

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 7:5:2006

Reading: 1 John 1:1-9

SERIES ON 1 JOHN

BACK TO BASICS

1. IT'S REAL

John was a very old man now, feeling the weight of his years and aware that his days on earth were about done. A godly life lay behind him, and a very long memory thrilled him. His native land was far away in the land of Israel, although he now lived in Ephesus, a pagan Asiatic city, on the edge of the European world. *This John, the beloved disciple wrote 5 books of the New Testament.* John gave us the gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, and he gave us the book of Revelation. These 5 books are in three main groups. First, is the gospel, which has to do with *our past*, and deals with the theme *of salvation*. The three epistles have to do with *our present* and deal with the theme *of sanctification*. The last book, in the Bible deals with *our future* and the theme is *glorification*. Each time that John wrote a book he always had a definite purpose in mind. We don't have to guess why John wrote this first epistle, for in this letter there are four keys all identified by the phrase “*these things I write,*” and these provide the four reasons why John wrote this letter. You see, John wrote

1. To Provide Assurance:

Look at (5:13) This word “*know,*” should be circled in your Bible, it's the key word in 1 John, for its used over 30 times. Some say, “*well, you can't really know you are going to heaven when you die.*” Yet John says, “*you can.*” You see, he is writing to provide assurance for the child of God. Are you sure of your salvation ? Dr. M.L. Jones said, “*assurance is not essential to salvation, but it is essential to the joy of salvation.*” 1.

2. To Protect Believers:

Look at (2:26) So John's purpose is to protect the saints from those who would lead them astray. Just as we fight cults today, John was fighting heresy yesterday. You see, there are always going to be people who will attack the Lord Jesus, and they will attack Him from all sides. They will either attack His deity, or they will attack His humanity. So John is writing to protect the saints !

3. To Prevent Sin:

Look at (2:1) The Bible nowhere teaches that a Christian is sinless, but it does teach that a child of God ought to sin less. Day by day we ought to grow in grace and sin less today, than we did yesterday. (1) (2) (3)

4. To Promote Joy:

Look at (1:4) So John is writing to promote joy in the heart of the child of God. Do you have joy today ? John's letter is vitally important, for it gives us guidance on what a real Christian is. John says, in a world of make believe, in a world where absolutes are out of fashion, in a world of fantasy, in a world of shallow relationships, in a world of forty shades of grey, be real, be authentic. So I want to speak to you this On the subject “ **Its Real.**” Did you notice how unusually John begins ? There are no words no greeting, no words of introduction. This is for all of God's people everywhere. This man cannot wait to start talking about Christ and so he introduces us to,

(1) THE TRUTH OF SONSHIP

John makes no mistake in his identification of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of the Father the Son of God. (1:3) In his letter he warns us several times, not to listen to false teachers who tell lies about Jesus Christ (2:22, 4:2-3) My if a man is wrong about Jesus Christ, he is wrong about God because the Lord Jesus is the final and complete revelation of God to man. Indeed, John refers to Christ as “ *the Word of Life.*” Now what is the purpose of a word ? You and I communicate with one another by using words. I am speaking words from this pulpit this and I am communicating what is on my mind and heart. John is saying that the Lord Jesus is God's communication to us. Christ reveals to us the mind and heart of God. And Jesus Christ is real. You say, “ *Wait a minute, how do you mean that the Lord Jesus is real ? I have never seen Him, never heard Him, never touched Him. How can you say that Jesus Christ is real ?*” Well, Paul says in (2 Cor 4:18) “ *For we are looking all the time not at the visible things, but at the invisible, the visible things are transitory, it is the invisible things that are really permanent.*” Its now what you can see that is real, its what you cannot see that's real. Christ is more real than riches, than reason, than religion. In fact, did you notice that His Sonship is presented here,

(a) ETERNALLY:

“ *That which was from the beginning,*” (1:1) You see, Christ is real eternally. Now there are three beginnings mentioned in Scripture. In (Gen 1:1) we are told about the beginning of creation. “ *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” In Mark we are told about another beginning, “ *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*,” (1:1) But here is a third beginning, “ *That which was from the beginning.*”

What John is saying is, “ *from the moment of creation, Jesus Christ existed.*” He is talking about the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. But don't stop there because in his gospel he goes a little further. For he begins his gospel by saying, “ *In the beginning,*” not “ *From the beginning,*” but “ *In the beginning was the Word.*” Now do you see the difference ? The Lord Jesus was in the beginning, the Lord Jesus was from the beginning. In other words, Christ was present before the creation and Christ was present during the creation, therefore Christ is eternal. There was never a time when He was not nor is there a time when He will not be. The Lord Jesus is coequal, coeternal, coexistent with God, the Father. *In the beginning, from the beginning, before the beginning and after the beginning, the Lord Jesus has always been.* My you talk about that old time religion. Listen, when you have got Christ, you've got the old time religion, the new time religion, the all time religion for He is “ *the same yesterday, and today and for ever.*” (Heb 13:8) From as far back as

you can think, and from as far forward as you can imagine, the Lord Jesus is the same sweet, sacred, sinless Saviour. (a)

