

1 John 1

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[0 : 00] The Apostle John doesn't hang about. He doesn't mess around. He doesn't go through all those normal introductions that you meet in many of the letters that Paul wrote. He doesn't introduce himself. All he says is, that which was from the beginning we have heard.

This perhaps gives us a picture of who John is talking to. We're told as we look into this passage that he had written this letter to the churches and the people in Ephesus, to the Christians and the surrounding area.

And because it's got this sort of general circulation, then there are things that we can learn from the things that John is saying to the people in his area.

And I think we can see from the way the letter is written that he has an intimate knowledge of these people. He's not speaking to strangers. He's speaking to people he knows.

He's got that intimate understanding of their needs. And this is a book, a letter, that seems to have a message that has two components to it.

[1 : 18] The message that John wants to get across to the Christians is that God is light, and that comes through in the passage we read, and also that God is love.

These two messages are sort of intermingled throughout this letter. So it's difficult to pull them apart, because if you try and deal with one, you end up introducing the other.

So we're not going to try and do that. But what we are going to do, is we're going to look at the message that John is putting across.

And it seems to have three component parts, three messages he's trying to put across to his readers.

And we're going to deal with those in a few moments. But as we look at this passage, the first three verses are very important to us.

[2 : 19] As an introduction to John's own credibility as a messenger. He's got a message he wants to put across in this letter.

But he's establishing, first of all, his own credibility. He tells us in those first three verses, doesn't he?

You read them through? He tells us of his own experience. Of his own knowledge and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He describes Jesus as the word of life. He describes him as the life manifested. He describes him as eternal life.

And the Son of God. That's John's view. Of the Lord Jesus. One writer has summarised these three verses in this way.

[3 : 28] John is declaring that kindness and grace has been shown. Because a person of eternal, essential life has come and visited humanity.

And he has given us. And he has given us. And he has given us. And he has procured eternal life for them. And then confirmed it upon them. That's their summary of these three verses.

John stresses in each of these verses. That we can trust the message that he's going to deliver. In the following verses.

In the rest of the letter. Not only does he have faith in Christ. But he says you can trust me. You can trust what I'm telling you.

Why? Because I was there. That's what he says. He said Christ taught me. He said I have seen.

[4 : 34] I have heard. I have handled. And now. I am constrained. To pass this message on to you.

Now we could hang around. In those first three verses. For the rest of the morning. And enjoy looking at how John sees Christ. How much he loves him.

And how much he wants this message. To get across. But as we move on. To verse five. We reveals more.

Of this message. He's going to elaborate it all through. One John. And bits of it carry on into. Two John. And three John.

But what he's dealing with. Are three. Fundamental. Messages. And they are things.

[5 : 39] That we as Christians. If we are Christians. This morning. We need to. Think about. We need to consider. What is being said. And the truth of it. But if this morning.

You're not a Christian. Don't switch off. Don't think this doesn't concern you. Because we're going to be dealing with. Some of the fundamentals.

Of what the Christian message is. Is all about. So whether you're young. Whether you're old.

Whether you're an experienced Christian. Or whether you're a young Christian.

The message that John. The apostle John. Wants to get across. Is to confirm to you. That you know. Why you believe. And if you don't believe.

I think he's asking the question. Why not? What is it about. This message. You don't understand.

So we hope. That in some way.

[6 : 37] We're going to meander through that. And get some understanding. Of what it's about. So what is this message. That John. Wants to put across. Well.

It divides into three parts. From this first chapter. Quite easily. But you'll see the divides. Although it's sort of intermingled.

In the way in which the chapter is. So I hope it doesn't come as muddled. As I'm making it sound.

But let's see where we go. The first thing John is telling us.

That the message. Of Christ. Is a message. Of light. And darkness. Verse five and six.

God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him. And walk in darkness. We lie. And we do not practice the truth. I don't know if you've ever had.

[7 : 35] The experience. Of going down a pothole. When I was in my teens. I remember taking some. Young people. To a pothole. Over in Cumbria.

