

Refuge City Church — May 7, 2023 “Experience of a Lifetime” (1 John 1)

Introduction

- **QUOTE:** “John’s pen is a surgeon’s knife, not a philosopher’s quill.” [J. Sidlow Baxter]
 - A surgeon’s knife is meant to open and expose the problems that lie within.
 - All in an attempt to diagnose, treat, and fix what is problematic, if not broken.
- [1 John] This is about love, light, and fellowship with God.
 - **John 20:31**, “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have *life* in his name.”
 - **1 John 2:5**, “but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the *love* of God is perfected.”
- Multiple times throughout this letter, John uses the phrase “*I write these things to you.*”
 - He provides us, on many occasion, what he is clearly trying to present to us as followers of Jesus.
 - “God is light” (1:5)
 - “So that you may not sin.” (2:1)
 - “Knowledge of God” (2:12-14)
 - “Knowledge of the truth” (2:21)
 - “Warning against deception” (2:26)
 - “Love one another” (3:11)
 - “God is love” (4:8)
 - “Believe in His name and have eternal life.” (5:13)

“Experience life” [Verse 1]

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—”

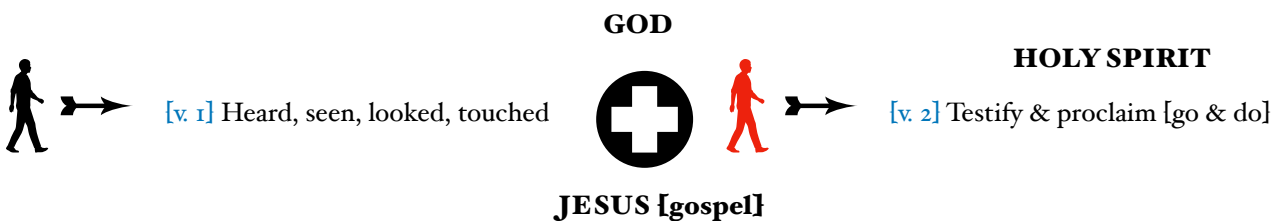
- The beauty of no introduction from John... “Let’s get down to business!”
- **“That which was from the beginning”.**
 - ‘*That*’ = who, whomever
 - ‘*Beginning*’ = “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” [John 1:1]
 - The beginning of time? [John 1:1]
 - The beginning of creation? [John 1:3, “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”]
 - The beginning of His life? [John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”]
 - The beginning of His ministry? [Mark 1:1, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God...”]
- **“...which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands”**... Life with Jesus is an experience.
 - It is a growing, intimate relationship with the One who gives us life [breath & spirit].

- It's what we hear [Word of God; prayer; communication]
- It's what we see [Spirit-inspired biblical perspective of the world around us/creation]
- It's what we touch [Connectedness with fellow believers]
- **THINK ABOUT:** The Marital Relationship
 - **Ephesians 5:31-32**, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."
 - The absence of one of these attributes will slowly starve the relationship.
- We see this throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus. People followed Him. Listened to Him. Simply desired to be in His presence. To see Him and maybe even get the chance to touch Him. [Mark 5: the woman who touched his garment]
- **"Concerning the word of life" = JESUS**
 - Who always was & is. Who we get to experience. Who gives us life!
 - **John 1:1**, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 - **John 14:6**, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."
 - **John 10:10**, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."
 - **John 17:3**, "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."
 - **John 20:31**, "...and that by believing you may have life in his name."
- Our fellowship with God is EXPERIENTIAL.

"Experience the movement" [Verse 2]

"the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—"

- **QUOTE:** "To look, saves; to gaze, sanctifies." [J. Vernon McGee]
- **QUESTION:** What is life in Jesus' name?
 - Our experience of walking in light & love, because of the salvation & sanctification He provides.



"Experience the fellowship" [Verses 3-4]

"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. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete."

