

CALLED INTO FELLOWSHIP | 1 John 1:1-4 | Pastor Mark Bofill | Oct. 30, 2022

I. The Focus of Fellowship (1-2) | II. The Invite to Fellowship (3) | III. The Joy of Fellowship (4)

INTRO: After that brief introduction, let's get right into the text by considering the first four verses in this epistle. **[Read Text...1 John 1:1-4].** – These serve as a PROLOGUE, revealing that believers are **CALLED INTO FELLOWSHIP**. (*This is what God desires for His children. That we would enjoy Him, Especially us here are CCV*).

- When it was made aware to me that I would be the new lead Pastor at CCV, almost immediately I **sensed the prompting of the Holy Spirit to begin with teaching the 1st epistle of John**. Yes, for the doctrinal truths contained within, but especially for the content mentioned in these first four verses.
Why? Because God wants this church to experience fellowship with Him which is joyfully overflowing!

***Even before the “Fall of Man,”** *God has always desired fellowship with mankind*. Right after the Fall, God expressed His intention to bring us back to Himself (cf. **Gen 3:15**). – (*1st gospel: lat. Protevangelion*)

[We have to turn our eyes to...]

I. THE FOCUS OF FELLOWSHIP (1-2) In these verses John declares that Fellowship has always existed with the Godhead and is freely offered to us in His Son Jesus Christ. As he writes, his focus...

A. CONCERNS THE “WORD OF LIFE” (1) John first begins with the with the awkward *demonstrative pronoun: “that;”* to refer to that *Word of Life*, who we are to focus on first.

1. **The Word was “from the beginning”** – According to conservative academics, there are **two basic ways to understand what was in the beginning:** (a) From the beginning of the Gospel message (as advocated by A. W. Pink, F. F. Bruce, and John MacArthur), or (b) From eternity past (i.e., He was there from the beginning of time signifying He pre-dated the beginning of time - John Stott and John Piper favor.)
2. This **“Word of life”** is a direct reference to **Jesus Christ** (mentioned later in v.3). John says that this Word was... **“heard, seen, looked upon, and handled,”** not only by John, but by the other apostles. **What is he trying to communicate by using these phrases?**
 - a. **“heard”** – Their ears received audible utterances spoken from Jesus.
 - b. **“seen with our eyes”** – They were actual eyewitnesses of his physical incarnation!
 - c. **“looked upon”** – They closely contemplated His demeanor! (*The way Jesus conducted himself as a man*)
 - d. **“handled”** – The touched Him and interacted with Him, thus emphasizing John’s point...
3. This **“Word of Life”** was not a ghost, phantom or apparition, but manifested in a physical body which had flesh and blood like every human being has! (*Satan tries to discredit this important fact!*)
 - a. As mentioned in the intro the epistle, most experts concur that John was disputing a certain component of Gnosticism, which taught that acquiring specific knowledge was necessary for salvation (*gnosis*). – **However, John’s first-hand knowledge of who Jesus Christ was outweighs any purportedly “greater knowledge” of the Gnostics.**

***This verse teaches us that Christianity is fact, not fiction (1:1)**

- b. This fact is consistent with what John shared in his gospel: In **(John 1:1,14)** In the beginning was the Word... 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.

B. DECLARES THE "ETERNAL LIFE" (2) – *The life was manifested* (i.e., Incarnation.) – John focuses attention on the fact that **Jesus Christ, who was with the Father in eternity has NOW manifested to the apostles**, of whom they had personally experienced and made it a point to **DECLARE this ETERNAL LIFE to ALL!**

***This teaches us that Christianity is proclaimed, not private (1:2)**

1. John declares the "eternal life" which Jesus offers and **made possible by His coming in the flesh.**
2. Here is the reason for declaring the "Word of life", the "eternal life." He is the Focus of Fellowship!
3. This "eternal life" is the same "life" which we can possess if we truly believe in the name of the Son of God - cf. **(1 John 5:11-13) It is for all!**

CLOSING THOUGHT: Being in fellowship with our heavenly Father is being in perfect alignment and harmony with Him. **How do we have perfect alignment and harmony with God**, the Creator, the Eternal Life? First, we receive sonship when we choose to confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead. (Romans 10:9,10): *...For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* **Jesus Christ is...The Focus of Fellowship**

II. THE INVITE TO FELLOWSHIP (3) – The NLT reads like this...*We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.* **(1 John 1:3)** – By declaring this *"life,"* as revealed by Jesus and through Jesus, **Fellowship is possible! Gr. Koinonia** – Fellowship involves the idea of **"sharing and communion"** (Oneness)

1. The apostles had fellowship with the **Jesus**, who taught them about fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. They experienced the working of the Godhead first-hand, on many occasions.
2. John **INVITES** his readers to participate in this same sharing... *"that you also may have fellowship with us..."* lit., so that you can experience what we are experiencing!
3. **All believers are invited to experience a full fellowship with the Godhead and with the entire body of Christ.** (*But Satan tries to disrupt such unity*)

***This teaches us that Christianity is shared, not selfish! (1:3)**

CLOSING THOUGHT: The Invite to Fellowship - is offered Freely to all believers! **When we walk in fellowship, we are joyfully blessed** – *Oh, gift of gifts! oh, grace of grace! That God should condescend -To make my heart His dwelling-place, And be my closest Friend!* – J Sidlow Baxter

Accepting this invitation to Fellowship with such a spiritual family, produces...

III. THE JOY OF FELLOWSHIP (4) – John experienced the joy of fellowship with the Word of Life. He also experienced the Joy of fellowship **with others who believed.** He now mentions his reason for sharing these truths... **that his readers would likewise experience the FULLNESS OF JOY!**

- It is **"fellowship"** with the Father and Son that makes **the "life"** of a Christian, so full of joy! – Jesus said, ***I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.* (John 10:10b)**

- **Have YOU LOST IT? The Joy of Fellowship is the Result of Abiding!** – In (John 15:10-11) said this, *“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and **abide in His love**. “These things I have spoken to you, **that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.**”*

***This teaches us that Christianity is rejoicing, not repressive (4)**

CONCLUSION: As you go out...this week, remember that **GOD HAS CALLED YOU INTO FELLOWSHIP!**

I pray that you...

- Contemplate God's Word with a renewed confidence
- Intensify your Focus on the Word of Life
- Have a strong desire for the joy of His fellowship
- Invite others to this fellowship