And. Putting the helmet on. And these overalls on. And doing that in the daylight. You're very brave aren't you. When you're standing in the daylight.

Thinking I'm going down that hole. And when you climb down. The hole. We had to go down. Some rope ladders. To start with. And you could still look up. And see the sunshine. And then.

When we're all gathered together. In this cavern. They said. Turn your lights on. Because this is where it starts. To get different. And I can remember. Going deeper and deeper.

And feeling quite confident. Because I had a light. And so did everybody else. On their helmets. But when we got a bit wet. When we were lying on our stomachs.

[8 : 33] Crawling through crevasses. And different things. I remember getting more and more nervous. And then we were lying in water. And he said.

Turn your lights off. Your helmets. It's the scariest thing. I've ever done in my life. Being with loads of other people.

Even though there were loads of people around. Turning that light off. Dark. You can go out on a dark night.

Can't you? And there's still a sense of light. But down in a pothole. There's no light at all.

And it is tangible. You know people talk about. Don't they? Feeling the darkness. You can feel the darkness. Well the darkness being referred to by John.

[9 : 32] Maybe not a real darkness. In the sense that it's dark around us. But it's a darkness in our souls. In our hearts.

It's real. It's tangible. It's tangible. It can be felt. This darkness is living a life without Christ.

And without hope. Being disobedient. Being rebellious. Doing our own thing with no reference to God. That's what John's talking about.

This darkness is being separated from God. Willfully going our own way. And the darkness is made even more tangible.

When you've heard the message of Christ. When somebody has told you. About the Lord Jesus. And yet you're still determined.

[10 : 39] To go your own way. Now I think this morning. Those of you who are sitting in these seats. Who have come to Christ.

Do you look back? Do you see the darkness you lived in once? I do. I think we all do. We look back and we think.

How dark my life was without Christ. Why is that? Because now we live in the light. We live in the light of God's grace.

Those who've been saved. Live in the light of him. The darkness is for those. Who cannot. And will not.

See. God in Christ Jesus. It's not a happy message is it?

[11 : 41] It doesn't stir the soul with encouragement. Isaiah the prophet tells us. Doesn't he? In that exhilarating chapter. Chapter 9.

Where we read about the prophecies. Of Christ's coming. How does he start it? The people walked in darkness. That's how it starts.

Psalms 107. Talks about those who sat in darkness. And in the shadow of death. Bound in affliction. Because. They rebelled against God.

Living in the darkness. That's living in a place. Where sin has dominion. But this is a message of light.

That's the bit that. That John wants to get. Across to us. God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. There's no sin.

[12 : 46] God doesn't. He hates sin. But in him is there's no light. There's no darkness. Only light. And we are encouraged.

Colossians 1 tells us. And testifies. That those who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Have been transported.

Conveyed. Delivered. Transferred. Those are the words. Those are the words. Out of the power of darkness.

Into the kingdom of the son of his love. Do you live in the darkness. Do you live in the darkness. Well the only person who can take you out of the darkness.

Is Jesus Christ. You can't walk out of it yourself. All these words. Are words.

[13 : 49] That give us. A very clear indication. That somebody else has to do it. We've been delivered.

Conveyed. Transferred. Transported. This deliverance. That Colossians talks about. Is the only remedy.

For sin. It has been freely given. It has been freely offered. By Jesus Christ. When he died.

On the hill. At Calvary. I'm sure last week. You were considering. Calvary. The cross.

That's where the light shines from. That's the only place you can find. Where the light abides. Is Calvary. Because that's where Christ.

[14 : 50] Died for our sins. Remember that old hymn. In my place. Condemned he stood. Sealed my pardon.

With his blood. The apostle Paul. Who wrote a lot of other letters. In our new testament. He also. Experienced this.

Didn't he? The apostle Paul. He was in darkness. He was a Pharisee. Of the Pharisees. There was nobody more passionate. And ardent.

In his pursuit. Of stamping out. Christians. He had stood. And watched people die. For Christ. So we could say that.

He lived in darkness. He knew what that was like. He was a hypocrite. Wasn't he? Because he said he loved God. And yet he clearly.

