

## Concerning The Word Of Life

2-21-10

### John 1:1-4 (READ)

1 John 1:1 is one of the most personal and tender verses in all of Scripture

John is old now addressing some problems in a group of people he loved

And he recalls the time when he was just a young man

He can remember the events of some 60 years ago like they just happened

If he quiets himself –he can almost hear His voice – see His face

Feel the sun burning down on them

Hear the crunch of their sandals as they walked dusty roads

Experience the sights and sounds of Jerusalem that last Passover week

He can just about feel the touch and the heat of His hand

He can remember what it felt like to lay his head on Jesus chest

The words of Jesus are still fresh in his memory

So he begins his letter - What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked at and touched with our hands

It is not by accident that John begins his letter this way

These phonies are telling you they have secret knowledge

Let me tell you this

I touched Him - I lay my head on His chest - I experienced Him

I am not just telling you what I have learned in the dark

I am telling you what I personally experienced

I am a witness to His glory

They never even met Jesus

I was the disciple who Jesus loved

Several years ago in preparation for a Christian radio program

An interviewer went onto the streets of a city and asked the question

What is Christianity?

Some called Christianity the “American way of life”

Some said it was an “organization” – or an “ethic”

One man called Christianity - a tool used by capitalism to suppress the poor

When the interviewer asked – Who is Jesus Christ

The answers got even more interesting

He was called a “pure source of energy” – “a good man” – “our leader”

But most replied – “I’m not sure” or “I just don’t know”  
The problem faced by the interviewer some 30 years ago  
Is the same problem faced by John some 1900 years ago  
The answer to the question “who is Jesus” means everything  
Although in John’s case the people to whom he was writing was the church  
The church was founded upon the teaching of the apostles  
But in time strange teaching began to creep in  
Heresies were introduced  
Into young fervent but not very knowledgeable groups  
So their initial understanding became shaky  
And many born again believers found themselves asking  
What is Christianity – Who is Jesus Christ  
These were intense and fundamental questions of the faith  
Who are we – what is the truth  
Who is right – the old teachers or these new ones  
John begins his defense of apostolic teachings  
By presenting five certainties about the person and work of Christ

Whom he calls the Word of life

**First John tells us the Word of Life is  
unchangeable**

**Verse 1 - What was from the beginning**

**The message of redemption is unchanging**

It hasn’t changed in 2000 years

It will never change because it can never change

# **You see the message of redemption is the message of Jesus Christ**

Leave Him out and all you have is a social club or a political group

Everything about Christianity centers on Jesus Christ and it won't change

# **Because Christianity is Jesus Christ and He doesn't change**

From the beginning of time Jesus Christ was is and always will be

The society we live in doesn't believe in absolutes

It has chosen to grant equal authority to every opinion - every philosophy

The church in America has been influenced by the culture

There is a new movement which states

That no one can know for sure what the Bible means

So anyone preaching from the Bible

Should offer a cautious humble open-minded opinion

But to state that the meaning of Scripture is unknowable

Is to attack the Author of Scripture

It is accusing God of being unable to make Himself clear

The result of such teaching is the loss of meaning and clarity in the Word

It causes all forms of unbiblical messages to come from the pulpit

Spoken of course in the name of Jesus

If you cannot know the truth any message will do

In opposition to that mindset

The writers of Scripture were absolutely certain about what they believed

They were there in the beginning

The apostles knew Jesus personally and were convinced of the truth

Inspired by the Holy Spirit they wrote with clarity and boldness

# **You can know that the message of salvation is clearly understandable**

And those who deny the Bible's clarity are almost always motivated

By rebellion against its clear teachings on sin and righteousness

Denying the Bible can be understood gives comfort to those

Who enjoy their sin and don't want to change

But the message of redemption is clear and it is unchanging

**From the beginning the way of salvation has been the same**

It hasn't changed with the times or kept up with social mores

**The Gospel has always commanded faith and repentance**

False teachings threatened the church in John's day just as they do today

The Bible suggests that there will be more of them

And as we get closer to the Lord's return

They will lead even more believers astray

Gnosticism was attacking the church John so loved

They denied the deity of Jesus

They claimed transcendent knowledge of the divine that came from outside of apostolic authority

