

Talk – 1 John 1:1-4 & 2:12-17 – Word and Life

Purpose of the Series:

The Christ is Jesus – and in him you may know that you have eternal life.

Central Truth

Believers have the Word of Life: Jesus. Life with him looks different to life without.

Purpose

I want to listener to see that 1 John has a lot to say to help Christians today live confidently for Christ.

Bible Reading

1 John 1:1-4 and 1 John 2:12-17

Today's issue:

Why listen to Jesus?

Talk – 1 John 1:1-4 & 2:12-17 – Word and Life

Outline

We have *heard*...we have *seen*...we have *looked at*...our hands have *touched* – this we *proclaim*

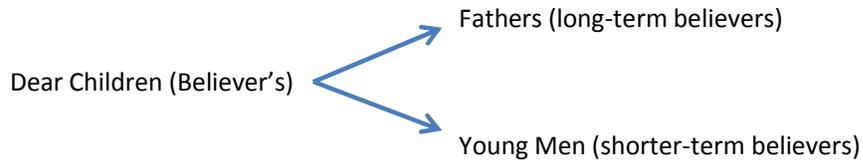
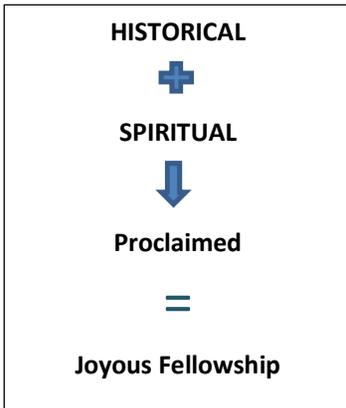
concerning the **Word of Life**.

↙
The **life** appeared – we have *seen* it...*testify* to it...we *proclaim* – **eternal life**.

We *proclaim*...what we have *seen*...and *heard* – so that

– you also may **have fellowship**

(with us, with the **Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ**).



- Believers:
- Transformed by God
 - forgiven of sin
 - know the Father
 - overcome the evil one

Why listen to Jesus?

Why speak about Jesus?

Talk – 1 John 1:1-4 & 2:12-17 – Word and Life

CHECK TIME

Talk

Imagine

*Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people living for today*

Whoo, oohh.

(‘Imagine’ Music & Lyrics John Lennon. Publisher: Downtown Music Publishing, 1971)

- When John Lennon wrote his amazing song ‘Imagine’, he proved three things:
First, that he was a gifted singer-songwriter.
Second, that opinion often sounds more attractive than fact.
And third, that Lennon, didn’t read his Bible!
- The letter of 1 John is written by the disciple John towards the end of his life. And it was written into a culture where opinion was given more credit than fact.
- Sound familiar?
- If the Gnostics of his day, could sing and write songs, then they would have been writing songs like ‘Imagine’.
- Which is why this short 5 chapter letter of 1 John will be so helpful for us to look at over the next six (or so) weeks.
- John wants people to know that the Christ is Jesus.
- And he wants people to know that believing in Jesus – is both *historically logical* and *spiritually important*.
- My aim today, is to introduce this letter to you. For some, you may know 1 John well and so it will be a reintroduction.
- I would like you to see that 1 John has a lot to say to help Christians live confidently for Christ.
- And also that 1 John has a lot to say to someone who wants to check out what it means to believe that the Christ is Jesus.
- We’re going to start with the prologue - the first four verses. And then move to Chapter 2 and consider who this letter was written too and why.

Let’s pray and ask God for help.

Talk – 1 John 1:1-4 & 2:12-17 – Word and Life

Lord and Father,

There is a message here before us which has both historical significance and spiritual importance – and it has been given so that the reader (so that we) might have fellowship with you eternally. Help us to listen. AMEN

[PAUSE – pick up the Bible]

