

1 John 1:1-4

Announcements:

- Holy Week Recap & Baptisms today - Shorter message; during service...
 - **Maybe God is calling you?**
- Sunday Night Messages - **tonight @6PM** for 3 Sundays (**Rise of Islam**)
 - No children's ministry... Mature content... Livestreamed/recorded...
- Facility updates - Project (**thank you photos**). **May 3rd?** (**master plan soon**)
- Turf Project - **Photos**; \$60K - \$180K "**Outdoor Fellowship Project Fund**"
- Paul and Jesse - *Paul says a few words*; send off in **prayer**; table...
 - (Dave Jamerson too!)

Please open to the **Book of 1st John** (Need a Bible? ...in a seat near you)

- *If just started attending*, good timing as we start a new book together
- **1 John** = *Light/Darkness, Truth/false, Morality/Sin, Fellowship, Assurance.*
- **Good news he cannot keep to Himself!** (*new baby, sports win, BBQ/coffee*)

Message Title: "Too Good Not to Share!"

- **The Incarnate Word of Life** (verses 1-3(a))
- **The Full Joy of Fellowship** (verses 3(b)-4)

Opening Key Theme = Two Kinds of Knowledge:

- Difference between knowing **about** something & **really knowing** something.
- You can be an **expert on military strategy**, but to **be in the battlefield**...
- You can **know about having kids** (*idea*) until you **actually have them**...
- **Academic & Experiential knowledge** are **not** the same **John can attest**...

And, **Our Christian Faith** is *not based on ideas or feelings*...

- It's grounded in a **real, historical Jesus**

Let's read the first four verses, then I'll give some more **introductory thoughts**...

Read Verses 1-4

- **PRAY**

Notice some things:

- **First, no name listed** (2/3rd John, "**the elder**") (*Revelation, "servant John"*)
 - **Historically (VAST)**, *assign this to the apostle John*,
 - *others: an elder, or the spirit of John*
 - **Legend: Last Apostle, Patmos, Oil**
 - (*Revelation, Irenaeus, Eusebius, Tertullian, Jerome*)
- **Next, nothing called out for date** (early as **65AD**, late as **130AD**) **85-100AD**
 - *I've looked into all this*. I lean towards **Apostle John and 90AD ish**.
 - Due to *internal content*, and *early church fathers*. **You assess**.
 - *For those wanting to dig deeper*...
 - **John Stott** — "*The Letters of John*" (Tyndale NT Commentaries)

- **Also, no audience is mentioned** *Churches in Ephesus/Asia Minor (Map)*
- **Finally, no introduction/greeting**, just jumps right in *unique!* (Like Hebrews)

The Incarnate Word of Life (verses 1-3(a))

These verses = (run-on sentence) **Grammatical ball of yarn**... v. 2 = *parenthetical*

V. 1 - That which was **from the beginning**

- **Hos** - "who, which, what, that" = **Context** = **a person!** (*the One, NLT*)
 - **Lesous Christos** (verse 3) (**Jehovah is Salvation + Anointed One**)
 - **Boice**: *not just a person, but entire message/life* Jesus embodies...
- **Was** - **from the beginning**...
 - **Beginning (arche)** - "origin, beginning, first place, leader/ruler, or that by which anything begins to be (exist)..."
 - **What beginning?** *Some say the Gospel, I say further...*
 - **Genesis 1:1** - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..."
 - **John 1:1-3** - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him..."
- **Person of Jesus Christ** existed **since eternity past**,
 - *Not just part of creation = the SOURCE*
 - He's **not merely a cool idea** we add to our lives, **He is Lord of all!**

That **eternal savior stepped into history** *Into time/space* as we know **as one of us**

- **And this is what John is bearing witness to...**

V. 1 - Which we have **heard**, which we have **seen with our eyes**, which we have **looked upon**, and our **hands have handled**

- **We** - **Who are the "we"?** -
 - Most say **including all Apostles** Some say **church** (*not false*)
- **Four Verbs**: **Heard, seen, observed, touched**. - **strong evidence of reality!** **One thing to hear** (*in the OT*) **another** to **see "with our eyes" not illusion**
 - **If this is Apostle John**, probably **late teens** when he first saw Jesus...
- **In our text today, heard, seen, observed, handled** = **stacking courtroom**.
 - Not just **heard/seen, observed** (*theaomai*) **careful study beheld** (*Jn*)
 - **John 1:32** - "John bore witness, saying, 'I saw (*theaomai*) the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.'"
- And **not only heard, seen, and carefully observed**, but **hands have handled**.
 - **Touched, hugged**.
 - **Luke 24:39** - "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. **Handle Me and see**, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have..." (John was in that room...)

Friends, it's **not just that Jesus existed...**

- **God really became human** & **broke into tangible history**.
- ...**false teachings in that day claimed** **Jesus did not** do these things...
- Known as **Gonsiticism** (*spoke about in Colossians*) - *mysticism/philosophy*
 - *our world* has plenty of **re-packaged versions** & **inter-minglings**...

