



Sermon Title: I John 1:1-10

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. What gives you 'joy'?
2. For what purpose do you usually 'write' something to someone: a text? Email? Letter?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Take time to look at who the Apostle John was. Find a timeline of his life. What other books did he write in the New Testament? What makes his writing trustworthy?
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-John-the-Apostle>
2. To whom is John addressing this Letter? (2:1, 18; 3:21; check out a study reference for more information.)
Review why he wrote to them. (Check out the four reasons; see summary)
Paraphrase what John is saying in I John 5:13.
What makes people uncertain of 'eternal life' today?
3. Pastor Henry said, 'Many people think that Christianity is all about learning truths and believing truths about God.'
What expressions do John 1:1,14; I John 1:1-3; 1 Cor 15:3-8 and 2 Peter 1:16 have that show 'true' Christianity is much more than a belief system?
4. Pastor Henry said, "Truth is not just something we know but also, truth is something we do and live." How does his statement reflect the difference between the phrases 'walk in the darkness' (1:6) and 'walk in the light' (1:7)? See Ephesians 5:8-10. Give some practical examples.

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Read Matthew 5:6. On a scale of 1 – 6 (1=less; 6=more), how hungry or thirsty are you for 'righteousness' (righteousness=Christ; 1 John 2:1)
2. How can you live that out this week?
3. How can the Group pray for you?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

(This week's writers: Edi Dygert, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Georgia Harrison.)

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

John 1:1,14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

2 Peter 1:16

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

1 John 1:10

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, ¹⁰whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. ²This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. ³We proclaim to you 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. ⁴We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy. ⁵This is the message we heard from Jesus ⁵and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. ⁶So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.



John the Apostle wrote the letters (epistles) of 1, 2 & 3 John; he also wrote the gospel of John and Revelation – all inspired by the Holy Spirit. John was the last surviving apostle and now in his 90's. He had spent most of his later years in Ephesus, providing leadership to the churches in Asia Minor and Ephesus, until he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he died. John gives 4 reasons for writing this letter to the church of believers. **#1)** We write this to make our joy complete, **1 John 1:4.** **#2)** I write this to you so that you will not sin, **1 John 2:1.** **#3)** I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray, **1 John 2:26.** **4)** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life. **1 John 5:13.**

John wrote this letter between 40 and 50 years after the death and resurrection of Christ. False teachings were already creating confusion and causing some believers to wonder what it meant to be a Christian; how they could be certain that they were true Christians. John says that if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, are trusting what He has accomplished by His grace on the cross, are cultivating a growing relationship and friendship with Him by living in daily humble dependence as you follow Him, then you can know that you have eternal life. Not because you live a perfect life, but because you put your trust in Jesus who is perfect and righteous. John wants us to have a full understanding of God's grace, the gospel and what it means to be true follower of Christ; and that we are neither deceived into a life of religious legalism nor a life of unbridled license. John gives us 3 tests that reveal whether or not a person is truly a Christ-follower: **Test #1:** What do you believe about Christ? **Test #2:** How are you living like Christ? **Test #3:** How are you loving like Christ?