1 John 1:1-4

*‘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’ (1:1).*

- Like he does in his gospel, John starts by talking about the Word of Life.
- For him, this word is significant.
- This word he has *heard*, he has *seen*, he has *looked at* and examined, and he has *touched*.
- And having heard, seen, looked and touched – he has decided it also needs to be *proclaimed*. Why? because this Word - is Life.
- We are not talking about a fairy tale, or a novel, a beautiful song, or wonderfully written poem – John is saying that after clear examination, this word is something that needs to be told so that others might also come to see its life value.
- In fact, this Word, this message of life – is more than words on a page. In verse 2, John says this word was with God the Father, and then appeared, and was seen by John and the other disciples – such that they could testify to it and proclaim it to others.
- In two very full verses, without mentioning his name, John introduces Jesus - the Word of Life. One who was *historically present* such that anyone who could see, hear or feel would know he was real. And one who was *spiritually significant* because this word brought eternal life.
- Everything that John goes on to say in this letter is based on the truth claims that Jesus is both *historical* and *spiritual*.
- For John, it is a mistake to deny the *physical human fleshly Jesus*. In other words (like it sometimes happens today) it is a mistake to deny the earthly existence of Jesus.
- To suggest that Jesus was an idea, or simply a representative of all that is good about humanity or to suggest that Jesus is just a figment of the imagination of many people a long time ago – all ideas that deny the historical evidence.
- Jesus was present, such that he walked among us. He drank, he ate, he slept, he wept and did what any human would need to do.

Illustration

- The British, know how to make a good TV Mystery. You know the kind – Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, Father Brown, Midsummer Murders, Jonathon Creek – the kind of shows

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where the evidences are laid out, but you have to be incredible intelligent to pick up the subtle clues and piece it all together to work out who it did it!

- What John does here is nothing like that – he lays out the evidence – that which is heard, that which is seen, that which is touched – and says – it is all there for you to see, clear and plain.
- So it is a mistake to deny the historical Jesus.
- It is also a mistake to deny the *spiritual, heavenly significance and impact of Jesus*.
- That he really did come from the Father, that he denied what it meant to be in very nature God, yet humbled himself and became man in order to bring eternal life.
- To suggest that Jesus was just a moral man, a good teacher, an unfortunate martyr – are all ideas that deny the spiritual significance of Jesus as Christ.
- Both factors – physical and spiritual – play a role in the life of a believer.
- When you, if you, became a Christian - you would have accepted the truth that Jesus was both man and God.

That as man, he lived and took your place. And when he died, he died for your sin.
And as God, he came without sin in order to bring you into eternal life.
- When you hear folk reject Jesus today, they reject at least one of those factors – sometimes both.

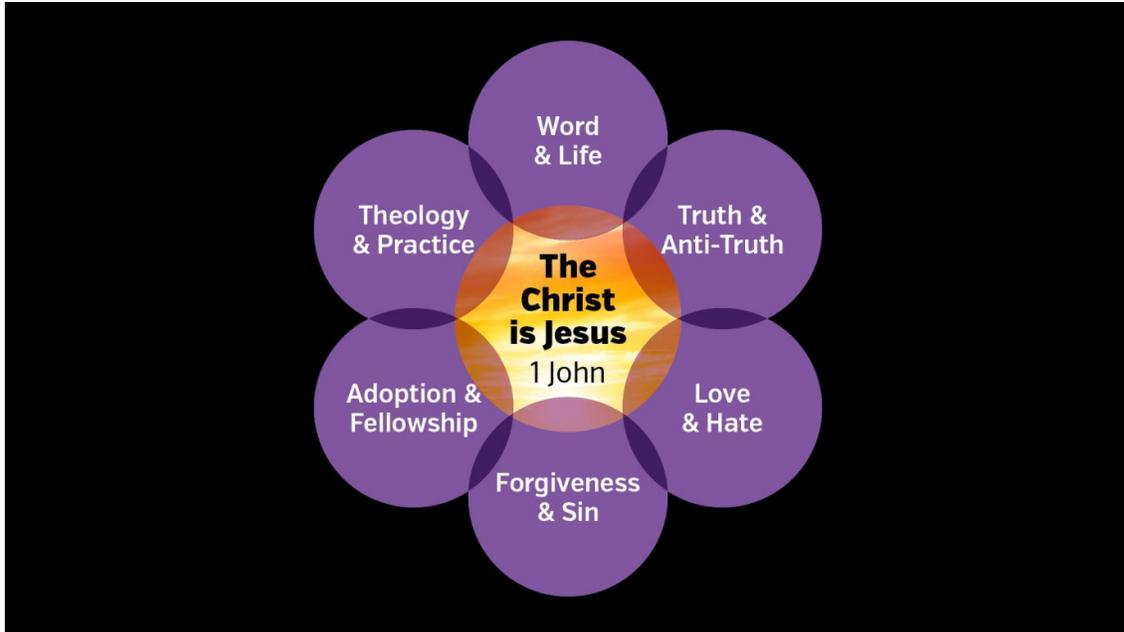
They reject that Jesus was *historically present* or they reject that Jesus is *spiritually significant*.
- For John – that it a denial of the facts.