- **Gnosticism** - "the spiritual world is good; the material world is evil and was created by a lesser, ignorant deity — not the true God. Salvation comes through secret spiritual knowledge (gnosis) available only to a select few." -
 - **Issues:** **matter/spirit** + **means of salvation** (secret/special)
 - Leading to **either of two extremes:** **asceticism** / **licentiousness**
- **main issue** was **a particular vein of Gnosticism** - **denied the incarnation**
- **Docetism** - "a heresy teaching that Jesus only appeared to have a physical body... Because matter is evil, a holy God could not have actually suffered or died in the flesh."
 - Greek (**dokeo**) = "to seem" or "to appear"
 - **If spirit is good; and body is evil**, God **could not have entered a body**
 - Either **Jesus** only **appeared** to have a body... (illusion, phantom)
- Also around: **Cerinthian Gnosticism** (Jesus had a **human body** but **not God**)

John is combating this with **eye witness testimony**...

- The one who existed **from the beginning**...
- **Jesus is real!** Not a **myth, legend, phantom or idea**.
- **Flesh & bones**, man! **Heard, seen, embraced!**
- **Struggling in faith? Wrestling with doubts?**
 - ...let John's letter **encourage you** today!

And, another name for Jesus...

V. 1 - Concerning **the Word of life** (don't you love that!?)

- This phrase covers both **Hebrew and Greek thinking**...
- **Hebrew** = **Dabar** (God's "**Speaking/breath**" **creates and sustains** all of life...)
- **Psalm 33:6** - "**By the word (dabar) of the Lord** the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."
- **Greek** = **Logos** (observed order, beauty, symmetry = an **ultimate creator**)
 - (**behind the cosmos**)
 - **Giving sense to the world, holding stars in place**, etc. - the "**Logos**"
 - But **Greeks never imagined** they could know "**THAT**" God...
- **In our text...** (**Jesus = The Word of Life**) = **Logos** = "word, speech, message, decree" + **Zoe** = "spiritual, divine life" (not 'bios')
 - **He is the Word** - **speaks all things into existence, holds them together**
 - **He is the Life** (resurrection, abundant, eternal) - **Not just Bios** (true).
 - **Garden of Eden restoration language!**
 - (Eden lost **tree of Life**, Christ is life (John 14:6))

John is **shocking his audience** that the **ultimate God (Word)**

- **can be personally known!**

Now for the **parenthetical verse 2** (pausing to really **make sure we understand**...)

V. 2 - That **eternal life** which was **with the Father**

- Now **this verse stanza alone** reaches the **mystery/depths of our faith**.
- **Couple things to point out** to **keep as simple (as possible)** (**difficult!**)
 - Christ is mentioned as being **the eternal life**.

- His existence did not begin in Bethlehem...
- Micah 5:2 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me. The One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, **from everlasting**" (from the **days of eternity**)
- And the **one who IS** eternal life (past), **offers us THAT very thing** (now and future...)
- John 11:25 - "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live..."
- To receive Christ is to receive **resurrection life**, AKA: **eternal life!**
- **Eternal life** was "**with the Father**" - **Doctrine of the Trinity**...
 - "**which was with**" = speaks of **past nature/character/fellowship**
 - **In the beginning**, the Son/**Father** existed together "**with**" another...
 - John 17:24-25 - "...you loved Me **before the foundation of the world**. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You..."
- Interesting **the Spirit** is not listed here, because **John's main focus** is on the **person of Jesus**
 - **Short statement on the trinity:**
 - **Father, Son, Spirit** = **one in essence; three in person**.
 - "**Trinity: Father, Son, Spirit**" (found in 'Another Gospel' under 'special services')
 - Be careful of "**modalism**" (dad, spouse, friend) **above sermon, also...**
 - **Athanasian Creed** (5th cent) **combat Christological heresies** (**divinity**)
 - **Catholic = Universal**. **Greek = katholikos** ("according to the whole")
 - **To the "whole" church, trinity is important**, we do not forsake any member
 - Matthew 28:19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**"

Back to the point of **Christ Himself...**

V. 2 - And (that life) **was manifested** to us

- **Manifested (Phaneroo)** = "to reveal, make visible, to bring to light"
- (**aorist: a past point in time**)
- In the OT, **God's presence** dwelled in the **Temple**... (but unapproachable)
- **John speaks** to the **Incarnation of Christ!** **His life** was "**manifested**" to us...
 - John 1:1.4.14 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In Him was life, and the life was the light of men... and **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...**" - Carnum = **flesh**
- God **pitched His tent** (**tabernacled** (**skeno**)) **among men!**
 - **profound! He came down to us!**
- **Nicene Creed** (5th century) to **combat** (**Arianism** = **Nicholas slap**) (**image**)

The **Eternal Word of Life** was in fact **manifested** among us...

