**Series on 1, 2, 3 John: Fellowship in the Community of Faith** 1John 1:4-2:11

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| **Slides** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title Slide |
| 2 | **Introduction**  We’ve been studying in the Book of John since January 1. We finished that and are now moving on to another set of Bible books for which most believe John wrote. These are called 1, 2, 3 John. It is thought that they were written about 10 years after the books of John, around 90-100 AD. Since the gospel is thought to be directed to a church in Ephesus, most think 1, 2, 3 John is meant for the same. By this time, the persecutions of Christians by the Jewish leaders and the Romans were intense. John must have been weary of hearing of several of his fellow disciples being tortured and killed for the gospel. It is assumed he was caring for Jesus’ mother, since Jesus asked him to do so when he and Mary watched the crucifixion. I’m sure he was active in the witness to Jesus, but he’d seen the Temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. He had seen many of his fellow believers arrested and put to death. And still he did not know his future when God would reveal the Revelation on the isle of Patmos. He lived in troubled times. And we can identify with that! We live in times of multiple natural disasters, multiple wars, the COVID-19 virus and much division in the world, let alone the U.S. |
| 3 | Oh, how I think John longed for the friendship and intimacy he had with Jesus. The picture in our mind’s eye is John leaning against the chest of Jesus during that last meal he and the disciples had with him! That intimacy seems to spark these writings of John we are looking at for the next few weeks. Listen again to verses 1:1-4:  1. We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our own eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our own hands, concerning the word of life – this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testified to it, and declared to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. |
| 4 | John is concerned that over the years the followers of Jesus have the form of Christianity in the face of persecutions, but they have lost their joy and intimacy with Christ and fellowship with each other. Their struggles have taken that joy away and, as we will learn later, many have left the church. But John still considers the remaining ones as faithful followers because in Ch. 2:1 he refers to them as “my little children,” which is a term used to indicate they are children of God through Jesus. Yet, they have lost the intimacy of being part of the family of God.  In this first chapter of 1st John, John is interested in helping these followers to reclaim the joy & intimacy they once had.   * Do you ever feel like this? That you have lost the joy and intimacy with Christ that you once had in those early days when you declared Jesus as your Savior & Lord.   I must admit during these last 2 years with the COVID and having to do virtual church and limited in-person worship, I have lost some of my joy and enthusiasm! |
| 5 | But the good news is that John gives us a way to reclaim that joy and intimacy with Christ and with each other.  First he shows what he knows about Jesus and wants us to reclaim it. That is what we need to understand about God. God is Light – no darkness not even a shadow of darkness is in God. In light we can see the reality, nothing is hidden when the light shines upon us. But if we chose, we can walk in darkness and that will surely lead us away from God, into the world, where evil abounds. Ex. I’ve shared this before, but it fits here. I like my bedroom as dark as possible when I sleep. The only thing in my bedroom is the light from the alarm system and my bedside clock, and now my BIPAP machine. If I have to go to the bathroom during the night, I don’t turn on a light because I don’t want to get awake and have trouble getting back to sleep. I know the path and can hold on to the foot of the bed. When I get to the end, I know the bathroom doorway is to my left. I reach out to touch the left door frame facing me, take two steps in and one to the left and I know the toilet is right there. All goes well until I leave a pair of shoes or get my oxygen tube in the path. When that happens, I stumble and often hit my pinky toe on the bed post! Then I am moaning and now wide awake! When it is dark, you can’t see where you are going. In terms of our faith in Christ, when we chose another way it is like walking in darkness and we stray into the ways of the world.  God wants us to walk in the light and then we will have fellowship with Him and each other. |
| 6 | Now, does that mean we don’t sin? Because the light of God is pure? NO! The answer is NO. It is in God’s light that we can see our sin and deal with it. Hopefully, we repent (go the opposite way) and receive God’s forgiveness provided by Christ’s death on the cross. Of course, in darkness you can’t see sin and in fact you really don’t care because the world has your attention. God wants us to walk in the light, repent of our sins and God will forgive those and even the ones we don’t see, because He so wants to have an intimate relationship with us. Confessing our sin in the Light is required to find that joy, that intimacy, that fellowship with God. |
| 7 | The third thing we need to restore the joy and intimacy with God is while in the Light we are to be obedient to Christ. Disobedience will take you back into darkness. How many of our marriages have lost that joy and spark they once had? You’re legally married, but the joy and intimacy has waned over the years? How many of us have lost the connection and love of family members over the years? That joy and fellowship we used to have at family gatherings? The term obedience that Jesus wants applies to our marriages. I’m not talking about the wife obeying the husband. I’m talking about the couple obeying the covenant made with God to whom they pledged themselves when they were married. I’m talking about the love and commitment that we once had to our own flesh and blood. Dealing with these situations require a new look at obedience to God. When we are obedient to Christ’s example, God shows us the way to move and stay in the Light. Obedience opens the door to right relationships with God and your brothers and sisters in Christ. |
| 8 | John says again what he said in the gospel – the commandment is “Love your brother.” Obedience boils down to this. But be mindful of what love really is. Love is deeper than what most of us think. Here Love means to intentionally pursue the well-being and best for another person. It is the opposite of being self-centered. If we are of this world, our love will be exposed in what we desire for ourselves – not for others.   * It is really tempting to get lured into wanting that perfect house, or that newest car, or that newest gadget, or that popular line of clothing. But such love is directed at yourself even though you may justify it by saying, “I’m doing it for my family.” Yet, in the end, such love will crumble in darkness.   If you want God’s love to come to you, but you do not let it go through you then it ends up being self-centered.  Don’t you be self-centered, but as a Christian, obey Christ, love others who are.  Mother Teresa said, “People are unrealistic, illogical and self-centered. Love them anyway.” |
| 9 | If you walk in the Light, confess our sin and obey, then it will allow God’s love to flow through you to others. Then the floodgate will open, and God’s love will shower the lives of others and open the joy, intimacy and fellowship back into your life.  How many of you are yearning for that joy and intimacy that John experienced with Jesus and now with the believers? John writes here saying that we can have that fellowship with each other if we walk in the Light, confess our sin and be obedient to Christ. The result is that we can reclaim the joy and intimacy with Christ and each other here at Center.  The promise is that seeking to live in Christ’s Light and in confession of sin and in obedience to Christ is that the joy and intimacy and fellowship can be restored in one’s marriage and family relationships, including the church family.  Wow, what a gift! What a second chance! And all this is made possible in John’s church where folks were leaving and choosing to walk in darkness.  All this is available to us at Center today! Amen! |