

September 3, 2017-

I John 1:1-4

- "Reaffirming our Faith"

Introduction:

Last week's Hurricane Harvey has reinforced life's uncertainties to all of us. The storm has forced many to leave their homes with FEMA officials saying more than 40,000 people could need shelter. Hurricane Harvey has created considerable uncertainty for gasoline supplies and prices, as the area affected by the hurricane is home to much of the nation's petroleum infrastructure. Uncertainty has delays school openings as districts sort through the damage of hurricane Harvey. Most won't open until September 11. Even baseball is uncertain if the Houston Astros will be able to play at home by Tuesday. The uncertainty of Hurricane Harvey has been unsettling but thank God for the lives saved and the relationships restored.

We face many uncertainties in the world we live: our health, our jobs, the economy, retirement to mention a few. No book in the Bible is more needed today than **1 John** because it is a book of certainties. Most people understand that the important things in life are not things at all – they are the relationships we have. God has put a desire for relationship in every one of us, a desire He intended to be met with relationships with other people, but most of all, to be met by a relationship with Him. In this remarkable letter, John tells us the truth about relationships – and shows us how to have relationships that are real, for both now and eternity.

Some people say, "I live for making money. I live for driving a car. I live for sports. I live for money." You know what those things are? Those are the poor excuses and substitutes for life that Satan has created, taken the good gifts of God and twisting them and saying, "This is life. This is what you live for. But these substitute, have no lasting value. They have no lasting power. They aren't eternal in nature. Paul wrote: 2Cr 4:18 **While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.**

That is the first reason why John writes this book is clearly stated in chapter 1 verse 4, "to make our joy complete." Only God can make our joy complete. The central theme of the letter is how our faith is manifested in love. The word love is mentioned 55 times in this little letter. Why does John focus so much on Love, because he knew the importance of Christian love.

I. Background:

1. The book of 1 John is really a response to the heresy that came to be known as Gnosticism, and early Christian religious movement teaching that salvation comes by learning mysterious spiritual truths that free humanity from the material world a deviation from the path of Jesus onto some other thing. He responds in this book in a very positive way. He doesn't talk that much about Gnosticism, only in kind of an indirect way in promoting and glorifying the person of Jesus Christ. In the process, he shows the shallowness of any truth that seeks to glorify something in addition to the truth revealed in Jesus. No matter what it is that one believes will make them happy. He is writing this letter to reassure Christians about their faith

2. This belief (or teaching) that there must be something beyond Jesus, there must be something we can add to Him, in the first century that was called Gnosticism; a belief that Jesus was fine, but there was something beyond Him, a secret wisdom that I could teach you and that if you had this secret wisdom (and that's what the word 'gnostic' means – 'wisdom' or 'gnosis' – it means wisdom), if I could teach you this special, secret wisdom.

3. The author of this book doesn't identify himself. However, based on the writing style, there is no doubt it was written by the apostle John. He also wrote four other books in the New Testament. John was the only disciple present at Jesus' crucifixion. When Jesus sees His mother and John standing near His cross, He asks John to take Mary as his own mother.

Apparently, John took care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, until she died. No one was closer to Jesus than John. Because of his humility, John never mentions his own name in his gospel or his epistles; he simply calls himself the disciple, whom Jesus loved (Jn. 20:2). So, John writes this epistle based on personal experiences. Because of persecution, John moved from Jerusalem to Ephesus, where he wrote this letter. Most Bible scholars believe it was written around 85 A.D., more than fifty years after the crucifixion of Jesus. John was around nineteen years old when he began to follow Jesus and is now in his seventies. All the other disciples have met violent deaths, so John is the only one still living.

The second reason he gives us this book is to prevent sin (2:1). In other words, that we might be strengthened by the Word of God and that we might be kept from sin in our lives. Not that we will ever, on this earth, be sinless, but that we will sin less as we get the Word of God in our hearts. Without preventative maintenance you will repeatedly sin.

A third reason for the little book of 1 John is to provide protection for the saints or to protect the saints of God (2:26). The fourth reason for the little book is in order to provide assurance (5:13). You see, God wants you to know that you are saved. God not only wants you to be saved, but He wants you to know that you are saved. That begins with:

II Reaffirming that Jesus is God

1. Jesus was no newcomer when He stepped into history as a baby in Bethlehem. John writes: That which was from the beginning (1:1 a). Before the beginning of creation, time, and history, Jesus existed. John make this even clearer in **John 1:1 and verse 14**. In the beginning, Jesus already existed. Jesus did not begin to exist when He was born in Bethlehem because He has always been God. John takes us back to this time in eternity past, to meet this One which was from the beginning.

2. These verses were written to combat the false teaching of the Gnostics, who taught that Jesus didn't have a real body of flesh and blood because God could not become a human being. Part of the teaching of Gnosticism was that though Jesus was God, He was not actually a physical man. Referring to Jesus' body, John writes: which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled (1:1). John was

an eyewitness to the fact Jesus had a body of flesh and blood because he had personally heard ... seen . . . and even touched His body. Jesus wasn't a spirit or an illusion.

3. John is saying, "I know what I'm talking about. I was there-I've heard Him, I've seen Him, and I've touched Him." To reveal beyond any doubt Jesus was God in flesh and blood. In this first verse of his epistle John calls Jesus the Word of life. Ref. **John 10:30**

John often calls Jesus the Word. As the Word, Jesus conveys or communicates God. You see, when Jesus is speaking, God is speaking. If you were God, with the power to do anything, and you wanted to communicate with ants, what would you become? An ant! If you wanted to communicate with birds, what would you become? A bird! If you wanted to communicate with human beings, what would you become? A human being!

IV. Reaffirm Knowing Jesus Personally

1. John writes: **That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father; and with his Son Jesus Christ (1:3).** The word translated fellowship (KOINONIA, coin-oh-knee-uh) means to share in common or have in partnership. John and the other original disciples had a personal, private fellowship with Jesus. John is writing so we can have that same fellowship with Him.

Fellowship with Jesus didn't end when He was crucified. We can have an even more intimate fellowship with him. John is writing so others (us) can experience this too.

2. After Jesus was crucified, Thomas did not believe He was resurrected and said he would not believe unless he could put his fingers in the nail prints in Jesus' hands and put his hand into Jesus' spear-pierced side (Jn 20:25). When Thomas finally saw the resurrected Christ, He offered to let Thomas touch Him as he had demanded. John 20:29

Some people think they would believe in Jesus if they could see a sign or miracle, but Jesus says we are more blessed if we believe without seeing. All the proof we need is in the Bible and in the testimonies of other believers. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man wanted someone to return from the dead to convince his brothers to be saved (Lk 16:30).

In other words, if the Bible won't convince them, nothing will. Through faith, we can have fellowship with Christ, along with John and the apostles. This faith is not based on wishful thinking, some mystical "mumbo jumbo," or even a second-hand report. It is based on the eyewitness accounts of John and other apostles who heard, saw, and even touched Jesus. Just as in Lazarus' day, if the Bible and the testimonies of other believers do not convince someone today that Jesus is God's Son, nothing not even someone rising from the dead-will.

Conclusion:

John concludes his introduction: And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full (1 Jn 1:4). This joy is the result of having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus doesn't call us to a dull, boring existence. Instead, He offers us full, or complete, joy that cannot be found in the world. This joy will be a major factor in your "becoming an effective Christian."