

Concerning the Word of Life

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to 1 John. Pastor Colin will be starting his series on 1 John tonight. And tonight we're going to read verses 1 through 4 of chapter 1.

1 John chapter 1, verses 1 to 4. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life.

The life appeared. We have seen it and testified to it. And we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

We write this to you. We write this to make our joy complete. Let's hear His word preached. I want to begin by just saying, on behalf of my family, how thankful we are to be with you all.

[1 : 18] How grateful to the Lord we are that He has brought us to Grace Fellowship. It is a joy to be with you tonight. Even in preparing this sermon, I was overflowing with gratitude to God for our fellowship in this body that we have together.

So, thanks be to God that He brought us here. My family and I are just giving Him thanks tonight. Thanks for having us, brother. Amen. Well, in life, we need clarity.

We need clarity. Some of us, depending on when you arrived, drove here in the rain. And we often don't think about our windshield wipers until it rains.

It's a sunny day. It's nice outside. You can see through your windshield just fine. And then it starts raining. And that's when you remember your windshield wiper is broken on your driver's side.

And suddenly now you've hit a crisis. As much as you stick your head out the window to look, as much as you're craning your neck, as much as you might have that towel that you brought along thinking, somehow I could just wipe off the windshield and it will work, you can't see.

[2 : 26] It is blurry. Your vision is obstructed by all of that rain. But then the sun comes back out. And it dries. And you can see.

Because when it rains and you have a broken windshield wiper, you know, I need clarity. All kinds of times in life that we need clarity. Here's something else that we need to be clear on.

The essentials of our faith. We need to be clear on what we believe. What does it mean to be a Christian? What is it that we believe and know and understand to be true?

And what is it that we then proclaim to others? We need clarity on those matters. We live in a confusing world.

In part, because there is so much information that is available to us. We talked to some of that even in Sunday school this morning with social media.

[3 : 25] We can read. We can read. We can watch. We can listen to so much content. And so much of that content, it's meant to influence us. It's meant to impact and change the way we think, what we believe, what we understand to be right or true.

And so it can be overwhelming. It can be paralyzing. It can shake our confidence. It can shake our convictions. We can get mixed up in our heads.

We can become foggy about, what is it that I believe and why do I believe that? We become uncertain, confused. It's like trying to drive in the rain with broken windshield wipers.

This cripples our Christian life. So clarity, clarity is crucial. And the book of 1 John provides us with much clarity.

And so we are going to begin a sermon series, Lord willing, walking passage by passage through the book of 1 John. And the hope is that we will see clearly in all of this book, what is it again that means we're Christians?

[4 : 38] What do we hold to? What do we cling to? And what do we proclaim to others? Every book of the Bible was written by human authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

What does 2 Peter 1.21 say? Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. So every book ultimately authored by God himself, but he used men.

He used men with all of their personalities, with their unique writing styles. He used them to communicate truth to us. So every book of the Bible reads a little bit differently.

Some biblical authors write with great eloquence. Think Paul. Some write with great intellect. Think perhaps the author of Hebrews. John writes to us, and the emphasis we could draw is with great clarity.

Short statements. John gives us short statements that get straight to the point. Simple illustrations that stick. God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.

[5 : 49] Don't overcomplicate it. Don't overexplain it. John says, here is what we believe. Know it. Take it to heart. Live in obedience to it. And then proclaim it to others with clarity.

So let's be clear. Let's be clear for our own good, and let's be clear for the good of others. Let's be clear about what we believe. So tonight, John will give us in these first four verses, he'll give us four truths that we need to be absolutely clear on.

There's no room for uncertainty here. We can't be fuzzy about these truths. We can't straddle the fence on them. We can't have any ambiguity about them. Four truths about the person and work of Jesus Christ that we must have clarity about.

So truth number one, Jesus is the eternal Son. Jesus is the eternal Son.

We're going to see here how John opens up his letter. Now we know and can have strong conviction that the Apostle John wrote this letter.

[6 : 58] All through church history, that has been the understanding. John the Apostle wrote this letter. That is the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple who also wrote the gospel account that we have in our Bibles.

This is the disciple who reclined at Jesus' side at the Last Supper. This is the disciple, one of those who witnessed his crucifixion. This is the disciple who was entrusted with caring for Jesus' mother by Jesus when Jesus hung from the cross.

He found the empty tomb with Peter. He ate breakfast with Jesus after Jesus' resurrection on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias. This is the John that we have come to know as the one who wrote this letter.