[15 : 48] Didn't live out. Those things. But then he knew physical darkness. Because he met God. And God closed his eyes.

And then prayer came. Through Ananias. And the scales of darkness. Fell away. Just fell away. The light of God's grace.

Then came in. Didn't he? Came in. Illuminated his heart. Softened it. Warmed it. A new man.

A different man. Because the light. Penetrates the darkness. Of our souls. Exposes. Exposes.

Who we are. And what we are. So that we can do no other. When the light of God's grace. Comes in our heart.

[16 : 53] We can do no other. Than confess our sins. And he will be faithful. And just to forgive us our sins. You see you can see the dirt.

In the light. Can't you? When we clean our houses. We don't clean it with the light off. Do we? You might think.

What does he know about cleaning houses? I know quite a lot. Six bedrooms. You see. It's easy to clean. You know. You have to get them clean. Don't you? But you turn the light on.

So you can see the dirt. So you can see the cobwebs. So you can see what's going on. And you know. Isaiah prophesied.

Years before. We live in darkness. He says. But the Lord will arise. And the Gentiles. Will come to your light.

[17 : 53] Prophesying. That we live in darkness. We live in sin. And yet. Christ will come. Will shed his light.

And we will come. Have you come to that light? This morning. Have you come to that light? You see.

Darkness is sin. And we must not hide it. But we must confess it. We must allow the rays of God's light. And love. To embrace us.

To enfold us. Jesus. But there is a warning. In this chapter. It says. Beware of the hypocrisy.

If we say we live in the light. But do not behave like it. Then perhaps that light has not. Shone as it should have done. In our hearts.

[18 : 54] So that's the first thing. That comes out of this chapter. It's a message of darkness and light.

There is the darkness of sin. But there's also the light of God's grace. Secondly. Second message is this.

That there is a message of fellowship. And not of isolation. Or solitude. So this word is mentioned. Fellowship. Four times.

In these ten verses. The thrust of this seems to be. That for those who now live in light. In the light. That fellowship with God. And fellowship. With one another. Are key indicators. Of somebody who's living.

[19 : 51] In the light of God's grace. In the light of God's grace. In the light of God. In the light of God. In the light of God. In the light of God. In the light of God. So what can we learn for this? It exposes three other things for us.

It exposes the fact. That we cannot love the world. And claim fellowship with Christ. God is light. God is light. God is light. Says John.

And in him is no darkness at all. So later on in this letter. John expands this. When he says. Do not love the world.

Or the things of the world. If we do. The love of the Father is not in us. And all that is in the world. Is not of the Father. Have you come to the light?

Is the light. Energizing everything you do. Or have you still got one foot. In the darkness. This verse. [21 : 04] This verse. This verse is tell us. That we cannot love God. And love the world. If we love the world.

Where the darkness dwells. The love of the Father is not in us. Striking words aren't they? Challenging words.

We cannot love the world. And claim to have fellowship with God. We are to actively fellowship with God.

So. We cannot love the world. But then we are to do something positive. We are to actively fellowship with God. This is not optional.

This is not optional. God doesn't save us to live in isolation. He wants us to have fellowship with himself.

[22 : 06] And with one another. But we will come on to that in a few minutes. The conclusion for John seems to be. That if God has saved us from our sins.

It is inevitable. It is inevitable. That we will want to. And desire to be with. Those who have been. Likewise saved. Those who are also in the light. We will be attracted to. And it's interesting isn't it. When you're in the light. You understand so much more about the darkness. When you're in darkness.

When I was down that pothole. The thought that somebody else was quite close. Was frightening. But unnerving.

[23 : 07] Because I couldn't see them. I had no sense of direction. Of if I needed help.

Even putting my hand up. To turn the light back on again. Seemed to be a real struggle. Because the darkness. Isolates.

It isolates us. Do you have fellowship. When you're in darkness. Have you done that. Played that game. With the children. Where you know. You put a mask on them.

And they're in darkness. And you're all in light. And they feel so isolated. Where are you. Trying to find you. I just wonder.

