

“Got Fellowship” 1 John 1

The Nature of God revealed

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Carl Sagan an astronomer and science advocate wrote a book titled Pale Blue Dot – which was inspired from a photo taken by Nasa’s voyager in 1990, as the spacecraft was departing our solar system, it was momentarily turned back in order to take this photo of earth which was almost 4 billion miles away.

It is hard to see in the photo, but there is a pale blue speck in the middle of the sun’s ray, which is earth. Though Carl himself could not recognize, or refused to recognize God’s hand in creation. He did recognize the **insignificance of humanity’s existence**, much less **his own personal existence**.

Carl wrote these words in his book – as he pondered **our very existence** on this pale blue dot.

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“Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.”

King David agreed with Carl Sagan assessment of our **in-significance**.

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Psalm 8:3–4 (NLT) — 3 When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers— the moon and the stars you set in place— **4** what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?

The reality is that we are insignificant in light of all of God’s creation. But in spite of us being mere mortals, those whose life is but a vapor. The truth is that **God invites us into a relationship with Him** that is so personal, so close, that it is the very picture of Koinonia. A term of fellowship which I will cover in more detail with in this message.

If you take nothing else from this message this morning. At least understand that where Carl Sagan concluded in his unbelief that:

Slide 5 “There is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves”.

The Holy Spirit has rebuked such a lie as being completely incorrect through the pen of the apostle John. **Showing that God the Father has indeed sent Jesus Christ for this very purpose**, to save us from ourselves and to invite us into an eternal relationship with both the Father and the Son.

But within this amazing promise of relationship, lies a burden of responsibility on our part (as with any relationship). **A burden of participation within that relationship.**

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1 John 1:1 (NKJV) — 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—

John begins verse 1 with the words “**that which**” was from the beginning. The Greek does not imply “ Jesus **who was** from the beginning. But instead the word interpreted as “ that which” in the NKJV, points to everything that was true concerning Jesus, **in both** His deity and His humanity.

In the first verse of this gospel of John it states – “In the **beginning was the Word**”. Making it clear that Jesus was in-fact the eternal God. He was eternally with God the Father from the beginning and is Himself is **the Word**. Meaning that He **Himself is the revealed concept of God**. Jesus fulfilled the unveiling of the glory of the invisible God in human form.

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John 1:14 (NKJV) — 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

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1 John 1:1 (NKJV) — 1 That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard**, which we **have seen** with our eyes, which **we have looked upon**, and our hands **have handled**, concerning the Word of life—

And John witnesses that the revealing of God was not just in the form of a dream or spiritual vision. But John’s testimony was based on the material senses of ; hearing Jesus speak as a human, seeing His human body live on earth - John even uses the word that is interpreted as “ looked upon” meaning to intently study and observe the man Jesus in His daily life. Seeing all the bodily function of expected of any human being – eating, drinking, sleeping, and ect. We get our English word – **theater** from the root of the word interpreted as “looked upon”.

The author of Hebrews noted that God in past time spoke through the prophets, but now have spoken to us through Jesus Christ His son.

Beyond site and sound, John witness is even confirmed **though physical touch**. John often laid his head to rest on Jesus’ chest. The apostles even stuck there fingers **in His physical wounds after His resurrection**.

John gives all of this testimony – in order to confirm that Jesus was “**the Word of Life**”. Again meaning that **Jesus was the revealed being of God Himself**, in the form of life. Not just physical life (Bios) but Zoe life. Abundant life. Not only was Jesus life himself but He is the giver of Life

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John 10:10 (NKJV) - - 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

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2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and **was manifested** to us—

John states that this eternal life was manifested. Manifest means **to reveal or make apparent things that were previously hidden.**

So when John notes that the life was manifested, he didn't mean life in general, but the life that “**God is**” was made visible or known through Jesus – **and we (John and the other disciples who witnessed Jesus' life) both declared that life, and bore witness to that life.**

It is easy to wash over the fact God Himself was revealed or made apparent. But think about it. The all powerful, all present, all knowing God of creation. A God who stands outside of time, who was eternally in existence, who encompasses all of creation - was revealed through the physical life and presence of Jesus.

Jesus told Thomas

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John 14:7 (NKJV) — 7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; **and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”**

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When Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, Jesus said

John 14:9 (NKJV) — 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

So within these first two verses - John was making some significant and vitally important claims.

1) That through the physical body of Jesus, eternal life was made visible.

2) and that John and the other disciples bore witness of that physical manifestation of God through the discernment of the senses that God has given them – sound, sight, and touch.

Now one of the reasons for John stressing Jesus humanity was to **refute a heresy** that had come into the church called Gnosticism. This teaching claimed that essentially everything in the physical realm was evil and therefore denied that Jesus could have had a true physical body. Which denied not only his humanity but the virgin birth itself.

But the error of Gnosticism went even further to believe that since all matter is evil, **what we do with our physical bodies have no bearing on our spiritual state of being.** As though they were totally unrelated.

