

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 27TH-28TH, 2019 // BOOK OF 1 JOHN

A LITTLE ABOUT 1 JOHN

This letter was sent to the church in Ephesus (western Turkey) and circulated throughout Asia Minor. Written either 60-65 A.D. or 80-90 A.D. to encourage believers to be strong in their faith. Uses imagery of light and darkness, talks a lot of God's love, and instructs us to obey Jesus' commands.

A LITTLE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- John was one of the original 12 disciples of Christ and wrote 5 books of the NT.
- He was formerly a follower of John the Baptist and was nicknamed one of the "Sons of Thunder" along with his brother James.
- Was the only disciple at the foot of the cross.
- Also called the "Apostle of Love."

A LITTLE ABOUT EPHEBUS

Ephesus was the capital city of Asia Minor. Though a small population (about 3000 people), it was extremely influential because of trade in the Roman Empire. Also a very wealthy, intelligent, and pagan area that held the Temple of Diana, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.

REAL (1 JOHN 1:1-4)

THE SETUP

John opens up with a prologue about Jesus and what he has "seen with [his] eyes" and "touched with [his] own hands, concerning the word of life."

- Because several decades had passed since the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, false teachers had arisen suggesting things like Jesus was never a physical man.

JOHN MET THE BAD THEOLOGY HEAD ON

John lived and traveled with Christ for 3 ½ years and literally touched the body of God. False teachers who had never known the physical Christ were spreading speculations that were not the true gospel.

- **How often do people say "I think..." vs. "The Word says..."? We must rely on the Bible for our theology.**

THE TRUTH WAS "REVEALED"

The identity of Jesus is the key. John says that "life" was revealed in Who Jesus is, the coequal of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

- Like John's culture, **we have made Jesus into an image that we can put into a box and make us comfortable. The distortion of Jesus' identity is a salvation issue.**

"...SO THAT OUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE."

One of the biggest reasons John wrote these letters was because knowing Who Jesus truly is brings "complete" joy. Also, John finds joy in knowing that others are saved by Christ.

- **There is a contentment that can only come from God. We may find happiness in other things, but it is fleeting.**

LIGHT & DARK (1 JOHN 1:5-2:2)

"...THE MESSAGE WE HAVE HEARD FROM HIM"

John makes a lot of references to darkness and light in his writings (Jn 8, 9, 12). Since God is light and there is no darkness in Him, no one can claim to follow Christ and also live in "darkness."

- Simply put, **living in sin and claiming to be a Christian is incompatible. We will "know a tree by its fruit."**

THINGS CHANGE WHEN WE WALK IN THE LIGHT

The first thing John mentions is that living in fellowship with Christ changes how we treat others. **In the 4th chapter John says that it is impossible to love a God we cannot see if we can't love people we can see.**

LIVING IN THE LIGHT ALSO CHANGES OUR ACTIONS

V7 says, "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." This suggests not just initial forgiveness, but a progressive and continual change into more of the image of Christ.

- **This means that true conversion produces a noticeable change in how we think and act. We should always be evolving (being sanctified).**

WE MUST KNOW WHAT SIN IS

When we say "we have no sin" we are "deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We must not only know what the Bible calls sin, but be ready to confess it and let God "cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- **Pleading ignorance isn't sufficient when we have the Word that clearly defines sin and calls for repentance.**

WE WILL MAKE MISTAKES, BUT WE HAVE HELP

John makes it clear that he wants the reader to move far from sin, but when they do mess up, they can go back to Christ for forgiveness and help.

- We tend to take this to extremes. Either we **teach instantaneous loss of salvation, or we turn a blind eye to sinful lifestyles.**

WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL OF THIS

God knows that we are imperfect and will make mistakes, so He is gracious to forgive. **This does not excuse sin or give us a free pass to live against God's commands!**

- Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." This doesn't mean we're perfect, but that **when we fall we go back and ask His forgiveness.**

CAN WE LOSE SALVATION?

The debate on this will never be resolved, and quite frankly is a waste of time. **If one is pursuing Christ and producing Fruit of the Spirit there is no need to worry.** If one claims to follow Christ but there is no fruit, there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

OBEDIENCE (1 JOHN 2:3-6)

DIDN'T I SAY THAT EARLIER?

John gives us a simple litmus test to see who really follows Christ: they **"keep His commands."** John gets a little snappier when he says that **people who claim to know Him but don't keep His commands are liars.**

- This is not advocating perfection, but a regard for what God tells us to do. This is why **repentance is a lifestyle!**

OBEDIENCE IS A SERIOUS THING

John says that "whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is complete." He says, "This is how we know we are in Him: The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked."

- **In order to keep His Word, we must read His Word and apply it to our lives!**

"MADE COMPLETE" MEANS WE MATURE

A relationship with Christ is a lifelong journey and we are constantly changing and looking more like Him as we go.

- Hebrews 12 speaks of the Christian life in relation to running a race which requires us to **let go of excess weight (sin) and to run with perseverance until the end (death).**

LOVING OTHERS (1 JOHN 2:7-11)

A NEW / OLD COMMAND?

John says that he has a new command to teach the followers of Christ, but it is actually an old one. He means that what he is about to tell them has always been a law of God, but Christ brought even further clarity during His ministry.

- **Loving people** is found all throughout the OT and NT.

THE OLD COMMAND PERFECTLY DEMONSTRATED

The game-changing event in the idea of loving others came through Jesus' crucifixion. **Not only did God tell us to love, but He displayed the most vivid example of how far loving others can go!**

- 1Pet. 2:21 says **"Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps."**

POSSESSING THE "TRUE LIGHT"

The only way we can love others is by living in the "true light" that is "already shining." V10 says how we treat others is an example of living in the light, but if we don't love others we "walk in darkness" and "our eyes are blinded."

- **Love (agape) means a deep love that acts properly towards and desires good for others.**

IMPOSSIBLE!

- It is easy to get overwhelmed, frustrated, angry, and depressed through this life and we often say, "I cannot do it."
- That is actually correct, **we cannot make it without significant help.** Without God's Spirit in us, we are completely incapable of being what we are designed to be.
- We can't live a **committed** life without the HS encouraging and counseling us.
- We can't walk in light without **repentance and remembering the blood of Christ.**
- **We can't have fellowship with God if we neglect His commands.** This means we can't have the security, peace, or other blessings of God.
- We can't **properly love** others without God's Spirit in us.
- We must be humble and realize that without fellowship with God we can't be saved, fulfilled, properly love, and we walk in darkness. But, **when we are in a relationship with Christ, we can be everything God desires for us to be!**