How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? God has always sent someone first. He sent Noah, Moses, the prophets, and John. Now He sends you.

You don't need a title. John didn't have one. You don't need every answer. You just need to tell what Jesus has done in your life. It's not your job to save anyone. We just point people to the One who saves.

Reflect

Go back to the name you wrote on Thursday. What is one thing Jesus has done in your life that you could tell them?

Today's action step

Take the bold step. Before Sunday, share with that person one thing Jesus has done in your life. One or two sentences is enough. That's what a voice does.

Closing prayer*Jesus, I am not the Christ, but I know the Christ. Help me point someone to You this week. Amen.***LOOKING AHEAD**

Next Sunday: Week 5 · Behold the Lamb of God · John 1:29–34 · October 11, 2026. Memory verse this week: John 1:23.