

## **“The Heart of the Apostle John”: I John 1:1-4**

Over the last number of weeks we have been looking at the book of Jude and we have heard Jude’s warnings to the church in regards to those who will come and lead astray all of those who are weak in their faith. In order to combat these heresies Jude calls the church to defend the Truth of God and to build our faith upon what has been said before in Scripture, and to give God praise for what he has done, he is doing, and what he will do.

This week I want to begin a series on the Epistles of John. John’s message to the church is a message that goes hand in hand with Jude’s words, yet it takes Jude’s words and adds basic principles of living a Christian life.

The Apostle John was one of John the Baptists disciples and later became one of the 12 disciples. In fact, he was one of the three disciples who were the closest to Jesus. As any human being John had his faults. He was known to have outbursts of selfishness and anger, even at one time asking Jesus for a special position in Jesus Kingdom.

John’s relationship with Jesus had great impact on him. In spite of his faults John was able to experience the unconditional love of God. John makes reference to this fact in **John 21:20**:

*Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them – the one who had leaned over to Jesus during the supper and asked, “Lord, who among us will betray you?”*

Yet, Jesus’ love for John motivated him to become a spokesperson for the love of God. John had caught Jesus’ heart for people and now writes these three Epistles so that people would not miss out on God’s love for them. Love is the most powerful motivation in the world. It breaks down barriers, it welds friends together. And it has also been known to be a weapon by which no one can defend themselves from.

God’s love for John stirred him to help others experience the same relationship he had with Jesus.

### **I. John’s purposes in writing his first Epistle**

#### **1. So that your joy may be full (complete) **I John 1:4****

In **John 15:9-11** Jesus said:

*“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey me, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father and remain in his love. I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy.”*

There is a connection between love and joy. Not only are they part of the fruits of the Spirit but joy seems to be love's result. There is no greater feeling than that of being loved or valued. It lets us know that we matter and that we have a place within this grand creation. We aren't just another number or face, but one who has logic, personality, influence, and value.

2. So that you will not sin. I John 2:1

John writes Jesus words in John 8:34-35:

*Jesus replied, "I assure you that everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever."*

Sin has a way of enslaving us, controlling us, dominating us, and dictating our actions. It leaves no room for God and a loving relationship with him. It steals God's best from us and it severs us off from a loving relationship with God to that of judgement.

John understood the importance of not allowing anything to come between the relationship that he valued so greatly. Yet, not only did it hurt us but hurts and disappoints our Father in heaven. A relationship is when two parties exchange love and concern, not when one dominates and dictates to everyone their desires.

3. So that you may know you have eternal life. I John 5:13

John tells us in John 20:31 that the events that he has recorded in his Gospel were written so that we would believe in Jesus and that by believing in him we may find eternal life. John understood the value of the gift of life. Because there was a relationship in place, he knew that eternal life was another expression of God's love to us.

But John's Epistles were not only to encourage the church but also to warn them. I John 2:26 says:

*I have written these things to you because you need to be aware of those who want to lead you astray.*

John was writing to various Gentile congregations and of course he was writing to the church in general. Yet, the Gentiles seemed to be influenced by many outside forms of belief, and John wanted them not to mix Christianity with any other train of thought. Also, during this time Gnosticism was becoming wide spread. The Gnostics believed in:

- a. The superiority of knowledge over scripture
- b. That only few can understand the Scriptures

- c. That all matter is evil therefore God did not create or have anything to do with the material universe
- d. God cannot become flesh in fact he seemed to be physical and therefore could not resurrect from the flesh
- e. Jesus was a physical being, but Christ came upon him at his baptism and left before his death.

Gnosticism was attacking all that the Scriptures taught. In fact, it devalued the work and love of God. As we study the Epistles of John we will find that he addresses these false teachings.

John wanted mankind to experience the same unconditional love that he was able to experience. He didn't want men to be ripped off from the blessing of faith in Christ.

The background of who John was, what influenced his life, and his heart will give us insight as we begin to look at I John. **I John 1:1-4**

*The one who existed from the beginning is the one we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is Jesus Christ, the Word of Life. This one who is life from God was shown to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and announce to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was shown to us. We are telling you about 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. We are writing these things to so that our joy will be complete.*

#### **I. Jesus is both God and Man. (vs.1-2)**

The first thing I want us to notice is that John makes 9 references to the physical existence of Jesus Christ. He states that he has seen, heard, and touched Jesus. The fact that Jesus became a physical human being is crucial to the idea of salvation. In order to be a representative of mankind he had to become a man, having a physical body that was able to die (Spirit cannot die and neither can God). And in order to be a mediator with God he had to be God himself.

If Jesus was not a man then his ability to conquer death and the grave would damage the concept of our receiving eternal life. And if Jesus was not God then his ability to pay the proper price for our sin would be in question.

John wants to make it very clear that Jesus was a man who conquered death and the grave thus proving his deity to mankind. **John 1:1, 14**

*In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God.*

*So the Word became a human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.*

John is telling us that he has seen the proof. There is not question as to the validity of Jesus Christ and his origin. And because of Jesus' death and resurrection we can be assured that eternal life is available. **I John 5:11-13** says

*And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life. I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.*

Eternal life is a reality. It is something that we will experience. Yet, just as eternal life is reality, so is eternal death. Those who refuse to believe in Christ will find out this truth.

## **II. Become Partners (vs. 3)**

The Scriptures here use the term fellowship, which comes from the Greek word "Koinonia" which means "to partner with, to participate with, to become a companion, to have something in common." John lays out the facts of what he has seen for himself in hopes that we would believe what he has to say and become a partner with him in the benefits of Christ. That his belief and faith would stir our belief and faith.

But he continues and states his hope that we would become partners with Christ. When one believes in God there is a spiritual union that takes place. We find a picture of this in **John 15:1-5**:

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned for greater fruitfulness, by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*

We are to remain in him and he will remain in us. A fellowship between God and man, yet a relationship of eternal blessing.

John wants us to experience the same deep, intimate, and reliant relationship that he has experienced with Jesus Christ. He doesn't want us to miss out on this vital relationship. Why? Look at verse. 4