Condition and Implications of Fellowship

But John had a greater reason for writing this letter than just correcting the false claims of Gnosticism. These things were written as an invitation to enter into a **fullness of Joy.**

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3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

John notes that the ultimate reason that he declares these things is so as interpreted in the NKJV **“That your Joy may be full”**. Other translations **say that OUR joy may be full.**

- The important thing to concentrate on, is the **path to this fullness joy.**

It is through fellowship. Using the Greek word that I spoke of earlier – *“Koinonia”*. This term implies sharing life together, having a joint participation with another, or even better said - **“being in common with another”**.

A man once inscribed these words on his wife’s headstone - **“With you alone I shared my life”**. I love that in the fact, that within marriage there is a sharing of life to the point that **the two are considered one.** That is a very **picture of Koinonia.**

In using the term Koinonia, John is not just talking about having some sort of social interaction. In fact John offers fellowship with other believers that he had and would never meet in person.

What John is offering is **a fellowship that can only be experienced through the work of the Holy Spirit in the believers life as the Spirit brings us into a spiritual union** with other believers and even more importantly, fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

What John is claiming is that **And the result in such a fellowship, is JOY!** Joy in spite of life’s circumstances.

On the night of Jesus’ arrest, He prayed a prayer for not only his disciples that were with Him at that time, but for all who would come to know and believe in Him. That means – us.

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John 17:21–23 (NKJV) — **21** that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. **22** And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: **23** I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Do you see what it means to be in common with another?

It is unity among believers in service to the Lord and being one with the Father as Jesus is one with Him. Even being brought in to perfection within that union. Not perfection as in the sense of sinlessness (not yet), **but perfect and complete in Love. So that the world will know the love of the Father and of His Son.**

And the product of that is JOY. - Believers can and will experience the fullness of God's joy with in our fellowship together, and with Him.

The wording in 1 John 1:4 is that your or our joy **may be full** – the Greek term used implies not just “**sort of**” being full. But it means **crammed to the top**, to the **point of overflowing**, to **absolute fullness**.

But as I said in the introduction of my message. As part of that fellowship with Jesus, **there is a burden of participation within that relationship.**

That is the thing about true Koinonia – according to Kenneth Wuest as noted in his Greek New Testament study - in order to experience true Koinonia, there has to be:

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- **“a joint participation with another, in things held in common by both” .**

Let that sink in. True fellowship requires that there not only be common likes and dislikes between those in fellowship. But there must be **a joint participation according to those likes and dislikes.**

This is the message that John is proclaiming. There is an offering of fellowship with Jesus, **but that offering carries with it the burden of participation.**

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5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

John stresses that **God is light** . Not speaking of physical light, but ethical, spiritual, and moral perfection. Light itself is not an attribute of God but is the very essence of God just as love is.

This Greek term interpreted as light is “**Phos**”. In this John was saying that God in His nature, Essence, and Character is light. **Perfect righteousness. In fact His light is so pure and perfect that no man can stand before Him and live.**

- John notes that there is an absolute absence of any darkness at all in God. Implying that God’s very **nature and being is perfect Holiness.**

Here is John’s point -

Vs. 6 states that If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie.

Now John was teaching not only against the heresy of Gnosticism but against the false teaching of **Antinomianism** – taken from the Greek word meaning “**against the law**”. Teaching that any notion of obedience to any law was legalistic.

I think that the spirit of this false teaching is still **alive and well today, within** the teaching of extreme grace that requires no life of obedience. Only faith. Now don’t misunderstand me. We are saved 100% by faith in the work of Jesus on the Cross. But as John is pointing out that faith which brings us into fellowship with Jesus absolutely demands, walking in light.

Remember true fellowship requires **joint-participation** in things **possessed by both**. This is exactly what is stated in Vs 6. If we claim to have joint-participation in light yet walk in darkness, we are not living in common with God or with Jesus and therefore, we are not being truthful about our fellowship. “**We do not practice the truth**”.

This term walk in darkness – does not imply anything short of moral perfection. But the Greek term means “**to live occupied with or conducting oneself in the sphere and control of**”. Which inclines habitual sin. Giving oneself over to the reign of the sinful nature.

Paul noted a warning in the book of Galatians, to those who walk in darkness.

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Galatians 5:19–21 (NKJV) — 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, **20** idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, **21** envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; **of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

This is exactly what John is saying. We cannot possibly have true fellowship with the Lord and yet live in darkness. **That is not living in common with God’s light.** Now you can try to fit that into your theological box in any way you choose.

But the truth remains. If you live habitually in darkness (walking in willful sin) and claim to have fellowship with Jesus, **you are possibly deceiving yourself.**

My heart is not to condemn anyone who is listening this morning, **but instead to encourage you to grasp the reality of the transformation that we truly have in our fellowship with Christ.**

I am not talking about legalism, I am talking about something supernatural happening in our life through our relationship with Christ. Something that God Himself does inside of us **through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

So let's take a short diversion if you will into the book of **Romans chapter 6**, in order to look at the mechanics (if you will) concerning the truth that it is **not logical to be able to remain habitually walking in darkness, yet have true fellowship in Jesus.**

Now time does not allow me to cover this in fullness today. But my hope is that this will cause you to study the truth of these scriptures yourself.

