

## 1 John 1:1-3

### “The basis of our fellowship”

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#### I. Intro

This morning we start our study into the introduction to the apostle John’s first letter. As noted in our overview of this letter last week John does not share the normal format of ancient letters in his introduction as *he does not introduce himself nor who his intended readers were*. Such normal formality is replaced with what consumed John; *the master passion of his life: The Person and Work of Jesus Christ!* The theme of this letter is “*Fellowship*”, and John’s aim in the first three verses is to reveal to his readers the “*Basis Fellowship*” which *John joyously remembers from the beginning of his relationship 70 years earlier*. Humanity cannot have any lasting harmony with their fellow man if there is no harmony with their creator, so there is no better place to start a topic on fellowship than with what Jesus has done to restore a right relationship. We cannot regain our relationship with God on our works or effort; we are 100% dependent upon God to bridge the eternal separation that existed between a Holy God and sinful humanity. Throughout this letter John is just as amazed at Jesus as he had been since he first encountered Jesus! It is noticeable in John’s use of the words’ “*as He*” and “*even as He*” which John uses some 6 times in this letter. Jesus is on John’s heart and mind at the beginning of this letter in 1:1-3 and He is still there at the end of this letter in 5:20. Though not asked the elderly apostle John answers the question to his readers of “*What Jesus is to me 70 years after I last*

saw Him physically!” In the use of those words “AS HE” we note that those 6 occurrences are arranged into three pairs both inwardly and outwardly:

1. *Jesus Christ our example in relationship to the Father:*
  - a. 1:7 Inward:
  - b. 2:6 Outward:
2. *Jesus Christ our example in relationship to our self:*
  - a. 2:3 Inward:
  - b. 3:7 Outward:
3. *Jesus Christ our example in relationship to others:*
  - a. 3:23 Inward:
  - b. 4:17 Outward:

With magnificent clarity John describes three amazing truths about His Son as THE instrument and “Basis of our fellowship”. Before we look at this notice first that John makes this threefold declaration about Jesus from three different perspectives:

1. **Vs. 1 Personal experience:** The Jesus John had encountered was, HEARD, SEEN, and INVESTIGATED. Notice that John’s personal encounter and initial perception hadn’t changed or altered even in the 70 years that had elapsed. In fact, what John had HEARD, SEEN, and INVESTIGATED in Jesus during His earthly life and again had done so after the resurrection has become His calling in life and the thing that John most wanted to talk about. So how about Christian? Has anything changed from the impact Jesus made in the beginning of your encounter with Him? Oh, I pray you love has increased and not decreased!
2. **Vs. 2 Personal testimony:** John declares that his “*experience*” has become his

“*privileged vocation*” and for the last 70 years he has “*born witness*” of that experience.

That my dear friends is what every Christian’s truest calling is “bear witness” to our encounter with our Lord. And what is that witness? Well John says that it is that “LIFE WAS MANIFESTED” in Jesus. That we began the TRUE purpose and experience of what God had designed for humanity when He created us when we encountered Jesus!

3. **Vs. 3 *Personal communication***: Next John says that he was engaged in this witness by the means of “personal declaration”. It is true of all of us; *that which we love the most we talk the most about!* In the case of some, the one they love the most is themselves and that is what they speak most on. Other’s it may be a hobby or profession or family! I want to talk about the One that saved my life, the comforter of my soul, my resting place and only joy, my Lord, Savior, and best friend....JESUS!

The basis of our fellowship is Jesus Christ and here in the first three verses John not only tells us how Jesus impacted him but in what ways Jesus did so.

1. Vs. 1 “*That which was from the beginning*”: John’s experience from the beginning conferred the truth to his heart that Jesus was first *Eternal* and second *Divine!* Take that in for a moment....John looked upon, listened, and considered all that JESUS said and did for 3 ½ years and then after the resurrection and his conclusion that governed the remainder of his over 100 years of life was that Jesus was God and eternal. We must not take such an examination lightly as John speaks of not only the thoroughness of the investigation but the certainty of it as he spent the remainder of his life dedicated to communicating the FACTS of this investigation. Just consider what evidence it would take for you to come to these same conclusions while looking at a man who in physical appearance looked just like you!

2. Vs. 1a ***“Concerning the Word of Life”***: Second John recognized through his investigation of Jesus that He alone is life giving and unique. John describes Jesus as the “Word of Life” the word is Logos the one who “speaks and it comes into existence”. Jesus, John declares is the ***“Life giver”*** as well as the ***“eternal life giver”***! Again, think of the handicaps that John had to overcome to come to these conclusions! The years of prejudice and experience....there had never been one who walked on earth that was God the Son, who was LOGOS the very one who spoke, and things came into existence! Furthermore, in 70 years of life and experiences nothing had come into his life that changed or altered that revelation.
3. Vs. 2 ***“The life was manifested”***: Finally, John says that this very Person whom he examined for 3 ½ years that was Eternal and Divine that is the Logos the Word Life Giver was made visible on this earth and John had to reconcile this reality. The Eternal and Divine became man, took on human form. Paul had also come to this same conclusion in Philip. 2:5-8 ***“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*** The incarnation of Jesus is what John writes of here and it is the most amazing reality that has ever happened in all of human history!

When John wrote his gospel he started with the Person of Jesus who according to John 1:1 was both Divine and human. In the Gospel John simply calls Jesus, the Word but here in this letter he says that Jesus is the Word of Life, and we can safely proclaim as John does that Christianity is

Christ and our foundation is the fact of Jesus' Divine Person and Work. The Church ceases to exist, and its relevance becomes insignificant if it ever becomes ununited to their founder Jesus!

Vs.3 The final thing we are given in this section is the reason for this manifestation: The answer is both simple and at the same time extremely profound....it was for the purpose of fellowship!!

John says it right here “*that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*”

- The word “Fellowship” is a word that means things in common. And Paul would ask in 2 Cor. 6:14-17 “*For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?*” That is why God gave His only son and the fact that all redemptive work has in view the necessity of bring man out of lawlessness to righteousness, enmity to friendship and loneliness to fellowship.
- Next we see whom fellowship is with and first it is with the Father, and it includes four things:
  - a. **Access to His presence**: And the access according to the Word of God, is not only in time of need but also when we fail as when we confess our sins He is faithful to forgive us ALL our iniquity. We are invited in Hebrews to approach His throne boldly in prayer but not only that we can enjoy the sense of presence in peace throughout the day.
  - b. **Assurance of His favor**: We can know because the redemptive work was based upon God's goodness and not our own that we are blessed with “every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus”.
  - c. **Enjoyment of His truth**: We can enjoy the word of God even when it is corrective in attitudes and actions as the Bible tells us that God disciplines those He loves.
  - d. **Possession of His love**: Finally, our fellowship with God purposes the realization that we

are loved and belong to the Only one who knows us completely and yet still has chosen to love us completely.

- Because our fellowship starts with reconciliation with God it can extend to fellowship with humanity. There can be no lasting fellowship with humanity that doesn't start with fellowship with God and such fellowship with God must be initiated by God. John says that because of the work of God they had fellowship with them. We are in joint relationship with others who are beneficiaries of God's grace. This in turn has placed us in joint participation in love, labor, and hope all to the glory of God. Our life in fellowship with God is never alone but in union with God and our fellow servants of Jesus.