- (**Dabar/Logos has been revealed!**)

Vv. 2-3 - Which we have seen and heard... we **bear witness** and **declare to you**

- **John** finally **reaches his main point** - **We are WITNESSES!** (apostles?)
 - **BTW**, that's **the call of the entire church** as well - **Acts 1:8 man!**
- **main verb of the whole passage** is found in **verse 3** = **declare/proclaim**
 - **The reason he is writing is this right here!** **parenthetical** = **THIS!**

Dearly beloved brethren, **The Word of Life** is truly: **Too Good Not To Share!**

- (if you had the cure...?)
- **Shout it from the mountain tops! God has made a way of life for all!**
- not information merely for the sake of it, information for transformation!

Which is **the WHY** of our closing 1.5 verses...

The Full Joy of Fellowship (verses 3(b)-4)

V. 3 - ...that you also may have **fellowship...**

- **So that (hina) = the big purpose = Fellowship...**
 - (John wants you to be blessed by this...)
 - Community, belonging, purpose, family enjoy what He has enjoyed!
- **Fellowship (koinonia)** - "sharing, communion, intimacy, participation." (from koinos, 'common')
- **This is not just potlucks and parties.** This is a **mutual sharing of rad life!**
 - God wants to **share His life with you**
 - and for you to **share it with one another...**
- Framed here in both the: **Vertical & Horizontal** (so much of 1st John...)
 - **Many of the points = you must not / cannot separate the two...**

Horizontally:

V. 3 - ...that you also may have fellowship **with us**

- John desires his **listeners join in on this mutual sharing** together!
- Acts 2:44 - "Now all who believed **were together**, and had all things **in common**"
- You CANNOT have a full mature Christian life apart from **being connected to a body of believers.**
- We want to **cultivate a Christlike Community.**
 - Hope to build **participators, not spectators...**
 - You can **come and hang for a while as a spectator**, but **please do not remain there...**
 - **Ask yourself: am I in fellowship or just attendance?**
 - challenges **consumerist Christianity** (selfish, jump ship, don't grow)
 - **Growth happens** in serving, studying, loving, bearing, and praying.
 - **Costs something!**

Vertically: (which is where **real true fellowship** must be founded...)

V. 3 - And truly our fellowship is **with the Father and with His Son** Jesus Christ.

- John now **invites us to Know God.**
 - To **share our lives** with Him and **live for** Him. **Personally!**
- Matthew 6:9 - "In this manner, therefore, pray: **Our Father in heaven...**"
- Yes, the **creator/sustainer God of the universe**, **can be known!**
 - **Reverently & relationally**
- John 15:15 - "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; **but I have called you friends**, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."
- **didn't have to climb a mountain to find Him, He came to us, gave His Word!**
- **we share our lives with Him and He shares His life with us** (not "added")

- "Fellowship with God means we have gone into business with God, that His enterprises are to be our enterprises" (G. Campbell Morgan)

You could say: it's all about **Knowing Him** and **Growing Together** in Him.

- **Objectively (theologically)** both (**vertical and horizontal**) are true...
- ...but **subjectively/experientially**, you must decide (daily)...
- Picture the **marriage relationship** (**legal union vs relational union**)

danger is two fold: church vigor, devotional empty VS seeking God, but Lone Ranger (**both lack**)

V. 4 - ...these things we write to you that **your joy may be full**

- The **final goal of these opening verses?** It is a **overflowing Joy!**
- **Full** (from **Pleroo**) = "fill to the brim" = **complete/abounding! cup overflowing!**
- Not something the world can take from you **in Christ** can **be cultivated (fruit!)**
- **John's heart for His readers, is God's heart for you and I... (Your vs Our)**
- **John 15:10-11** - "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.**" - **and remember last Sunday?**
- **Psalm 16:11** - "You will show me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore...**"

This is **more important than you realize, friends...**

- **Have you lost your joy in Christ and for His church?**
 - That's **not good. Let Him work on you...**
- **I have lost joy before in the Lord**, and **in ministry** before
 - **it's a battle for all...** (pleasures, riches, deceptions)
- **"If any of you have lost the joy of the Lord. I pray you do not think it a small loss."** (Charles Spurgeon)
- David had to **pray and ask the Lord for it back due to sin...**
 - **Psalm 51:12** - "Restore to me **the joy of Your salvation...**"

Closing:

John shows us the path: **Truth** → **Fellowship** → **Joy**

- **Pleading with souls - altar call response...**
- **Jesus is real, eternal, and knowable - He is the Word of Life!**
 - Bringing a **rich relationship & heart fulfilling joy!**
- **not being invited to church, being invited to a life changing relationship...**

And today, we're going to celebrate that, through **Baptisms**

- "I know Him..."
- "I belong to Him..."
- "I've entered into that life..."

PRAY