Any alteration of divine truth as given us by the apostles

Whether adding to it or taking away from it

Constitutes an attack on truth and an attack against Jesus

**Any teacher in any age who changes the message of the cross**

**For any reason – even to make it more marketable or acceptable**

**Has become a false teacher**

Some churches today like to leave out that word – repentance

After all sin is such a nasty word – so let's not deal with it

Paul writing to churches in Galatia

I am amazed that you are so soon deserting Him for a different Gospel. Even if I, or an angel from heaven should preach to you a Gospel contrary to what we have preached, he is to be accursed

A different Gospel was being offered so with a simple opening statement

# **John establishes that the Gospel message is permanent and unalterable**

## **The Word of life is unchangeable and the Word of Life is historical**

Vss 1-2 What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life

I cannot read these verses without getting chills

We heard Him speak – and no man spoke like this Man

We looked at Him - we saw Him in action

We physically touched Him

Jesus wasn't raised from the dead spiritually

He was raised from the dead physically

He ate bread and fish – He told Thomas to touch His wounds

No matter what these new teachers say – John knew the truth

He lived with Jesus for three years – he ate with Him – He spoke to Him

He watched in wonder as miracle after miracle was performed

And regardless of what modern theologians tell us

Experiencing Jesus is not a mystical transcendent experience

## **Jesus was a real man who lived during a certain period of time**

God came and lived with us so that he could make Himself known to us

He was envied and despised by the religious leaders of His day

So they had the Roman authorities crucify Him

He was tortured and then died a cruel death on the cross

Was buried – hastily thrown into a tomb so the Sabbath wouldn't be violated

But that wasn't His end – it was more like the end of the beginning

For after three days in a tomb He physically arose from the dead

**Jesus resurrection proved that He was who He said He was**

**And accomplished what He came to accomplish**

Jesus life – His words activities even His death and resurrection  
Was preplanned by God as the payment for our sins  
And John states - I was there

## **The Gospel the apostles proclaimed is the only Gospel**

They were there in space time history and saw and heard and touched Jesus  
They know – they have stated it – don't wander from this teaching  
Now you don't have to have secret knowledge – there is no such thing  
We sometimes try to make the Good News of Jesus too sophisticated  
But salvation isn't complex

## **Even children can comprehend the historical truth about Jesus**

## **Repent of their sins and be saved**

In the Gospel account of the life of Jesus - John wrote  
We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth

## **Jesus Christ was the God-man – fully divine and yet fully human**

John didn't meet Jesus in a vision  
He had experienced Him through his natural senses  
No one told Him about Jesus - he was a true witness of the incarnation  
He was a witness of the resurrection  
John lists three ways he experienced the Word of Life

## **John heard the Lord speak**

He heard the parables – he was there at the Sermon on the Mount  
And perhaps more importantly John received private words of instruction  
The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus would talk in parables to the crowd

And then privately tell His disciples what they meant  
Although he is writing some 60 years later  
What he heard firsthand was still a vivid memory to him  
Not only had he heard Him **John had seen the Lord**  
For three years John had followed Jesus and witnessed His miracles  
He had seen Him on the Mount of Transfiguration  
John stresses that he had seen with his eyes  
He was not talking about a vision – not some spiritual discerning  
He saw the Lord  
He watched as the sick were healed the blind given sight  
He was there when Lazarus was raised from the dead

**He was a constant eyewitness to Jesus' earthly ministry**

**John had seen ample proof to know that Jesus was God in human flesh**

**Finally John tells us that he touched Jesus with his hands**

The Greek word used for touch is the same word Jesus used  
When He told His disciples to touch Him after the resurrection  
John physically handled Jesus  
With the incarnation of Jesus the Word of Life was manifested  
The verb translated manifested means revealed  
Or to make visible that which was hidden  
No man has seen God at any time

**But God revealed Himself in human flesh in Jesus**

Philip said show us the Father and we will believe

Jesus responded – **when you have seen Me you've seen the Father**

John was there – he saw – he touched – he heard and he knows

## **Eternal Spirit God came in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ**

The Word of Life is unchangeable – the Word of Life is historical

### **The Word of Life is communicable**

Vs 2-3 And we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us, what we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you also

### **What John heard and saw and touched became his basis**

#### **For telling others about the Christ**

The three years he spent with Jesus was not just a private experience

The privilege he had of being in the presence of the Lord

Became the basis for the knowledge he now shares with others

## **You see with privilege come responsibility**

### **Let me put it this way - With the privilege of knowing Christ**

#### **Comes the responsibility to tell others about Him**

And that wasn't just true for John 2000 years ago

It's true today for you and me

The apostle John knew that

### **Communicating the Gospel isn't just a good idea – it's a command**

John Stott – The historical manifestation of eternal life is to be proclaimed, not monopolized. The revelation is given to the few for the many.