But John doesn't do the normal introduction here. He doesn't identify himself as an apostle. In fact, he doesn't identify himself at all. He doesn't greet his readers.

He doesn't give any kind of blessing of grace and peace like someone like Paul would often do. John just launches in. No warm-up shots. No stretching.

[8 : 08] No light jogging. Let's write a letter. Verse 1. So, we've had this read once already and we've seen that there's a lot of pronouns here in these opening verses.

And we need to sift through them a bit. These pronouns, they're all pointing to the end of verse 1. That should ring familiar to us.

The word of life. John's gospel account begins in a very similar way. John 1.1 reads, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. So, who is this Word? Who is this Word of life? It's Jesus Christ. It's the Eternal Son.

It is the second person of the Triune God, who was from the beginning. That phrase emphasizes His eternal nature. He was from the beginning in that He existed before all things.

[9 : 19] And in the beginning, He brought all things into existence. Colossians 1.16 teaches us, For by Him, Jesus, all things were created. In heaven and on earth.

Visible and invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. So, the preexistent Christ brought all things into existence.

He was from the beginning. And He was from the beginning in relationship to the other persons of the Trinity. We see that near the end of verse 2.

Which was with the Father. So, the Eternal Son was in perfect relationship with God the Father. He was in perfect relationship with God the Spirit.

From before time began. They were existing in perfect harmony. They were delighting in and enjoying each other. God the Son was with God the Father.

[10:20] John teaches us that. And now the Son, the Son comes to us as the Word of life. The Eternal Son sent by the Father.

He's the Word. He comes with message. He comes to bear witness to what the Father says. So, we see here that John, he is bearing witness to us.

And John is saying, here is the message from the Son. He bears witness to us. But then we also are seeing here that the Son bears witness saying, this is what the Father has sent me to say. I speak from Him. The divine, life-giving Word has come. The Eternal Son sent from the Father. So, we must be clear.

We must be clear. As simple as this sounds, we must remember, Jesus is God. He is divine. He is the Word of life. He is the eternal life.

[11:22] He possesses life within Himself. No. John actually finishes his letter much like he began it. He says in chapter 5, verse 20, speaking of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 5, verse 20, he says, He is the true God and eternal life. So, we must be clear. Jesus is God. A truth that is essential to our faith, but also a truth that is not warmly welcomed by all people. The natural man scoffs at the idea that Jesus is God. Perhaps a good man. Perhaps a skilled teacher. Perhaps a prophet sent by God.

But certainly not God Himself. To the natural man in his sinful state, that's a ridiculous idea. But to the Christian, to you and I who are in Christ, this is an essential truth.

Jesus is God. The Word of life. That which was from the beginning. The eternal life. That which was with the Father. Jesus is the eternal Son.

[12:34] So, that's the first truth that we must be clear on. Here's the second truth. The eternal Son took on flesh. The eternal Son took on flesh.

Verse 1 again. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands concerning the Word of life.

So, the eternal God. He who is so far above us. The transcendent One. He drew near. He became imminent. He came close to us.

He became a man. That which was from the beginning. The preexistent One that we just saw. The God who is invisible could now be seen with human eyes.

He could now be looked upon. He could be touched by human hands. The life was made manifest. He who was with the Father came to us.

[13:33] God appeared. He who is eternal entered into time. He entered into history. Jesus Christ is the true God who truly became a flesh and blood human being.

This too is so important for us to have clarity about. Our faith rests upon a person. Our faith doesn't rest on an idea. It doesn't rest on a warm, fuzzy feeling.

It doesn't rest on an experience that we've had. Our faith isn't founded upon a set of principles to live by. It's not one of many human philosophies for how to live a good life.

Our faith is founded upon a real person who lived a sinless life, obediently went to the cross and died, rose again, ascended to heaven and is reigning there, interceding on behalf of his people right now.

Our faith rests upon a person, the God-man, Jesus Christ. So to be a Christian is to confess Christ and him crucified. Our faith is rooted in a real historical person who is the true God and eternal life.

[14:47] Now John was an eyewitness. That's his argument here beginning his letter. I was there. He's telling us on behalf of all of the apostles, we were there.

We saw him. We touched him. God revealed himself by becoming a sinless man. We witnessed his life. We witnessed his death. We witnessed his resurrection.

We witnessed his ascension. I was there. I'm testifying to you. This is like John is giving a deposition and he is saying, put this down as on the record.

