



Trusting the Word of Life
Wk. 1 Light & Love - 1 John 1:1-4
By Pastor Jody May

1 John 1:1-4 ESV

The Word of Life

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— 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— 3 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. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

BACKGROUND:

Who, What, When, and Where:

Who-This letter was written most agree by the Apostle John. Although nowhere in this letter does it self-identify John as the author most have come to believe it was him. It doesn't take an analytical or a language expert to see the overlap between the Gospel of John and the epistles that have garnered his name. John is described as very close with Jesus when he was here on earth. Close enough that Jesus left in John's care His mother Mary, upon entering His glorified state.

What-You also must understand what you are reading. This is a letter; we call it an *epistle* in theological terms. It is a public address to not a singular person but to a group of individuals which are being spoken to as if they are one. That works well when one is writing to a church, a body tied together by their faith in Jesus, they are one.

Where-Now what group of Christians is he talking to? Most believe he is writing to the church in Ephesus. That means not just one group of people somewhere in Ephesus but that all the Christians



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located in and near Ephesus would receive this letter. This transcript would circulate from home gathering to home gathering in the city around the countryside for those that would call Ephesus their home.

When-There has been some speculation about this but most likely in the early 90s AD. He probably wrote it after his gospel and before the book of Revelation. It is at the close of the age of first-generation Apostleship. John is the last one, that last one that speaks with the authority of one of the original disciples of the Christ.

Why-Because John is their *spiritual father*. Back in the middle of the century Apollos had come and evangelized the city, then Paul shows up, picks a fight with the town leaders, destroys its' economy, wars against demonic which craft, and the church was birthed in fire. Then comes John, that becomes their Elder, and teaches them how to love and why they are to be different than the rest of the world.

In John's Day there was debate and confusion about how a person achieved eternal life = enlightenment & physical resurrection. Theologians / Historians have come to believe that one of the reasons John wrote this book was due to the rise of an offshoot of Christian religion, more of a philosophy, called *Gnosticism*.

Gnosticism comes from the Greek word "gnosis" which means simply, "to know". It was esoteric in nature, meaning not everyone could obtain it, it was mystically achieved, you didn't learn it, it just was there or came into being on its' own.

The danger in Gnosticism for this church was what it taught about Salvation:

Salvation: Gnosticism claims hidden knowledge as the basis for salvation. Adherents believed that secret revelation frees the "divine spark" within humans, allowing the human soul to return to the divine realm of light in which it belongs. Gnostics, thus, divided Christians into two categories with one group being carnal



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(inferior) and the other being spiritual (superior). Only the superior, divinely enlightened persons could comprehend the secret teachings and obtain true salvation.¹

The Big Issues:

So, John wants to address how do we refrain from falling away into the error of Gnosticism. How do we keep from being lured away from the teachings of Christ? That is our challenge to accept today, our prayer is God show us the way in which we cling to our faith!²

LIGHT & LOVE

John gives us **2 Resources** by which to do this:

1st - Light, which comes from Christ and is sustained in Fellowship with each other. You are to obey it and seek it 1:7&9.

2nd - Love, learning how to treasure God and value each other. We are to guard it and yield to its' impulses.

INTRODUCTION:

Hey! Get the attention...

We are just weeks away from an annual sporting event that occurs only every 4 years, the Olympics! What makes this such a great event is that it gives athletes the opportunity to really discover are they the best in the world! Along with that, athletes benefit so much from being around each other, sharing, encouraging, relating, that part of the Olympic experience 'IS' the building of relationships that they will have for the rest of their lives.

My son and I are wrestling fans, it is one of the oldest Olympic sports there is, and we were able to watch behind the scenes this year how the wrestlers coped with having to delay their whole lives for a year, thanks to COVID.

¹ <https://www.learnreligions.com/what-is-gnosticism-700683>

² <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/1john/1john.htm>



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These athletes had to spend another year engaged at high levels of competition, had to put family plans on hold, had to trust their coaches and nutritionists to get them to their peak condition again in a year. Make no mistake when you see an American take the stand for GOLD this year, they did not get there on their own it was because they Trusted in their coaches, nutritionists, trainers, rehabilitators, and most above all their training partners; when they get to that platform it required a full **TEAM Effort**.