PAUSE

- As we read this letter together over the next few weeks, we will be reading a word about the Word of Life: Jesus.
- This word however, is not just an academic exercise.
- John does not want his readers to be puffed up with knowledge about Jesus – he wants to see that knowledge applied to life.
- And so his desire is that Jesus is proclaimed. That what he and others had seen and heard and touched would be proclaimed for the benefit of others who may not have had the privilege of hearing first hand, or seeing right before them, or touching him when he walked among them.
- John knows the significance of this word, and he doesn't want it to be lost to history or undermined over time – and so he testifies to those who would hear.
- Friends, many sitting here today will have long ago accepted this witness about Jesus - and you will know that having Jesus as part of your life has shaped you in many ways.
- For some here, this will be new.
- This letter will capture many of the aspects of what it means to hold to the Christian faith.
- Accepting Jesus, believing in him, has implications which John highlights for us.

Talk – 1 John 1:1-4 & 2:12-17 – Word and Life

- There are contrasting themes that will emerge in this letter, that cross over other themes – and combined they paint a picture of what it means to be Christian in a world that often wants to dismiss Jesus as the Christ. [VISUAL – The 1 John ‘Flower’]



- Look at the screen - as we move through the letter, we'll read about the importance of truth in the context of those who will deny truth.
- We'll see the impact of that truth on the way we love others even though many around will hate.
- We'll see that love motivates forgiveness even in the face of sin.
- We'll see that forgiveness means believers are adopted into the fellowship of God's people.
- And we'll see that believers are called both to know and put into practice what they believe.
- All because – of Jesus - the Word of Life.

Believers have the Word of Life: Jesus. Life with him should be different to life without.

PAUSE

2:12-14

- Let's go to Chapter 2 – verse 12 – and look at who this letter is written too and why.
- 'I write to you, dear children'
Verse 13 – 'I write to you fathers'
'I write to you young men'
'I write to you dear children'
Verse 14 'I write to you fathers'
'I write to you young men'

Talk – 1 John 1:1-4 & 2:12-17 – Word and Life

- John is writing to believers. The catch all category here is - the children.
 - John is approaching the end of his life, he is an old man, he is most probably the last remaining apostle - and as a wise senior – all the believers around him would be like children.
 - Think of a theological elder calling believers around him to gather in close to hear what he has to say.
 - And among that group there are some who have been Christian for a long time – those he calls ‘fathers’. I don’t think this is meant to be gender specific. It is likely that he is addressing ‘fathers’ as those who are leaders among the believers.
 - And then there are those who have been Christian for less time – the ‘young men’ – again I don’t think it is gender specific.
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- As we think about our Church family here – believers are children, children of God.
 - Our spiritual state is that we are adopted into the family of God through Christ.
 - John eagerly recognises that spiritual reality, that we have fellowship together, and our fellowship is not just with one another, but with God the Father and Jesus the son – as children.
 - Yet among us our fellowship there are those who are spiritually older – those who have been believers for the longest period of time – our fathers and mothers of faith. If that is you, you have set the pattern of life for those who are spiritually younger – Thank you.
 - You have set the example for others to follow – for those who for less time have been believers in Jesus – the young men and women of faith.
-
- Notice that in writing, he highlights what has already happened for these believers.
 - As Children - your sins have been forgiven and you have known the father.
 - As Fathers (and Mothers in faith) – you have known God from the beginning (presumable right back from when you became a believer)
 - And as Young Men (and Women) – you have overcome the evil one, you are strong, and the Word of God lives in you.
 - The main point here – is that believers have been transformed by God. And transformed in three ways. Let’s consider each:
 1. First, *You are forgiven*.

The fundamental experience of the believer is that you have been forgiven your sin.
No longer will sin have any say over your eternity.
That is not to imply that sin will no longer be an issue, but that the *consequence* of sin, that is eternal death, that that consequence will no longer determine your eternity.
Why? because Jesus the Word has dealt with your sin - to give you life.
 2. Second you have been transformed by *knowing God*.

Here is where knowledge is privilege.
One of the benefits of knowing God over a long period of time is that you know the depth of his love and care and provision.
You know that, through the circumstances of life, both good and bad.

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You know the longer view and you can see how God has worked for the benefit of those he loves.

