

## **THEME: KNOWING AND LIVING THE TRUTH:**

### **God made Touchable: 1 John 1:1-4**

February 11, 2018

Midway: BCC

#### **QUIZ:**

1. How many chapters in this letter? (5)
2. What kind of a person does John refer to as a liar? He who denies that Jesus is the Christ (2:22).
3. What word do you think is found most often in this letter? Love (46 times)
4. He refers to an Old Testament person to illustrate what they the readers should not do. What was his name? Cain (3:12) – “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother.”
5. John encourages his readers to test the spirits because not every spirit is from God. He says there is a way we can recognize the Spirit of God: “Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ \_\_\_\_\_ (“has come in the flesh is from God” – 4:2)
6. Who does John refer to as a murderer? (he who hates his brother – 3:15).
7. Finish the sentence: There is no fear in love but, (perfect love casts out fear- 4:18).
8. Finish sentence: And this is the victory that has overcome the world (our faith - 5:4).
9. Finish sentence: There are 3 that testify: the Spirit and the water and (the blood - 5:7-8).
10. What phrase does John conclude the book with? (Little children keep yourselves from idols – 5:21).

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

As we mentioned last Sunday, the main reason that John wrote this epistle was to counter false teaching. A heretical faction had developed within the church, one that promoted false teachings about Christ.

Scholars have identified this heresy as Docetism and pointed specifically to a person by the name of Cerinthus. These folks denied that Jesus actually had flesh and blood; they denied that God had come in the flesh. They did not deny the deity of Jesus Christ, but denied His humanity. Cerinthus did not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary, tho he was more righteous and wise than other men. After His baptism Christ descended upon Him (upon Jesus, the mere human) in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and it was then that He proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. At last Christ departed from Jesus, and then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible (incapable of suffering or feeling pain), inasmuch as He was a spiritual being (Comfort and Hayley, Cornerstone Commentary, 325).

#### **1 John 1:1-4:**

*1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life.*

*2. The Life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal Life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

3. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His son, Jesus Christ.

4. We write this to you to make our joy complete.

#### **A. Verse One: The Word of Life**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

“That which was from the beginning” – these words remind me of Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1.

*That which was from the beginning.* John will use this phrase about 8 times in this book.

What “beginning” is he referring to?

I think it is none other than the same beginning that Genesis 1 and John 1 mention.

Who is the “that which” that he is referring to when he says “that which was from the beginning?” The answer is at the end of the verse: “this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”

*The Word of Life* - So in essence he is referring to, “the Word of Life who was from the beginning.”

In John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word.” There John is speaking about Jesus.

In his gospel John identified the Son of God as both “the Word” (logos) *In the beginning was the Word* and “Life (zoe):” *In Him was Life and that Life was the Light of men.*

In the Gospel he is clearly referring to Jesus.

Here he again combines those 2 and refers to Jesus as “The Word of Life.”

As “The Word” the Son expresses God; as “life” He imparts God’s eternal Life to believers.

He is both God and the Giver of eternal Life.

#### **B. Verse Two: The Word becomes Flesh**

*The Life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal Life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

*He has appeared to us:* John states this twice in the same verse which lines up again with the Gospel:

**John 1:14:** *The Word became **flesh** and **dwelt** among us and we have **seen** His glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*We proclaim to you the Eternal Life* – this refers to the divine, eternal life – the life of God. This life resided in Christ, and He made it available to all who believe in Him.

*The eternal Life which was with the Father* –

WOW! This Jesus whom John is speaking about and telling his readers unequivocally that he has seen Him and touched Him, this Jesus, was with the Father. Here is this human being walking around in Palestine and He is human and He is eternal – He is divine.

**John 1:1:** *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.* . . He was face to face with the Father. This speaks of intimate fellowship. When John uses this expression, he is implying that the Word (the Son) and God (the Father) enjoyed an intimate, personal

relationship from the beginning. In Jesus' intercessory prayer in John 17 He reveals that the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world.

John and the rest of the apostles had come to the realization that the Word of Life who had been in face to face fellowship with the Father through all eternity, had entered into time to be revealed to them in human flesh.

When the Son entered into time, the eternal fellowship of the Father and Son also entered into time.

1. So, to have heard Jesus was to have heard the Father speaking in the Son (John 14:10, 24).

2. To have seen Jesus was to have seen the Father (John 14:8-10), and

3. To have known Him was to have known Him who was one with the Father (John 10:30, 38).

4. The Son and the Father are so united that they are said to indwell each other (John 14:8-10).

5. Christ perfectly expressed the Father because He lived in perfect union with Him. Therefore, for the disciple to know Jesus, was to know the Father (Comfort and Hawley, 331).

That is why the Son is called "the Word" He is the revealer, the communicator of God to humanity. As the Word, the Son of God fully conveys and communicates God. In both Jewish and Greek thought, the *logos* was associated with the idea of beginnings – the world began through the Word (Genesis 1:3ff, - where the expression "God said" is used repeatedly). John may have had this in mind, but he was also initiating a new use of this term (*logos*) to identify the Son of God as the divine expression.

Paul thought the same way - **Colossians 1:15: the Son is the visible image of the invisible God.** The writer of Hebrews thought the same way: *The Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His being (Hebrews 1:3).*

**In the Godhead, the Son functions as the revealer of God and the reality of God. He is God made touchable** (ibid, 332).

### Repetition in these verses:

As you have probably noted, there is a lot of repetition in these first 3 verses.

We need to remember that whenever there is repetition in the Bible it is always done on purpose. John had a purpose with the repetition.

Which we have **heard**

Which we have **seen** with our eyes

Which we have **looked at**

Which our hands have **touched**

The life **appeared**: we have **seen** it and **testify** to it

We **proclaim** to you the eternal life – He was with the Father and has **appeared** to us. He was in heaven with God the Father and He has come down to earth and we actually saw Him.

