

FIRST JOHN PART 1

1:1-10

READ First John 1:1-4 [*"made manifest" means that we recognized something*]

V 4 is John's first purpose statement that we read earlier, "JOY" being the key word. Apparently the 3 verses that lead up to this have something to do with our joy. Let's take a look.

Hint: John and the apostles saw, heard and touched Him and He was with the God the Father. Who do you suppose John is talking about here as being "the word of life" or "the eternal life"? **Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

V 1, This Jesus, who we apostles heard teach, who we saw with our own eyes and touched with our own hands, we now proclaim to you. What He taught us we now teach you. The same message that He gave to us, we now pass on to you. Our message is not some new truth. It has been the same message "from the beginning," ever since Jesus arrived on the scene and began teaching. Hebrews 13:8 says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. His message back then is His message now.

In V 2 when John says that Jesus was "made manifest" and talked about seeing Him and Jesus having been "with the Father" I was reminded of similar words that John wrote in his Gospel: "And the Word (speaking of Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14). John is telling us what he experienced personally was the eternal life of God, the living word, IN HUMAN FLESH! Jesus!

V 3, "We proclaim also to you..." John wants his readers to have the same glorious knowledge that he and the other apostles have. "I am passing it on to you, the next generation, what we heard from Jesus."

He goes on to say “so that you may have fellowship with us.” [Show Q6 slide] So, what is “fellowship?” We talk a lot about Christian fellowship and we even have a Fellowship Hall in our church. Whatever this fellowship is, it is also involves the Father and the Son.

READ 1 Corinthians 1:9 and Philippians 2:1. Here we see that this fellowship we have is with the Son and the Father as well as the Holy Spirit – all three members of the Holy Trinity are part of this fellowship. So what is it? What is fellowship? It is a partnership, a sharing of something in common. It’s a lot more than merely socializing and eating a meal together. So, getting back to Q6 John defines fellowship as **being linked together in a common bond with Jesus Christ and with the Father** (Paul adds with the Spirit). So then, when we come together as a body of believers we share a common bond with each other – we have the same Lord – and all three Persons of the Trinity are there with us inhabiting our prayers, our worship and our study together in God’s Word. It is something very special.

V 4 tells us that this fellowship with the saints and with God ought to bring us joy. And our joy is complete because God’s right there with us, among us. What exactly is “joy”? It’s simply this: full satisfaction and total fulfillment. In this letter John will unpack for us what all of that means. By the time we finish our study in First John we should be filled with joy. So are you excited about that?

Well, I hate to throw cold water on your spiritual flame, but at this point there is an elephant in the room, so to speak. [Show Q7 slide] We Christians ought to be full of joy, but something is blocking this in our lives. What is it? I’ve given you a hint up here. In the very next section, beginning in v 5 John addresses the problem of... **SIN**. Bummer. It’s time for us to face reality.

READ First John 1:5-10

Then Chapter 2 opens with John's second purpose statement: "I am writing to you so that you may not sin." So clearly sin is an issue and it is blocking our pathway to the joy that God wants us to have.

If we're going to have fellowship with God we must "walk in the light" as v 7 says. In other words, we must be obedient to what God tells us to do or in some cases not to do. As we walk in the light of God's Word, we will see things for what they really are. We can fool ourselves for years, but God's word will expose the truth. Then we will be able to respond appropriately to what He tells us. We're saved, but we're not perfect. We are "sinners saved by grace." Like the old hymn says "prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love." We're saved but we still have our old sin nature to deal with every day.

So how do we deal with our sin problem? Two things. It's not complicated...

First, **I must be honest with myself about my sin.** That's the first step. I have to admit what it is specifically that I'm doing (or not doing). I acknowledge my sin. I see it for what it really is in the light of God's truth.

Second, **I must be honest with God and confess my sin to Him.** I need to be specific. When I'm honest with God and I do this, God is faithful. He forgives me and cleanses me. If I don't confess my sin then I am, in essence, denying my sin or condoning it. I'm justifying it. This puts a barrier between me and God. It adversely impacts my fellowship with Him. It robs me of my joy.

I don't have to tell any of you what sin is. You know when you sin. The Holy Spirit tells you. Sin doesn't necessarily have to be some egregious offense, though sometimes it is. Sin can be something I say in anger to someone or just my feelings of anger and resentment toward someone or some group. It could even be a fear that I have about anything that I have not turned over to God. Note: fear can be a healthy thing by protecting us from things that can hurt us. But it can be sin if we allow it to keep us from

trusting God or doing what He wants us to do. Sin can be dishonesty. It can be pride. On the flipside it can be a lack of self-esteem. In Hebrews one of the sins mentioned was the sin of unbelief. Sin can be wrong attitudes or misplaced priorities. Sin can take on many forms but it is all rooted in selfishness. Sin is self-centered and self-serving. The bad news is that we're all sinners.

In closing, I don't pretend to know your heart and what it is you are dealing with in this area. And you don't know mine either. On Wednesday night the pastor made a comment. He said, "Before I get up here in the pulpit and preach to you, I first preach in the mirror." In other words, everything he was saying to us, he said to himself first. I feel the same way. I'm talking to myself first before I talk to you every Sunday. There may be something that you and I need to deal with today or this week. Ask God to reveal to you exactly what it is and what you need to do about it. Then, start the healing process. Be honest with yourself. Confess it to God. Give it to Him. Let Him show you what you need to do. Then do it. As God forgives you and lifts that burden off of you, just a word of advice – be sure to forgive yourself as well. Don't carry that burden around with you anymore.

If we as God's dear children really want to have joy, peace, contentment, satisfaction in our lives, then we must first deal with any unconfessed sin we're holding onto. Our sin hurts us and it hurts God. It is possible that our sin may also have hurt someone else, maybe even someone in our distant past. God may have you at some point confess your sin to them to try to make things right. Or He may not. There is no reason to open up old wounds. But whatever He lays on your heart to do, I urge you to be obedient and do it.

I want you to go home and think about these two questions. Write down a few thoughts and then come prepared to share them with us next time. We'll leave it there for now and pick up with Chapter 2 in a couple of weeks.