- **QUOTE:** Fellowship requires and rests on information, a common body of knowledge, and mutual acceptance of that data. [Thomas Constable]

- “Fellowship” [koinonia] = contributory help; participation; partnership; sharing.
- Yes, the Apostles were blessed to walk, talk, live, and experience Jesus in the flesh.
 - **John 20:29**, “Jesus said to him, “...Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”
 - This allows us to have the same experiences with Jesus through fellowship with one another.
- **Verse 3** represents the *purpose* of the Gospel message.
 - To see, hear, and proclaim for the purpose of eternal life/salvation, so that others can then live in fellowship with Jesus.
- **Knowledge births intimacy**
 - As believers, we *partake* in His nature, thus bringing about connectivity to Jesus.
 - **2 Peter 1:3-4**, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, *through the knowledge* of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become *partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”
 - **QUOTE:** “Jesus Christ took upon Himself the nature of man that by faith, we may receive the very nature of God.” [Warren Wiersbe]
- **Intimacy births Joy**
 - When we commit to consistent fellowship with Jesus & other believers, it fills our spiritual & emotional bank accounts with the joy of the Lord.
 - **3 John 1:4**, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”
 - **John 15:9, 11**, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love... These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

“*Experience His light*” [Verses 5-10]

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

- **Common Sense:** Does it make more sense to walk in the light, or in the darkness?
 - We live in an adverse world. We need to continue, stay, dwell, remain steadfast in our fellowship with Jesus!
 - It is our sin that separates us from God and the enjoyment of true fellowship.
- **QUOTE:** “[God’s] nature determines the conditions for fellowship with Him.” [D. Edmond Hiebert]; “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
- **QUOTE:** “As all material life and growth depends on light, so all spiritual life and growth depends on God.” [Robert Jamieson]
 - **Ephesians 2:12-13**, “Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated... and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”
 - Back to the covenant we make in marriage.

- If you get married, more than likely, you've made mistakes in your marriage [small or large].
- However, when those mistakes are made, you don't go through a marriage ceremony every time something bad happens to reignite the relationship.
- Forgiveness is offered, accepted, and fellowship is resumed & strengthened so as not to make those same errors.
- **Hebrews 10:22**, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."
- I don't believe any of us would say that we are without sin. We understand we're not perfect, right?!
 - **Verse 8**: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - Something we need to consider is not whether we make it through a day, or moment, without sinning.
 - Rather, do we feel the *guilt* of the sin we commit?
 - Knowing we sin, if we don't regularly confess that sin, we have become complacent in our sinful ways, and therefore claim "we have no sin".
 - **1 Corinthians 10:12**, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."
 - How do you carry God's truth?
 - Like a penny in your pocket, or alcohol in your bloodstream?
 - **Ephesians 5:18**, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,"
- God is light. God is spirit. God is truth. God is love. Walk in His light!
- To gain the level of fellowship that we should desire with God only comes from *remaining* in contact with Him, and *regularly* confessing our sins.
 - **QUESTION**: "But he forgave all my sin when Jesus died on the cross! Why do I need to confess again and again?"
 - Look at the Parent-Child relationship.
 - There are rules that govern most Christian households. When those rules are broken, the parent does not immediately dis-fellowship the child from the house [grace and mercy].
 - There are consequences, and then a recognition and reiteration of those rules.
 - This is exactly how Jesus taught us to pray. He included "and forgive us our sins..."
 - Sin may momentarily interrupt our fellowship with God, but it cannot change our relationship with Him."
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:1-3a**, "Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification..." [the continual, constant pursuit of living righteously before God]
- Living in constant fellowship with Christ is not merely by imitation, but by the incarnation of Holy Spirit living in and through us.

Conclusion

- **Review:** “John’s pen is a surgeon’s knife, not a philosopher’s quill.”
 - The goal of this morning is NOT to walk away happy, having listened to yet one more message in church.
 - I don’t desire that you simply attain a little more knowledge.
 - God’s Word is the catalyst for behavior modification, as we live in the presence of a holy God. But it’s not enough if you simply listen and not respond.
 - **GOAL:** Walk in the light and love of God constantly & consistently every day.
 - To know what it is to *experience* the very presence of GOD!
- So, what needs to be exposed and surgically removed from your life?
- What has God revealed that you need to confess, so you can get right back to experiencing true fellowship with Him?