The crux of John's answer to these questions is this: while what you **believe** about Jesus and the way to eternal life is important, believing in Jesus in only a part of what it means to be a Christian. An even greater part is to know Jesus personally while living and loving like Jesus on a daily basis. With this overview in mind, John begins with the first test: believing in Christ. Most people that John wrote to had not heard nor seen Jesus in the flesh; they were getting their information second-hand from those who had. Consequently, false teachers were infiltrating the church, some questioning the humanity of Jesus, others that He was God. We have similar skeptics today. John's letter clearly states the Jesus was who He claimed to be. "We, the other apostles and hundreds of believers who had encountered Christ in the flesh, want you to know Jesus was real: we heard him teach, saw the miracles, touched his body, saw him bleed and nailed to the cross," **1 John 1:1-3.** The Apostle Peter says, "we were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty." **2 Peter 1:16.** In addition to the eyewitness accounts of all 4 gospels, various secular historians wrote about Christ, including Josephus and Tacitus. The narrative and content of the gospels is also compelling evidence for their veracity. As Tim Keller points out, if the Gospels were 'made up', why would they tell of the crucifixion – a shameful penalty for criminals; or show the agony of Jesus crying that God had abandoned him, and thereby create doubt about his deity or ability to save people from their sins; or present the early leaders and disciples as petty, jealous, egotistical and self-centered? Most of the apostles were martyred - would they have died for a lie? Others have suggested that myths over time were added to embellish the biblical account. But Paul's letters, providing a summary of Jesus' life including miracles and other claims, were written between 15 -25 years after Christ's death and resurrection. 1 Corinthians, widely accepted as being written no later than 56 AD, includes a formal creed and a detailed list of eyewitnesses – many were still alive to refute anything wrong or made up. Many believe that Paul received this creed from Peter and James about 3 years after he became a follower of Christ, which would have been about 5 years after Christ's resurrection. This creed would have been memorized and passed on to the early believers, customary when paper or papyrus was scarce.

The Apostle John confirms by His eyewitness account that then and now 'we' can experience Jesus and have a relationship with Him because He was both human and fully God, the Word of Life, eternal life, **1 John 1:1-5 & John 1:1**, essentially saying: Jesus is God, He is alive, He is life, and He is my life. Believing honey is sweet is profoundly different from tasting the honey. (**Psalm 34:8**) Learning and believing truths about God is part of Christianity; knowing and experiencing Jesus is life itself. We can tell you what we have seen and heard, but not until we have a relationship with Him are we also united in relationship to one another, **1 John 1:3.** John writes the way he does so that our joy will be complete, **1 John 1:4.** (Reason 1 & Test 1) The second test of true follower of Christ is living like Jesus. Becoming a Christ-follower changes your beliefs and your behaviours, **1 John 1:5.** Light reveals things as they are: when the light is turned on, you are no longer ignorant of what you cannot see in the dark. God created light. Light symbolizes truth: righteousness, purity & goodness; darkness symbolizes ignorance and error: sin & rebellion. God reveals the truth, **Psalm 119:105, Ephesians 5:8.** God is light, there is no darkness in Him; the evil in this world does not come from Him. If you claim you believe in Jesus but are not living and behaving in the way Jesus would, then, says John – you lie and do not live the truth. Truth is not just something we know; truth is something we do, it is something we live. Sadly, Barna research tells us lack of generosity, alcohol abuse, use of porn, marital unfaithfulness (among a host of other sins) by people who say they put their trust in Christ, having lifestyles and behaviours that look very similar to people who make no claim of fellowship with Christ. True Christians don't just believe their faith – they live their faith. How would that look like practically? Dallas Willard offers the following: instead of asking, "What would Jesus do?" we should ask, "What would Jesus do – if He were me?" As the owner of my company, how would He treat his employees and clients, handle His profits? As an employee, would he do just the minimum required? As a parent, what time and attention would he give to his kids; pray with them or scream at them? If Jesus were a husband what kind of husband would he be, treasuring his wife, or taking her granted, giving her the silent treatment? John is saying that being a Christian is not just a matter of believing what Jesus said, it is a matter of living like Jesus lived.

Two reminders here. **First**, this is between you and God – we are to examine ourselves, not point fingers or pass judgment on others. **Secondly**, John is not talking about perfection. He is talking about the direction of your life and heart, the commitment to growing daily in Christ. Do you have a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness? **Matt 5:6 and 1 John 2:1.** John says that Jesus blesses and satisfies those who hunger and thirst for righteousness - for Him, Jesus, the Righteous One. We are made eternally righteous when we put our trust in Jesus. If we continue by faith to hunger and thirst to know and follow Jesus, we will be transformed into the image of, and empowered by, Jesus. We will increasingly reflect the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness & goodness, the faithfulness, gentleness and self-control of Jesus. If we want all Jesus has for us, we must give him all of us. As Billy Graham said, 'When we come to the end of ourselves and our abilities, we come to the beginning of God in our lives.'