Your perspective is not lost as easily in the urgency of today which so very easily happen to those newer in faith.

That long-term knowledge, that long-term relationship - brings confidence and stability.

3. And the third way you have been transformed is by *overcoming the evil one*.

I don't think it is a surprise that John reminds the younger in faith that they have overcome evil.

The battle between that which is good and that which is evil is so very real when you first become a believer.

We are abundantly aware of all that the world offers – and the stark contrast between what the world says is good and what God says is good.

And with that new faith comes a zeal, a strength, a passion to live for Jesus.

I suspect that is what John highlights when he says to the young men (and women) that they are strong - is not referring only to them being physically stronger than those older fathers and mothers, but that they are also spiritually zealous and hungry - that the word of God lives in them and shapes them. Oh, for new faith?!

- John is reminding believers of who they have become.
 - Transformed by God – forgiven, knowing God, and overcoming the evil one.
- Believers have the Word of Life: Jesus. Life with him is different to life without.

PAUSE

2:15-17

- So now, having painted a picture of Jesus and having reminded believers of how they have been transformed, John issues a warning – Chapter 2 verse 15. *[READ 1 Jn 2:15-17]*
- This warning is not a rebuke as if those who he writes to have failed.
- This warning is an exhortation – an encouragement - to live and love according to the faith that they have in Jesus.
- Don't love the world and anything that the world values – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes, the boasting – it is temporary – not eternal. Don't love anything opposed to God.
- Yes, we live in the world, but that does not mean that we should be influenced by the world.
- The call here is not to remove ourselves, but rather that we avoid being shaped by the world
- The dilemma that John highlights is that it is impossible to *love* both the world and God.

- What are the signs of the person who loves the world more than God?
- Let me try and give some general suggestions – and ask that you think about what that might specifically mean for you:
 - Does the world get more of your attention than God does?

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- Do you speak more about the things of this world than you do about the things of God?
 - Do the things of this world captivate you such that you would be unwilling to part with if it meant living to God's will?
 - Do you pursue something in the world with greater zeal or passion than you serve God or his people?
 - Do you pride yourselves on the things that the world values which God wouldn't?
 - Do you determine what you agree or disagree with more by worldly ideals than godly ideals?
 - Do you seek to obtain things of this world – possessions, status, money – and do that in a way that would displease God?
- They are all general examples – and so asked in an effort to allow you to apply them specifically into your own thinking.

Illustration

- When I proposed to my now wife and declared my love to her – one of the best moves I have made! Batting way above my average!!
- Suppose, when I asked for her hand - she responded by saying Yes, I will marry you and live my life with you – but you should know that I love my job more, or my car more, or my sporting dream more, or my DVD collection more, or my symphony membership more – such that if any of those things arise, I will always put them first.
- You would think I would deluded to agree to that!

- I wonder how Jesus feels when a believer says 'I will love you, and serve you, and meet with your people, and read your word, and talk to you in prayer – but remember – I love the world!

- That is just called worldliness.
- Worldliness is what our culture does to make sin seem less sinful or not sinful at all.
- Worldliness is what our culture does to make righteousness look odd and strange and ridiculous.

- It is impossible to love, desire, and be committed to the world and at the same time love, desire, and be committed as a child of God.

- If a person has been transformed by God through the forgiveness of sin, the knowledge of the Father, and in overcoming of the evil one – then they ought to be people who do not love the world.

Believers have the Word of Life: Jesus. Life with him is different to life without.

PAUSE

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There is a benefit:

- Verse 17 – the world and its desires pass away, but the person who does the will of God lives forever.
- Despite the promises, regardless of the opinions, what the world offers will come up short.

Which take us back to Chapter 1:3-4

- John proclaims, he testifies about what he has plainly heard, seen and touched – so that others would also have fellowship, not just with other believers, but with God the Father and with his son Jesus Christ.
- A fellowship – that is eternal, that does not pass away like the things of this world.
- And why write this – dear children, fathers and young men?
- To make our joy complete.

- Why *listen* to Jesus (the Word of Life)? – because he given eternal life.
- Why *speak* about Jesus? So that others might also enjoy a joyous eternal fellowship – with the Father and the son and his children.

- John Lennon – bought the lie and sung it for anyone who would listen – that what this world has to offer is all that there is!
- If only he looked at Jesus – the man of history and the Word of eternal life.
- We have a far more reliable John to listen too

Pray