Whether the writer. The Hebrews. Perhaps had an inkling. Of this sort of. Behaviour. When he wrote those words. Do not forsake.

[24 : 07] The assembling of yourselves together. As the manner of summies. If we forsake. The assembling of ourselves together. What's that about?

Is that the darkness. Intruding. Into the life. Of the believer. In the life of the church. The light. But we come together.

To encourage each other. Our witness. To the light. Is when we come together. To worship. Like this.

When you come together. To pray. When you come together. To sing hymns. And psalms. Because you see.

When we come together. In the light. We're not really. Coming together. For the sake. Of our fellow believers.

[25 : 07] Our focus. Is Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we come together. To worship him. It's him. It's him.

We look towards. It's him. We seek. Doesn't it say. Where two or three. Are gathered together. There I am. In the midst of them. God wants us. To fellowship with him. He comes. To meet us. Just where two or three. Of us are together. He says.

There I am. The word is tabernacling. That's where I dwell. With where two or three. I dwell with them. That's the depth.

Of the fellowship. That Christ. Has. He wants us to be willing. He wants us to be anticipating.

[26 : 11] Hatry. He wants us to expect him. To be there. He wants to meet with us. Together. He wants to shed.

His radiant light. Over us again. When he's with us. Keeping the darkness at bay. Keeping under the rays.

Of his glorious gospel. That leads us on to. That leads us on to. Sort of like a third. Part of this. He wants us to have a relationship with him.

Fellowship with him. But also. Relationship with one another. We are to expressly. And outwardly. Love. Our fellow Christians. If you're not a Christian this morning.

When you look around. At the rest of the congregation. And people you know are Christians. Do you see that love? Do you see that they really care for people? That they're really considerate?

[27 : 17] That they love them deeply? Loving one another. Is a key. A fundamental characteristic.

Evident of true fellowship. In the church. We can all say can't we? I love God. I do.

I love God. Rolls off the tongue. But when you look around. At your fellow believers. You know what's coming don't you?

We're a funny bunch. I think that. You know. We are a funny bunch. And you think. How can I love them? How can I love them? How can I love them?

But Jesus says this. Well. It comes in. Later on. John says it. But it's. Emphasized by Jesus. John gives us.

[28 : 20] This vivid. This very profound challenge. Later on. In this. Particular epistle. Listen to these words. He who hates.

His brother. Is in darkness. And walks in darkness. He's blinded. And doesn't know where he's going. What a challenge.

What a challenge. Brought from darkness. Into light. We fellowship with God. Hate our brothers. How can we say. We live in. Light of God's love. And yet hate someone. Who Christ also died for. And gave himself for.

This is like a real internal thermometer. Inside of us. Challenges our spiritual perspective. Do I really love God.

[29 : 25] As I should. Do I really love Christ. As I should. You see.

Those who walk in the light. Love as Christ loved the church. That's the way we should be. He demonstrated. He demonstrated his love.

Toward us. And that while we were yet sinners. He died for us. And his expectation is. That we love in that same quality.

That he loves us. We love each other.

Because God first loved us. And gave himself for us. That's why we love one another. It shows our devotion to him. Him who brought us out of darkness.

[30 : 32] Him who we fellowship with. And we're very happy. And we love to do that. But he says. There's more to it than that. We must love one another.

Truly. Deeply. Spiritually. Practically. The apostle says.

Later on in chapter 3 of this. This epistle. We know that we are passed. From death into life. Because we love our brethren. So it's one of those assurances.

That God gives us. We know we passed from death into life. We know that we're Christians. We know that we love God. Because we love our brethren.

Now some people say. You know. Well I don't know. A few years ago. I used to be quite a fan of the Snoopy cartoons. I don't know whether you were.

[31 : 35] But he. But Charlie Brown used to have this saying. Didn't he? I love mankind. It's people I can't stand. And that was what it's like. And sometimes we say. Well we love the brethren.

But them. That. I can't. There's no place for that. Under God's rule. No place for that. We love the brethren.

