

Subject: *Straight Talk about Jesus*

Scripture: *1 John 1:1-4*

John is often called the apostle of love. We could also call him the apostle of straight talk. For John everything was white or black, good or evil, right or wrong. He speaks straight and to the point. In this letter he writes about light vs. darkness, truth vs. lies, and children of God and children of the devil. We are going to examine this letter very carefully and a good title for this study is “Straight Talk about the Christian Life.”

The theme for our VBS was “Discover, Decide, and Defend.” John used the same approach in this letter.

- DISCOVER who Jesus is and what He expects of you
- DECIDE that He is worthy of your faith and obedience
- DEFEND the truth against hypocrisy and false teaching

First John is called a general epistle because it was not written to a specific church (like Romans or Corinthians) or to a specific person (like Timothy or Titus). First John was written to Christians in general.

John was an apostle of Christ. He was a member of Christ’s inner circle (Peter, James, and John). He wrote five books of the Bible (Gospel of John, three epistles/letters, and the book of Revelation). First John was among the last book written during the first century. John was the last remaining apostle or eyewitness of Jesus.

Although John is known for his straight talk and direct style, his tone is loving and he writes as an older pastor to his beloved congregation, referring to them as “little children.” He is writing with two things in mind:

- To define real vs. false believers
- To define truth vs. error

The church has always had to speak up and defend real Christian faith from the counterfeit and to defend Christian truth from false doctrine. First John flows along two lines of thought: how we live and what we believe. These are always connected together.

John begins at the right place, the person of Jesus Christ. We need to be right about who Jesus is and what He did and we need to be sure we have a relationship with Him. That’s what matters most of all.

1. Jesus wants us to know His REAL IDENTITY (vs. 1)

Jesus Christ is the Word of life. That is how John began his gospel (John 1:1-4). Jesus is the eternal Son of God. He is the creator and sustainer of life. He is the Word, the ultimate expression of God’s mind and heart to us. John was convinced that Jesus was God in human flesh. He had a real first-hand experience of hearing Jesus, seeing Jesus, looking upon (gazing, looking closely), touching Jesus. John was the one who leaned on Jesus chest at the Passover meal.

In verse 2, John tells us twice that Jesus was “manifested” (shown, revealed). John was amazed that He had actually witnessed the eternal Son of God on earth. What a privilege to hear Him, see Him, and testify of Him. This was no make-believe story. He was real. As a faithful pastor of God’s people, John understood his responsibility to warn them about false teachers and establish them in the truth. From the first verse on John is writing to warn believers about false teachers who claimed that Jesus wasn’t really a man. He only seemed to be a man. This was a false teaching of Gnosticism that was based on the philosophy that only spirit was pure and physical matter was evil. They said it was impossible for God to become

a man. But John declares the absolute truth that Jesus stepped out of eternity into time and He stepped out of Heaven into Earth to become a real man. He is the God-man. He did what He did because He is who He is.

2. Jesus wants us to have a REAL RELATIONSHIP with Him (vs. 3)

John uses the word “fellowship” (*koinonia*), which means sharing the life of Christ. Being a Christian is not a religion. It is a relationship with Christ. Here is something worth noting. When Jesus described eternal life, this is what He said.

- **John 17:3** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

When John and Paul (who both wrote the majority of the New Testament) describe the Christian life, they don't describe it mainly in terms of going to Heaven or avoiding Hell, but they describe it as fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus or knowing Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 1:9** *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- **Philippians 3:8** *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*
- **1 John 5:20** *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

3. Jesus wants us to have REAL JOY in our lives (vs. 4)

John has something in mind as he writes. He wants all believers to have full joy. This is something the world is looking for, but in all the wrong places. A Christian is to have a life full of joy. Our joy comes from Christ and our relationship with Him. This is a joy that no one can take away. It is a lasting joy, a pure joy, a deep joy.

- **Philippians 4:4** *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*
- **3 John 1:4** *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

If we understand, believe, and obey what John wrote, then we'll have real joy and full joy.

- The joy of having our sins forgiven (1:5-10)
- The joy of defeating Satan (2:13-14)
- The joy of overcoming discouragement (2:18-19)
- The joy of anticipating Christ's coming (3:2-3)
- The joy of detecting truth and error (4:1-6)
- The joy of overcoming the world (5:4-5)
- The joy of knowing we are saved (5:11-13)
- The joy of having our prayers answered (5:14-15)

Christians ought to have the joy of the Lord, but the key is found in that old song, “Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” Is your life joyful? If not, why not? Every person will leave this service mad, sad, or glad. What about you?