

To Make Your Joy Complete

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

² My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (NIV 2011)

I wonder how many packages have been delivered this past year? With lockdowns and what not, we are relying on internet and deliveries for things we usually pick up at the store. I can't imagine how many miles a driver drives and how many packages he delivers. I suppose it could wear on him. But can you imagine a driver bringing a package, and a little girl meets him at the door, smiles and thanks him? I bet it makes that driver happy. He realizes he isn't delivering packages. He is helping people out and it makes the job more enjoyable.

We believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God. That means that every word in it is from God. Yes, there are human writers, many of them, but they were used by God to give us his Word. This is called inspiration and it is the work of the Holy Spirit who breathed into the human writers both the word and thoughts they had and wrote down. But don't think that these human writers were unemotional computers or zombies. They knew what was going on. And it made them excited and happy. We learn that from our text for today. John wasn't another deliveryman who was dropping off another package to another house. He was excited to write every word he wrote down. As he says, it made his joy complete.

I. We share the good news of Jesus to make our joy complete.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

John is excited here. He can't wait to tell us something. What? He has met God. He has met the one who was there from the beginning. He is the eternal life. How do we know? His own ears have heard him. He heard the many parables, the sermon on the mount. He had heard the shrieks of demons driven out by him. He heard the Father in heaven declare him as God his Son.

He has seen him. He saw the storm stilled twice. He saw him feed five thousand with one lunch, and the widow embracing her dead son raised to life. He saw him talking to Moses and Elijah. And he also had touched him. His hand touched his when he passed a piece of bread to him on Maundy Thursday. In Jesus he saw, heard and touched God. Jesus is God.

That alone is enough to excite anyone. But what made John even happier, what made his joy complete is he is able to share all he had heard and seen. God used John and the others to tell us what they heard and seen so we may have fellowship with them. When we do, we have fellowship with God himself. The Apostles, and you must include the prophets in the Old Testament, are like an extension cord. They are plugged into God and anyone plugged into them is plugged into God.

In Revelation it describes God's Church like a New Jerusalem which has 12 foundations, each representing one of the twelve apostles. As it says in Ephesians 2, we are all *“...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ himself as the chief cornerstone.”* In Acts 2, when the Church got started on Pentecost, what did the believers do? They met every day and devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching.

Why is this so important? Parents, when you talk about Jesus with your kids, when you lead a devotion at home, you are plugging your kids into the extension cord of the Apostles' and prophets which in turn is plugged into God. You are letting them see the same things they saw. You are letting them hear the same things they heard. You are touching the same things they touched.

To know and see Jesus was very exciting to John. There is no greater joy. Yet, John tells us that even this perfect joy can become more joyous. How? By sharing it with others. We called both sets of our parents the day each of our kids were born. We didn't keep that from them. We didn't visit two years later and say, “Oh, by the way, these are your grandkids.” Our joy moved us to share it with others. It made very happy parents happier to share it because it brought happiness to others.

Now, what is it we are to share? What is it that is so important we must tell others?

II. It is a message of salvation.

“⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

Darkness and light are complete opposites. Generally darkness scares us and keeps us from doing things. Would you drive at night without headlights? Maybe you like to sit outside in the dark and look at the stars, but what if you are alone and you hear a strange sound? You’d be a little scared, wouldn’t you? To walk in the darkness is a dangerous thing. We avoid dark alleys in the big cities. Even if you have a flashlight, it illuminates only a small area; the rest remains in darkness.

Physical darkness is a scary thing, but spiritual darkness is deadly. God is light, the opposite of darkness. If we walk in the light, that is, with God, knowing him, and most of all, trusting him by faith, we are walking in the light. Living in the light means we see. We see God and know who he is. We see all around us. I read a funny satire this week. If you want to keep intruders out of your house, the writer suggested you throw lego pieces all over the floor. Parents, you know what I mean. How many times have you stepped on lego pieces or some other toy your kids left on the floor? The idea is the intruder will be bothered by the lego pieces and leave. In the dark you don’t see those things and step on them. In the light you see them and avoid them. In the light we see sin and temptation and avoid them. We see the lies and false teachings and avoid them. We see the resurrection that will happen. We see Christ, the cross, God and ourselves seated with him in heaven.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” Sadly, so many people prefer to stay in the darkness. The Word is shared, they hear it, the Spirit opens the door, and they slam it shut. What is preventing us from living in darkness? John helps us here. ***“⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”*** How many addicts are convinced they have no addiction? The same with sin. It is a lie to say we have no sin, and worse, we call God a liar. He calls it a sin. The liar says God is wrong. Think of the Pharisee in the temple who boasted about his offerings, his lifestyle, how he was not like the rest. He was lying to God, himself, to others.

But if we confess our sins, what happens? God is faithful and just to forgive them. He is faithful because he promises to forgive the sinner and bring him to heaven. He is just because he is only being fair to forgive sins. Jesus died for them on the cross. Sins are paid for. The only fair thing to do is declare the sinner forgiven.

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” So we come full circle. Forgiven of our sins, our goal is to walk in the light. That means turning on the light, seeing the legos on the floor and step around them. It means seeing sin and temptation and stepping around them. It means walking as though we are in fellowship with God, that Jesus did die for us, that heaven is our home. That is our goal.

That was David’s goal, then he saw Bathsheeba. That was Peter’s goal, but he denied Christ. Paul had this as his goal, and what the good he wanted to do, he didn’t. The evil he wanted to “step around,” he stepped right into it. Even believers still sin. What’s the difference? ***“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”***

Now you know why John was so happy that he met God. He was so happy that Jesus came. ***“... the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*** Jesus brought him into fellowship with God the Father. And it made him even happier to share that message with us so we, too, have fellowship with him and the Apostles who, like an extension cord, means fellowship with God. If it made him excited, wouldn’t it make you excited, too? Let people know what it feels like to be a sinner forgiven by God. Connect them with the Apostles so they hear and see and touch the same things. Amen.