We love those who are believers. But Christ also died for sinners. If this morning.

You're not a Christian. Christ died for you. He loves you. But this is his standard. This is his standard.

If you love me. You will love the brethren. You will love sin. So if you come to Christ. He doesn't make it an easy road. He asks commitment.

[32 : 38] He asks you to love others. As much as he loved you. So.

It's a message of darkness and light. It's a message of fellowship. Not isolation. But it's also. A message of truth.

And not lies. If we say we have no sin. We deceive ourselves. The truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned.

We make him a liar. And his word is not in us. Very quickly. John wants us all to hear.

He wants us all to believe. And understand. That the truth. Is important. And that if we deny.

[33 : 41] Our sins. If we ignore. The evidence. That he's sharing with us here. About being. A message of light. Sinners being in the darkness.

Only being saved. Through Christ. And he's saying. That we are. Deluding ourselves. If we think. We're going to be. Okay. The evidence is clear. From John. Only Christ. Can save. Only Christ. Can bring us. Out of the light. Into the darkness. He has achieved that. At Calvary. But if the light. Has not penetrated. If we have not. Put our trust in Christ. If we have not. Opened our hearts. To him. We are still. In the darkness. We are still.

[34 : 39] In sin. We are still. Without hope. In this world. God. If I could.

Plead with you. If I could. Beg you. If I could. Make you a Christian. Today. I would. But I can't. Only Christ. Can save. Why do we stay.

In the darkness. It hinders. Everything. About the enjoyment. Of Christ. Following on.

From this. If we stay. In our sin. We are deluded. It says. The truth. Is not in us. We are lying. To ourselves. Following.

On from this. John. Illuminates. The path. For us. Doesn't he? Telling us. That if we recognize. This. If we recognize. The fact.

[35 : 47] That we are in our sin. Then. He will come. And cleanse us.

If we ask him. The work. Of the spirit. Of truth. Helping us.

To see ourselves. As we really are. And to go. To the one.

Who is light. Who has no darkness. In him at all. And seek. His forgiveness. I am the way.

The truth. And the life. Jesus said that. The only way. The only truth. Eternal life.

[36 : 46] And John. Emphasizes here. In the first three verses. He emphasized. For us to see these things.

To open our minds. To these things. To the truth. Of the words. That he speaks. Because he says. I want you to learn.

Like I learned. I want you to understand. I want you to hear. And I want you to come. To Christ. Come out of the darkness.

Let him convey you. Out of the darkness. Into the light. Of God's love. And when Jesus. Touches our lives. When he comes in.

He enables us. To see. Where we have been. All these years. Were you converted.

[37 : 46] As an older person. Do you look back. And think of all those years. In the darkness. Or if you're a younger person. Look forward.

All those years. You can spend. In the light. Of God's grace. The truth.

Is that Christ. Is that Christ. Shed his blood. At Calvary. For sinners. He died. For you. And for me. If we will only. Trust him. So what do we. Conclude from this. What's John's purpose.

Why is John. Stressing these things. Why is this letter. Been written. Why is it been written. With energy. And enthusiasm. Why does he want us.

[38 : 46] To know this message. Well if you've noticed. We haven't talked about. One verse. And that's verse four. And these things. We write to you.

That your joy. May be full. The purpose of John. Writing this letter. The purpose of John. Sending this message.

About light and darkness. About fellowship. Or isolation. About truth and lies. Is this. That your joy. That your joy.

My joy. Might be full. Complete. Without any doubt. Now you can read the rest of.

This epistle. And you'll see it being developed. And it developed. And this is like the. The introduction. Into what's going on.

[39 : 50] But be encouraged. Rejoice. If you are a Christian. You know the light. You've come to him.

Rejoice in that fact. Love the brethren. Fellowship with Christ. Hold on to the truth. But if you're not a Christian.

Why do you want to dwell. In the darkness of sin. Any longer than today. Come to Christ. Come to him.

Ask him to forgive you. Your sins. And to cleanse you. From all unrighteousness. And he will.

Amen.

Amen.