This is evidence. The Word took on flesh. This is the incarnation. And I've seen him. I'm proclaiming this to you. And to be sure that you get what I'm saying, John says, I'm going to repeat this three times in these four verses.

Verse 1, we have heard, we have seen with our eyes, we've looked upon, touched with our hands.

Verse 2, the life was made manifest and we have seen it. Verse 3, that which we have seen and heard, we proclaim.

[15:56] I was there, John said. I didn't just hear about Jesus. I heard him. I heard his words. I didn't just see Jesus from afar.

I touched him with my hands. And it's true. He is the eternal son. And I'm an eyewitness to the fact that he became a sinless man.

The eternal son took on flesh. And he took on flesh that he might die in the place of sinful man. So we must be clear on that truth.

Truth number three, the eternal son is the source of eternal life. The eternal son is the source of eternal life.

verse 2 says, the life was made manifest and we have seen it and testified to it and proclaimed to you the eternal life.

[16:56] John says, here is the son. He is the eternal life. The eternal son who took on flesh, he is the only one who can be the source of eternal life for fallen sinful man, for people like you and me.

He possesses life within himself. What did John say in his gospel account? John 1 verse 4, in him was life. And only he can give life to us.

Jesus made this point several times in his earthly ministry. John chapter 4, Jesus meets this woman at the well. And to help her to understand who he is, he illustrates using the very water from the well.

And he says in verse 13, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

You see the point? Only Jesus can give life. Fast forward to John chapter 10. Jesus is speaking of how he is the good shepherd. He is speaking of how he is the door, the gate to the sheepfold.

[18:13] And he is describing himself as this good shepherd and his people as weak and needy but beloved sheep. And he says, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Only Jesus can give us life. And you remember Jesus' friend Lazarus? Lazarus got sick. Jesus was slow in coming to Lazarus and so Lazarus died.

Now Jesus allowed for that to happen so that then he would bring Lazarus back from the dead serving as this picture of a future full final resurrection.

And in that account in John 11 Jesus said this, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me though he die yet he shall live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

Now Jesus said those words to Lazarus' sister Martha. And then he asked her this question. This incredibly soul penetrating question.

[19:15] A question that cut to the heart. And as we read the word the question is asked of us. And this is what he said. Do you believe this?

Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Do you believe that he is the word of life? Do you believe that only Jesus can give life to us?

Do you believe this? Do you believe in him? Jesus promises life to all who turn to him in faith. Do you know the eternal son? Are you in Christ this very evening?

Have you turned from your sins which can only condemn you? Which can only destroy you? Which can only lead to death? Have you turned from your sins and have you turned to the one who gives life and gives it abundantly?

We must have clarity about this. The eternal son is the source, the only source of eternal life. 1 John 5.11 says this.

[20:21] And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life. And this life is in his son. Whoever has the son has life.

Whoever does not have the son of God does not have life. So our salvation begins and ends with Jesus Christ. Apart from him, we have no life.

Apart from him, we remain dead in our sins, under the wrath of God, awaiting his judgment in hell. And so if you're not in Christ this evening, flee to him. Find your refuge in him.

Find salvation in him. Eternal life belongs to Christ, but he offers it to you. Are you looking for eternal life tonight? You can have it.

Turn from your sin, trust in Christ alone. And if you are in Christ this evening, if your only hope in life and death is Christ alone because of his finished work on the cross for your sins, then John's testimony is assurance.

[21:25] We're safe. We're secure. The eternal son really did take on flesh. He really did live a perfect life of obedience. He really did die on the cross for our sins.

He really rose again. John is witnessing to this good news. He's proclaiming to us this good news. The eternal son is the source of our eternal life.

He's the only source. There's no other. There's no one else to turn to. There's nowhere else to turn to. Whoever believes in Jesus, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Eternal life. Living water. Only found in the son. If you have him, you have life. We must be clear on truth number three.

That through the eternal son, we have eternal life. And truth number four. Through the eternal son, we have true fellowship. Through the eternal son, we have true fellowship.

[22 : 27] Verse three. That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ.

So John proclaims his eyewitness testimony to us. The eternal son who took on flesh is the source of our eternal life. And so, when you become a Christian, you are joined to other Christians.

Bound together by the good news that is the gospel. Christ died for us. Christ was raised for us. By faith, our sins are forgiven. We are united in this.