(b) HISTORICALLY:

The word for “*manifested*,” in (1:2) means “*to appear*,” or “*to be made visible*.” The eternal Christ was born, became visible, and lived and moved on this earth. This is what Paul calls a mystery, “*Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.*” (1 Tim 3:16) John puts it this way, “*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*” (1:14) Do you see that John appeals to three of the senses that identify a person as a real person ? He says, “*We heard.*” John is saying, “*I actually heard His words and they are still ringing in my ears.*” Then he uses the word “*seen*,” and “*looked upon*.” This word “*look*,” means an intense gaze. John declares “*We looked upon Him, we examined Him. It was no hallucination. It was no passing glance. We really saw the Lord Jesus.*” Then he uses the word “*handled*.” What it means is, “*we touched Him.*” (Lk 24:39) As the old song says, “*they were there when it happened so they ought to know.*”

Here is the authentic, apostolic witness to the advent of the Lord Jesus ! ***Now why was John at pains to establish the perfect humanity of Christ ?*** To counteract a heresy that was current in John’s day. It was the heresy known as Gnosticism, which comes from the Greek word meaning “*to know*.” (gnosis) The word “*agnostic*,” means “*someone who does not know*,” therefore a “*gnostic*,” was a “*religious know it all*.” The Gnostic’s believed that all matter was evil. This means the body was evil, the flesh was evil, anything material or physical was evil. Therefore they denied the humanity of Christ. They were going around saying that Jesus Christ was not human at all, He just appeared to be human.

He was a phantom. Others said that Jesus was a human being and that the divine Christ came upon Him at His baptism and departed at His crucifixion. You see, they did not believe in the incarnation, the literal coming into human existence of the Lord Jesus ! My doctrine matters ? For deny the humanity of Christ, and you’ll have to deny the work of Christ, and if you deny the work of Christ, there’s no salvation.

***“ What think ye of Christ, is the test
To try both your state and your scheme
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.”***

(c) RELATIONALLY:

John uses a lovely phrase when he talks about “*the eternal life which was with the Father.*” (1:2) Here is someone unique, someone who shared eternity with God in a most extraordinary way. Yet says John “*He appeared.*” Its interesting that John wrote his gospel to prove the Deity of the Lord Jesus, then he had to turn around and write his epistle to prove the Humanity of the Lord Jesus ! Aren’t you glad this that Christ “*was made in the likeness of men ?*” (Phil 2:7) That Jesus Christ was a real man ? For its because of that He can be touched with the feeling of your infirmity

? (1)

(2) THE TRUTH OF RELATIONSHIP

The word “*fellowship*,” is one of the greatest words in the Bible. The Greek word “*koinonia*,” means “*to have in common*,” “*to share something together*,” A teacher in her Sunday School class said “*can anyone tell me what fellowship is ?*” One little boy raised his hand and said, “*Yes, it is two fellows in the same ship.*” Well, isn’t quite that it means “*to share in common.*” And John tells us that this fellowship can be experienced on two levels.

(a) Horizontally we are to Fellowship with the Family:

Did you notice what John says ? “*that ye also may have fellowship with us*,” Now what do we have in common that allows us to have fellowship one with another ? Well, very simply its Christ ! You see, when a man accepts Christ, he is immediately born again, and he is born into the family of God. The hymn writer put it like this,

***“ I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God
I’ve been washed in the fountain
Cleansed by His blood
Joint heirs with Jesus as I travel this sod
For I’m part of the family, the family of God.”***

My do you know something ? The N.T. knows nothing of lone ranger Christianity. Those who, in those early days had been in physical contact with the Lord, had been drawn together and bound together in a bond of mutual love. (Acts 2:41) They did not ask the question that hear so often today, “*Need a Christian join a local church ?*” No, they realised that they needed the help, support, and companionship of other believers ! My you are to fellowship with the family. Every Sunday is God’s family reunion and you are supposed to be here if you are a child of God. In fact, you ought to want to be here, for there is something desperately wrong with a man who does not want to be with his family. What a family is the family of God. Think of it !

No in laws. Just one Father and brothers and sisters in Christ ! So (a)

(b) Vertically we are to Fellowship with the Father:

“*And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*,” (1:3) Does that not stagger your imagination ? You can have fellowship with God. You can be as close to God as two best friends walking down a country lane. How do you have fellowship with God ? It is simple. You have fellowship with the Lord through the Word and Prayer ! You read the Bible, God talks to you. You pray, you talk to God ! Someone has said that while “*Christ has no favourites, He does have intimates.*” Are you one of them ? Are you walking with God ? Do you know something of uninterrupted communion with the Father ? My it goes without saying that you cannot have fellowship unless you have a relationship. You see, you cannot have fellowship with someone you do not know. You cannot have fellowship with the Lord, without a relationship, but it must be a special kind of relationship. You can only have fellowship with the Lord, if you have a relationship

with His Son, the Lord Jesus ! (1 Cor 1:9) My do you know Christ ? Do you know Him as your Saviour and Lord ? You see, if you don't enjoy fellowship with the Father, its because you don't have a relationship with the Son ! I wonder do some of you come into this and you don't get a thing out of it. You don't get a thing out of the singing, praying, preaching. You don't care for the people ! It wouldn't bother you if you never came to church again. I heard about a little boy that was sick one Sunday and the next day his Sunday School teacher saw him and she said, “ *Billy, you missed church yesterday, didn't you ?* ” He said, “ *No Ma'am not one bit.* ” You see, my the problem is not your fellowship, the problem is your relationship ! For when you really know Christ as Saviour and Lord, you can fellowship with God as your Father, and with us as your Family ! (1)
(2)