You! Indicate that the subject matter at hand applies to the listeners...

Olympic life is no joke, but family do you know that your spiritual life is just as challenging, and the Bible describes it as of much more importance that you pay attention to your soul rather than your body? ([Mat. 16:26](#))

The Apostle Paul described the Christian life in much the same way, from a time and region that gave birth to the Olympic games, he says this about the Christian life:

1 Corinthians 9:24 ESV

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

Paul recognizes and so should we that the Christian life IS a race, it IS taxing, it IS endured to gain the crown of life ([James 1:12](#)), and like Olympians you are going to need some help if you want to make it to the trophy platform. When one day you stand before the thrown of God it won't be because you did it all by yourself or you did it your way, BUT it will be because it was a TEAM effort and it required you to trust in Coach, trust in your spiritual trainers, and the reliance of those running this race with you.

As good as this sounds though we have tendencies to forget that all the time and when we forget this wonderful freeing truth, we find ourselves caught again in the daily struggle with the rest of the world to justify ourselves by our own works.

Look! Give some information about the subject to come...



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Our text today shares the secret of how we discover and retain the truth of the Gospel so that every day we can live in the peace of our Savior's accomplishments for our lives.

Do! Tell them what they are expected to do as a result of hearing the sermon...

We will discover today, **the 1st step**, that God has established by which we can experience the saving knowledge of Jesus everyday of our lives **provided** we are willing to share our lives with those that believe the same as we do.

OUTLINE:

The Good News about Jesus is He is someone you can TRUST, that has been testified to, and by believing in Him we have joyful community.

1. You can Trust Jesus because the Apostles did.

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*.

A. Explanation:

This epistle is written most likely in the early 90s AD. John is writing to you from the perspective of living a hard, long, tenacious, but fruitful life. John knows what it takes to get to the winner's circle, he's relating to us not as someone who has heard, this is **first-hand experience we are getting!**

His description of that experience is no joke: John had the opportunity to learn directly from Jesus, to see Him, see Him what? – DO MIRACLES! **John touched Him** and why is that important because it most likely means in **the resurrected state!** Then John gives Jesus this title – **The Word of Life.**

B. Illustration:



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It has been over 60 years since John has seen Jesus in the flesh and he still thinks the same thing about Jesus as he did when Jesus walked the earth when he wrote his first gospel:

John 1:1-5 ESV

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John, by use of Jesus' title, **Word of Life** in v.1 means he's never found anything over 60 years running, better to take Jesus' place, he's never found a better coach, a better friend, and even at this point in history when most the disciples are dead he doesn't stop believing and **Trusting in Jesus, this Word of Life**. The apostles (but John) have died proclaiming Jesus' name, they never found anything better either, and right now they are experiencing the crown of eternal life, and like Paul they have fought through their time on earth to be able to say:

2 Timothy 4:7-8 ESV

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

C. Argumentation:

Paul ran it to win it, the other apostles ran it to win it, they have **retained their crown of righteousness** and you can too if you are **willing to TRUST JESUS** as the Apostles Trusted Jesus.

Jesus, the coach, has literally the WORDS of Life, and we can find them all in one place, our BIBLE. Trust His Word family so we can celebrate together on the other side, so we too can claim to have *fought the good fight!*



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You need know something else though, the reason that Jesus is so suited to getting us through this life well, is because He was hand-picked for the job by the one who set up the path for life.

2. You can Trust Jesus because the Father does.

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

Again, they reiterate their time with Him, but then they credit the one who sent Him – the Father – they believe unlike the Pharisees/Sadducees/Scribes that indeed He was sent from God. John again risks his own neck in light of the Jews reading this, that he believes Jesus speaks for God, this is what got Jesus killed in the first place. That doesn't matter now to John, he's too old to care, what's important is that you should know what does it mean to have the backing of the Father...

A. Illustration:

You should know hands down why you trust your life coach Jesus Christ!

Philippians 2: 6-11 ESV

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father.**

'Form' there in v. 6 doesn't mean He was 'like' God but that **He was God**, He is the second person in the trinity! Furthermore, the text relates for us, He was with Him, but He humbled Himself to the Father's plan - the course laid out to a Substitutionary Death.