We have believed this good news. We're going to keep believing this good news together. We're going to keep encouraging each other and loving each other and exhorting each other and helping each other and building one another up.

We're going to bring clarity to our brothers and sisters when they're confused and despairing. And when we're confused and despairing, our brothers and sisters are going to bring that clarity to us as well.

[23 : 34] We do all of this because God saved each of us in His grace. He joined us together. We have this newfound relationship to the church.

These are indeed your brothers and sisters in Christ. We've been brought into this beautiful relationship to the church. But that's not all. Because the church is in fellowship with God Himself. The church is the people of God. He established the church. He builds His church. The church belongs to Him. And the church enjoys this sweet fellowship to God.

And so, when you become a Christian, you enjoy a newfound relationship to the church of God and you enjoy a newfound relationship to the God of the church.

No longer enemies with Him. no longer hostile toward Him. No longer at odds with Him. We have fellowship with God. He delights in us.

[24 : 39] He's glad to call us His children. And He's glad for us to call Him our Father. So we have to get this clear. We have true fellowship with one another and with God Himself through the Eternal Son who took on flesh as the source of our eternal life.

Kids, some of you have parents or maybe grandparents who wear glasses. Have you ever put on your parents or your grandparents glasses before?

I remember doing this with my dad's glasses and I thought, what is wrong with his glasses? You can't see through them. Put them on, everything goes blurry. Sometimes it's so blurry that you stumble around.

You can't walk straight because everything feels off. If you wear them long enough, you actually start to get a headache. It is a terrible experience to wear your parents' glasses.

But then you take those glasses off and you can see clearly again. You can see clearly without the glasses. Some of us need the glasses to see clearly.

[25 : 48] We need clarity in the Christian life because we live in a world that sometimes seems really blurry. So much confusion. All kinds of mixed up messages about what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil.

What should be of greatest importance in our lives and what really shouldn't be important at all. It's easy to lose focus. It's easy to feel like everything's fuzzy. It's easy to feel like you're wearing your parents' glasses or you're not wearing your glasses.

It's easy to feel disheartened and discouraged, to feel overwhelmed, confused. What do I believe about anything? These first four verses of 1 John give us clarity.

Clarity on the essentials of our faith. Jesus is the eternal Son. The eternal Son took on flesh. The eternal Son is the source of eternal life.

Through the eternal Son we have true fellowship. And when we have that clarity on those truths, here's what John says that we get.

[26 : 56] Joy. Verse 4. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

And when John says that, he doesn't mean to the exclusion of his readers. He means our joy. Our joy together in this. It's complete.

We enjoy fellowship with each other. We enjoy fellowship with God. When I let the mixed up messages of the world get in my head, I find myself more and more confused and frustrated and anxious and worried.

I find myself full of doubt and uncertainty. But when we keep these truths clear, we enjoy God. We aren't weighed down. We aren't entangled by fear and uncertainty.

Instead, we are free to confidently hold our confession to the end. My only hope is Christ, the eternal Son who is the source of my eternal life.

[28 : 06] we are free to confidently hold that confession to the end. And we're free to walk in fellowship with God and with his people with joy. Joyfully living as foreigners and exiles, strangers in this world, pilgrims journeying to our eternal home full of joy because the eternal Son took on flesh.

He's the source of our eternal life. We have fellowship with him. We have fellowship with the Father and the Spirit and we have fellowship with one another. So let's be clear on what we believe.

Let's be clear on what we confess for our good, for the good of others, for the glory of God. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do pray that by your Spirit you would give us clarity, that you would enable us to know and understand your word, to receive it joyfully and to then live according to it.

We thank you that indeed your Son has come. He came into the world. The word of life appeared, gave his life for us. Now we have eternal life through him.

We pray, Lord, that we would then live as a people who are redeemed and know it, that we would live joyfully before you and before others, not confused or mixed up in this world, but with clarity.

[29 : 42] We thank you, Father, that you gave us your word. What a privilege it is that we can read it, that we can sit under the preaching of it, that we can meditate upon it.

thank you for revealing yourself to us. Thank you for giving us your word. We pray, Father, now as we go from here that you would give us grace, give us strength, give us endurance, and keep our minds clear, focused on you.

Help us to keep perspective on what is true and what is not according to your word. We pray all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, for our closing song, we're going to sing that Christ is indeed our only hope in life and death. And so we can stand together to sing Christ our hope in life and death.

1 Timothy chapter 3. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness. He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

[30 : 54] Amen. We are dismissed.