

Summary

In this sermon from 1 John chapter 1, Pastor Chris introduces a new series through the book of First John with a central theme: "Be real, because God is real." He opens by establishing the identity of Jesus as the eternal Word who existed from the beginning, was physically present among His disciples, and is the full expression of God to humanity. John wrote to counter early heresies that denied either the eternal nature or the physical reality of Christ, and His message is just as relevant today. The sermon challenges believers to move beyond "cotton candy religion" and pursue genuine, substantive faith. A major focus of the message is the concept of koinonia, the Greek word for fellowship, which describes deep, mutual community where needs are shared and burdens are carried together. Pastor Chris connects this to walking in the light rather than hiding sin in darkness, emphasizing that real fellowship with God and with one another requires honesty and confession. He shares a deeply personal story about confessing a struggle with lust to his wife, illustrating how true koinonia looks like walking through difficulty together rather than judging. The sermon closes with an invitation to pray Psalm 139:23-24, asking God to search our hearts and free us from anything that grieves Him, so that our joy as a community can be made full.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hands and open hearts. We ask that You would quiet our minds and remove any distractions that would keep us from hearing what You want to speak to us today. As we discuss Your Word together, we pray that You would make us honest, humble, and willing to go wherever You lead. We do not want a shallow or surface-level faith. We want the real thing. Holy Spirit, guide our conversation, soften any hardened places in our hearts, and help each person in this group to receive exactly what You have for them today. In Jesus name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one thing about yourself that most people in this group probably do not know yet?

Key Verses

- 1 John 1:1
- 1 John 1:3

- 1 John 1:5-6
- 1 John 1:7
- 1 John 1:9
- Psalm 139:23-24

Questions

- Pastor Chris described the difference between 'cotton candy religion' and something real and substantive. In your own life, what does a genuine, substantive faith look like compared to a surface-level one?
- John opens his letter by emphasizing that Jesus was seen, heard, and touched, meaning He was physically and personally present. How does the truth of Jesus being fully present and real affect the way you relate to Him in your daily life?
- The Greek word koinonia describes a community so close that needs are shared and burdens are carried together. How would you describe the level of koinonia in your own relationships, both inside and outside the church?
- Acts 2:42-45 shows the early church devoting themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, even selling possessions to meet each other's needs. What do you think it would take for a community today to live that way? What gets in the way?
- Pastor Chris said that joy is the result of koinonia, and that 'our joy' being full together is better than just 'my joy' being full individually. Do you find it easier to focus on your own blessings or to genuinely celebrate when others are blessed? Why?
- John warns that claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness is a contradiction. What are some subtle or socially acceptable forms of darkness, like gossip or bitterness, that Christians sometimes overlook or minimize?
- Pastor Chris shared a very personal story about confessing a private struggle to his wife and experiencing healing through her prayerful response rather than judgment. What does that story reveal about what true koinonia in the church should look like when someone is vulnerable?
- 1 John 1:9 promises that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us. What makes confession so difficult, and what would it look like for this group to be a safe place where people feel free to be honest about their struggles?

Life Application

This week, take time to pray Psalm 139:23-24 each morning: 'Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' As you pray it, pay attention to what the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. If He highlights an area of sin, unforgiveness, or a hidden struggle, take a step toward the light. That might mean confessing it to God in prayer, sharing it with a trusted friend or spouse, or simply stopping the habit of hiding it. Choose one person in your life this week to check in on genuinely, not just with a quick hello, but with a real question about how they are doing. Practice koinonia in a small but intentional way.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus is eternal and real. He was not a created being or merely a spiritual idea. He was physically present, heard, seen, and touched, and He is still present with us today through the Holy Spirit.
- Koinonia is more than casual friendship. It is a deep, mutual community where people share needs, carry burdens, and genuinely care for one another. This kind of fellowship is what the church is called to practice.
- Walking in the light is a requirement for real fellowship with God. Choosing to hide sin in darkness damages our relationship with Him and with others, while confession and honesty open the door to cleansing and restoration.
- Joy is a community experience. The fullness of joy that God intends for us is not just personal but shared. When we are in genuine fellowship with God and with each other, our collective joy becomes complete.
- Confession is not weakness but the pathway to freedom. Dragging sin into the light, whether through prayer, confession to God, or vulnerability with a trusted person, is how God cleanses and heals us.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word that calls us to something deeper than religion. We thank You that You are real, that You are present, and that You desire genuine fellowship with each one of us. As we leave today, we ask that You would continue the work You started in our hearts. Where there is hidden sin, give us the courage to bring it into the light. Where there is unforgiveness, soften our hearts to release it. Where there is isolation, draw us into true koinonia with one

another. Fill us with the kind of joy that only comes from walking closely with You and with each other. Holy Spirit, do the work that only You can do. We trust You to be faithful and just, to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In Jesus name, amen.