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For that Jesus didn't just get crown of Righteousness for Himself BUT US! And that beautiful plan of humility, and associating with us as The Son of Man, was all to the Father's credit. The Father made the plan, He trusted Jesus, because He knew Jesus could get the job done, if the Father trusts Him then it's a sin when we don't!

B. Application:

Just a warning here today as well. Many people have a problem trusting Jesus, because I believe they have not taken the time to learn about Him and put His Word to the test. In 1 John it led to some in the church walking away which is one of the reasons John wrote this letter.

1 John 2:19 ESV

¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

People were led away from the church in John's day because they were deceived by people who did not believe in Jesus as the Word of life. There were people who believed not in Jesus' deity, or He only appeared human but was just a phantom, or He was not eternal all these beliefs negate Jesus' authority and power in your life and if that gets taken away from Him, you and I will stop listening to Him.

That will lead you to either a pitiful group of friends who believe not in God, who believe life is only what you can make of if it or it will bring you into some of those lifelong relationships, we talked about in the beginning today.

3. You can Trust Jesus to Give & Receive Joyful Community.

³that 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. ⁴And we are writing these things so that **our joy may be complete.**



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A. Explanation:

The invite by the Apostles is to join them, in what? **Joyful community** between them, the Father, and the Son. First, what's in it for them - joy!

Hebrews 13:17 ESV

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

One reason we want to Trust Jesus is that it makes the life of your church leaders a lot easier and pleasant. That's an ok thing guys! It helps them to feel encouraged for as the scripture indicates they are responsible for you. It is a hard weight to carry when you know that you are not only responsible for yourselves, but you are held accountable for those you give oversight to. Make this enjoyable for them.

B. Application:

Secondly, when you accept that life is all about **trials not smiles**, joy can still be **sustained** by the relationships you **obtain**. Life was made by God to be experienced together with other people that all are working at trusting Jesus.

Proverbs 17:17 ESV

A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.

This is such a blessing, I know for myself I have longed for half my life to have a family that not only cared about doing the right things loving God, but also cares whether I am doing the right thing or not.

Trusting Jesus brings us into this type of community, a support community for the purpose of running this race called life.

CONCLUSION:



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So, you want the good news today:

The Good News about Jesus is He is someone you can TRUST, that has been testified to, and by believing in Him we have joyful community.

Family, what a great opportunity we have before us today, to experience not only the benefits of eternal life that comes through **Trusting Jesus**, but we have a great example of what a life looks like when it is blessed with true Christian Friendship.

What you may not know, John, after writing his letters, is taken prisoner, tortured, and exiled to the isle of Patmos. The World tried to destroy John but what we see in the text is that John already knew the value of trusting in Jesus. He doesn't spend His time longing for death and lamenting on how his life was ending but instead was rewarded with the glorious vision of Jesus' return and ultimate victory over this world and he records it in the book of Revelation for Christ's church. John was more concerned about his legacy, about his church family, and about the fame of Jesus, that being boiled in oil could not kill him. It was God's decision to preserve him and ultimately show this world what does it look like for a Christian to be victorious in life up through one's death.

RESPONSE:

Today, will you take it on the Word of the Apostles and discover that Jesus 'IS' the **Word of Life - if you haven't gotten on a Bible reading plan yet start today, get an accountability partner through your CG. Don't make excuses for why the world has got you beat without first going to the one that beat it!**

Today, will you trust the Father and follow in His example for Trust in His Son? Is there something that you have a hard time believing about Christ, His deity, His humanity, the fact that He suffered as we do? That is essential for you to believe and for your Trust. Believe that He was fully God and fully man!

Today, you want to know how to make your pastors happy? Trust Jesus, step into this church, become a contributing member, and let's all take on a position of a servant in the upcoming days.



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Lastly, make us all happy in this church, and confess your sins, turn from a worldly life and follow Jesus as your Lord, as your Savior, as your coach for all of life and be a part of this joyful community.

Let me remind you one more time:

The Good News about Jesus is He is someone you can TRUST, He has been testified to, and by believing in Him we have joyful community.