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Romans 6:1–6 (NKJV) — 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

The context of Paul's question is revealed in a previous statement in Chapter 5:20 – Where grace abound, sin abound even more.

Therefore Paul presents the question. **Since God's grace abounds more, no matter the degree of sin, do we just continue in sin?** In other words – does is even matter if we live in sin or obedience? This was really the attitude and teaching of those caught up in **Antinomianism.**

But Paul doesn't answer the question with NO or even give an explanation as to how that is morally wrong. But His response is – **No, that is impossible.**

Paul then goes on to explain why it is impossible. It is impossible because **we have relationally been baptized into both Jesus's death and His resurrection.**

But I want to explain just what it is that Paul is stating. When He asks, shall we sin. The structure of the Greek word for sin (hamartia) is in the form of a noun. Not a verb. This implies not the individual acts of sin themselves, **but the very sin nature that resides within our flesh.** That which drives us to carry out act of sin.

To assist us in seeing just what it is that Paul is saying. Let's replace the word " sin" with " controlled by the sin nature".

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Romans 6:1–6 (NKJV) — 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in **being controlled by the sin nature** that grace may abound? **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to **the control of the sin nature** live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, **6**

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of **the sin nature** might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves **to the control of the sin nature**.

With out spending too much time – let me explain what Paul meant by the statement “**we were baptized into Christ Jesus both in His death and Resurrection.**” This is not implying water baptism, but a spiritual baptism that brings us into union with both Jesus’s death and His resurrection. Which is what water baptism is physically proclaiming.

I want to make it very clear. Paul is not saying that we no longer have a sin nature. Trust me, our flesh is very much alive and is just as corrupt **as it was before we came into salvation.** But the reality is that the sin nature **has lost its dominance** in our lives to the point that it is no longer **our common nature** to walk habitually in sin. We are now slave to righteousness instead.

If you are a believer this has to be true in your life! Paul even goes as far as to promise in verse 7, that “**he who has died (in union with Jesus’ death through spiritual baptism) is free from the control of sin**”. This doesn’t mean we can’t sin. It means we are free from the dominance that sin once had in our lives.

Now In light of the promise of Roman’s 6 let’s take another look at John’s claim in vs 6, hopefully with a better understanding.

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6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

In light of what we have learned from Romans 6, the fact that **sin no longer reigns as king** in the believers life. What this means is that **there is a new sheriff in town.**

In light of this let’s consider the lie that John is talking about. The lie is not that we claim to have no sin. The lie is that this person claims to have fellowship in union with Christ, **but they have no common bond with Jesus.** Shown by the fact that they continue to habitually practice doing **what Jesus hates.** Whis is the indication that they are still under the reign of the sinful nature.

Remember according to Kenneth Wuest - fellowship requires - “**a joint participation with another, in things held in common by both.**” A person can’t be continuously living against the light and yet claim **to be in communion** with that light.

If this strikes fear in your heart this morning, I want you to know that God is a God of mercy. His greatest desire is that you have true fellowship with Him. This is the very reason that Jesus came and willingly died on the Cross. **Not just for our salvation in and of itself, but in order that we could have true fellowship with The Father and the Son. So that He could free you from the reign of the sinful nature.**

John isn’t talking about a requirement of perfection in the believer’s life. He is talking about the action of a transformed life in Jesus Christ. A life in which the flesh no longer reigns as king. The skirmishes are still there in our battle against the flesh. **But victory has already been claimed through Jesus’ death.**

So often we fail to walk in the truth:

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7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

This isn't something that we must find a way to achieve on our own. There are so many promises in scripture concerning our transformation. God working in and through us through the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring us into the image and reality of Jesus righteousness.

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Philippians 2:12–13 (NKJV) — 12bwork out your own salvation with fear and trembling; **13** for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

But remember I said **with** the promise of fellowship comes the **burden of participation**.

The burden is that we are to work out of our salvation. Meaning there is to be a response in our life, **out of the fact that we are a new creation**.

But look, it is not up to us to do is on our own. But here is the truth of it. It is not **God's place to do it for us, without our cooperation**. It is God who works in us to both have the desire and the ability. Yet this requires our submission.

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7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

IF we surrender in obedience – and submit to the work that God is doing in our lives – the promise is maintained fellowship. Not just with each other. But even more importantly, fellowship with Jesus. And in this fellowship, our sin is cleansed away in order that the fellowship will remain.

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8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus stands in heaven before the Father as both our high priest and our advocate. His blood forever pleading before the Father on our behalf. His promise is that if we come to him in truth confessing our sin, He is just to not only remove that sin by His blood, but wash us white as snow. Insuring sin never obstructs our fellowship with the Father or Himself.

But that is only true for the one who would come to him surrendered in faith and humility.

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10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Close