(3) THE TRUTH OF DISCIPLESHIP

Of course those who first saw, and heard, and handled the Lord Jesus were His disciples. You remember, that it was to Peter the question was asked, “ *Art not thou also one of this man's disciples ?* ” (Jn 18:17) A disciple is one, who like Mary of Bethany, sits at the feet of the Saviour and learns of Him with a view to do His bidding. (Lk 10:39) In this context of (1 John) being a disciple means, there is,

(a) A MINISTRY WE MUST EXERCISE:

Do you see what John says in (1:3) “ *that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.* ” The word

“ *declare,* ” means to “ *announce, report, bring word.* ” Here John tells us how he and others “ *bear witness,* ” of the Life being manifested. (1:2) The words are a legal term that speak of testifying and giving testimony in court. A witness in court is someone who is called upon to give testimony to what they know ! My is this not our Christian responsibility ? Do you declare your faith ? Do you share it with others ? What is it we are to share with others ? Well, it's the truth of who Jesus Christ is, but its also to gave testimony to the grace of God in our lives, to what has happened to us and to what we know.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, was on one occasion invited by King Edward the seventh to Buckingham Palace in 1904. King Edward said to him,

“ *You are doing a good work, a great work, General Booth.* ” When the King asked Booth to write in his autograph album, the old man, now seventy five, bent forward, took the pen, and summed up his life's work.

*Your Majesty
Some men's ambition is art
Some men's ambition is fame
Some men's ambition is gold
My ambition is the souls of men*

Is your ambition to take the glorious news that the eternal Christ became man, that He might save them from their sins ? (a)

(b) A RADIANCY WE MUST EXHIBIT:

For John says in (1:4) The word “ *full*, ” means “ *to be filled full*. ” I want you to have total joy, not one half full. I want it full ! Do you have joy ? For the believer there is joy in several places. There is,

1. The Joy of SALVATION:

David asked the Lord on one occasion, “ *Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.* ” (Ps 51:12) Unfortunately most Christians stop right there. They get saved, and they think that is the end of the Christian life, when in reality it is just the beginning. My have you never gotten past the joy of salvation ?

2. The Joy of SCRIPTURE:

Do you know Jeremiah said ? “ *Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.* ” (Jer 15:16) Do you feel that way about your Bible ? Do you know why most believers don’t have much joy ? It is because they don’t study the Word, some don’t read the Bible from one week to the next. I tell you, there is the joy of getting into the Word of God, letting the Word of God get into you. There is the joy of opening your Bible, and taking an open heart, and a listening ear, and letting God speak to you. My would you start doing that, instead of playing with the things of God ?

3. The Joy of SOUL-WINNING:

Scholars tell us that some of the early manuscripts of 1 John translate “ *our joy*, ” instead of “ *your joy*. ” John is saying “ *the greatest joy that could come to me would be for you to know Christ initially, increasingly, intimately.* ” (5:13) My is there any greater joy than to lead a soul to the Saviour ? Charles Spurgeon said,

“ *Even if I were utterly selfish, and had no care for anything but my own happiness, I would choose if I might under God, to be a soul -winner, for never did I know perfect, overflowing, unutterable happiness of the purest and most ennobling order, till I first heard of one who had sought and found the Saviour through my means.* ” (1 Thes 2:20) Do you know someone today who needs Christ ? The late Dr. Roland Q. Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary told this story before he died. He was preaching in a service in Washington, D.C. after the service a young woman came up to him.

She said, “ *Dr. Leavell, when I was nine years old, on a hot Monday afternoon, in a little Mississippi town, you came to my house and spoke to me about Christ. I let him come into my heart. I have not always been what I should have been, but since that time I have tried to love as near to Jesus as I know how to live.* ” Dr. Leavell said to her, “ *Will you do something for me ?* ” She said, “ *Yes sir, if I can.* ” He said, “ *When we get to heaven, would you permit me to take you by the hand and lead you to the throne of King Jesus ? And will you tell Him what you have just told me ? If you will it will be heaven enough for me.* ” Samuel Rutherford thinking about his friends at Anwoth said,

*“ Oh if one soul from Anwoth
Meet at God’s right hand
Then my heaven shall be two heavens
In Immanuel’s land.”*

Tell me, on that great day when your joy will be full, as lay your trophies at the Saviour’s feet ?