We **proclaim** what we have **seen** and **heard**.

heard, and touched.

"Heard" – 2 x; "Seen,". "Looked at" – 4 x; "Our hands have touched" - 1 x

Note that twice he says that Jesus appeared to them.

He has heard with his ears; seen with his eyes and touched with his hands.

What point is John wanting to make? John wants his readers to know that he is talking about a real physical person who could be seen.

### **Why is it important to know that Jesus had a real physical body?**

We mentioned in our introduction, that John was addressing false teachers and their false teaching. These false teachers denied that Jesus actually had flesh and blood; they denied that God had come in the flesh.

John makes a very strong and compelling case that he has seen, heard and touched the Word of Life – Jesus, the Christ. He is talking about using real, physical senses. And he is talking about a real, physical person. This was not simply an immaterial spiritual being. He was a real person that could be seen, listened to, touched and then talked about.

**1 John 4:1-3: Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.**

### **1. There are at least 3 things we learn about Jesus from these verses:**

a. **Jesus was a real, human being with a physical body.** There is absolutely no doubt in John's mind that Jesus Christ was a real person.

b. **John refers to Jesus as, "the Word of Life," "the eternal Life" and also "the Life."**

c. **Jesus is equal with God:** *this eternal Life was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

**"He was with the Father," "and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."**  
By the way he uses the conjunction "and" he is indicating that both are of the same essence; both are divine; both are equal.

**Hebrews 1:3: The Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.**

**a. .Jesus is a real, human being with a physical body**

**b. Jesus is the eternal Word of Life**

**c. Jesus is divine – He is God the Son**

### **C.Verse Three: True Fellowship, based on Truth and Relationship**

**We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His son, Jesus Christ.**

*This we **proclaim** concerning the Word of Life.*

*We **proclaim** to you the Eternal Life.*

*We **proclaim** to you what we have seen and heard*

**Why is John proclaiming this?**

**So that you also may have fellowship with us**

**And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.**

### **1.True Fellowship must be based on Truth.**

We cannot have true fellowship if we don't worship the same God; or if our definition of God is different.

We must know what the truth is, especially about Jesus Christ, or there can be no fellowship.

It is very NB for us to know what the truth is.

This is the main reason that John is writing to these believers: a group has left that is not teaching or practicing the truth and he does not want the others to be led away from the truth.

Do you wish to base your life on a lie, on falsehood, on false teaching?

This is what many people do, without knowing it.

In a world where one of the key words is tolerance; in a world where people don't like absolutes, we can know the truth.

We have an absolute authority from where truth springs.

That absolute is the triune God and His natural and special revelation.

**Psalm 19 speaks of both Natural Revelation (His Creation) and Special Revelation (the Bible):**

*The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge (vs.1-2).*

*The law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul. . . (v.7).*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17:**

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correction and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**2.True Fellowship must be based on Relationship – first with God and then with each other.**

**He is speaking about relationship, both horizontal and vertical.**

**God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit are Persons – the triune God.**

We cannot fellowship with inanimate objects.

**Illustrate:** Can I fellowship with this pulpit? Can I fellowship with the piano? How about with my shirt? Can I fellowship with you – another Person?

Can you fellowship with your dog or cat or hamster?

They are animals not persons.

The kind of fellowship that John is talking about here involves a spiritual dimension – unless there is a spiritual component there can be no true fellowship.

We need to be born again in order for us to have the kind of fellowship that John is talking about here. A number of times in this sermon he will talk about being born of God.

We cannot have a relationship with God unless we come to God on His terms.

*Unless you are born again you cannot see the kingdom of God.*

It is only those who have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's Son, who can be at peace with God and therefore have a relationship with God.

"When a person becomes a child of God (through the new life given by the Holy Spirit), he or she enters into this one ageless, universal fellowship – a fellowship springing from the Godhead, coursing through the apostles, and flowing through every genuine believer who has ever been or will ever be" (Comfort and Hawley, 332).

As we gather together as a church family and are born of God, with the Father and the Son as our focus then we fellowship both with our Triune God and with each other. There is something that takes place in our spirits.

The triune God must be the basis, the focus of fellowship as the Scriptures talk about it. We cannot have true fellowship if we don't worship the same God; or if our definition of God is different.

**Song:** what a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

When there is true peace with God and with each other then we experience true fellowship.

When we love God and love each other then there can be true fellowship.

True fellowship can be characterized by a triangle, with God at the top and you and I below on a horizontal level.

#### **D.Verse Four: True Joy**

We write this to you to make our joy complete.

"THIS" - John is proclaiming the truth about Jesus. We are writing to tell you the truth about Jesus so that you, as you believe the same thing can have fellowship with us. Ultimately our fellowship is with the Father and the Son. As we have the right view of the Father and Son – as we know and believe the truth about the Father and the Son, then there is something that takes place in our spirits that affects our relationship with the Triune God and with each other. Knowing we have this shared belief and understanding brings us real joy. This is true fellowship.

True joy is also based on truth and leads to relationship – which is fellowship.

**The truth about Jesus – who He really is, leads to true fellowship and true joy.**

**PRAYER:**

**SONG: The Family of God**

**Chorus:**

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God,  
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood,  
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,  
For I'm part of the family, the family of God.

**Verse: One**

You will notice we say brother and sister round here,  
It's because we're a family and these folks are so dear,  
When one has a heartache, we all share the tear,  
And rejoice in each victory in this family so dear.

**Chorus:**

**Verse Two:**

From the door of an orphanage to the house of the King,  
No longer an outcast, a new song I sing,  
From rags unto riches, from the weak to the strong,  
I'm not worthy to be here, but praise God I belong.

**Chorus.**