## **The Word of Life unchangeable it is historical it is communicable**

## **The Word of Life is relational**

Verse 3 – That you also might have fellowship with us, and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ

The word translated fellowship means “an authentic partnership”

It isn't just sitting around the dinner table enjoying each other's company

We proclaim the Gospel to bring others into partnership with the Father and the Son and with us

Having that right relationship they become members of the family of God

Paul writing to the Ephesians – **There is one body and one Spirit, one hope or your calling; one Lord one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all**

## **Every believer is part of the church universal**

We are one big forever family

And God's intent is that we have fellowship

Or partnership with Him and with one with another

The church – the body of Christ runs much deeper than a social club

God has invested Himself in us

**And real fellowship is caused by the mutual life and love**

**Of those who are one in Spirit**

The goal of Gospel preaching it to produce a faith that rests in Jesus

**Those with saving faith enter into a genuine union**

## **With the Father the Son the Holy Spirit and with the church universal**

An unbreakable bond

**Through sin you may lose the joy of your fellowship with God**

**You will never lose the reality of eternal life from Him**

Jesus said – He who hears My words and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life

The new birth produces life and those born again

Are born again into an everlasting fellowship

Or partnership with the triune God

The Word of Life is unchangeable – the Word of Life is historical

The Word of Life is communicable it is relational and finally

# **The Word of Life is joyful**

## **Verse 4 – These things we write so that our joy may be made complete**

Because it is transforming truth

## **The Gospel brings joy produces satisfaction and gives fulfillment**

### **That can never be lost**

Jesus told His disciples – **These things I have told you so that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full**

Paul to the Romans – **the kingdom of God is righteousness joy and peace**

Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote – Joy is something quite peculiar, which cannot be explained. It is a quality that belongs to the Christian life in its essence. It comes to this; the only thing that can give me true joy is the contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfies my mind, He satisfies my emotions, He satisfies my every desire.

Now you may say I am a Christian and I have no joy

First don't confuse happiness and joy

## **Happiness is situational and is prompted by external circumstances**

Get a promotion – ace a hard test – your husband buys you jewelry

Your boyfriend asks you to marry him – all that brings happiness

Suddenly your circumstances change

Your boss tells you he made a mistake – it isn't your promotion after all

It turns out every one aced the test – the jewelry is a cubic zirconium

Your new fiancé is already married

What happens to the happiness – it is replaced by something far less

## **Joy is unconditional and is internal**

It is a byproduct of Jesus Christ living His life through you

And you can have it regardless of your circumstances

## **Joy comes when Christ is truly Lord of every aspect of your life**

So if you are a Christian and do not have joy

Then you are not really living the Christian life

Now I am not saying you are unsaved

Nor am I saying that

Regardless of what is occurring in your life

You ought to be smiling all the time

Joy is a mindset and if you don't have joy

You are missing one of the great privileges of being a child of God

You should have a settled peace within you

**That Christ is in control and nothing comes into your life**

**Without the permission of a loving God who has only your best interest in His heart**

Quite often God uses the hard things in our lives

To accomplish His greatest good

That is why Peter can write – **Count it all joy my brothers when you encounter various trials**

Of course Paul adds – **Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice**

How often are you to rejoice – always –

Regardless of the circumstances you are encountering

When Christ is Lord you can do that if He is not you cannot

And if He's not Lord of everything then He is not Lord at all

John wanted his readers to know the joy of the Lord

John wanted to make clear just what Christianity is about

Today people call themselves Christians for any number of reasons

Some believe they are Christians because they were born in the U S

At one time some 80% of Americans identified themselves as Christian

But most weren't

Some call themselves Christian because their parents were Christian

Or they go to church or they believe the Bible to be true

Or they do nice things for others

None of these are in and of themselves Christian

Christianity began with God's revealing of Himself in the Person of Jesus

And it continues today

By the authoritative testimony of the apostles who were witness to that revelation

John wants us to know that **Christianity is Jesus Christ**

It is not moral teachings or ethical behavior

It isn't secret knowledge given only to a chosen few – it is Jesus

As Malcolm Muggeridge wrote – Christianity is Christ or it is nothing

Paul to the Ephesians – **You are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone**

That's the church – that is you