

Studies in 1 John 01 Gate-Fathers Fellowship

by John W. Bramhall

John's epistle reveals the precious truth of fellowship with the Father and the Son, emphasizing the importance of knowing and understanding the incarnate Son of God.

Duration: 37:26

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Matthew 3:13-17, John 1:1-14, 1 John 1:1-3, Revelation 1:12-16

Topics: "Fellowship With God", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by introducing the First Epistle of John and its importance for the blessing of God's people. He then reads the first four verses of the epistle, which highlight the person of Christ as the Word of Life. The preacher emphasizes that John's joy and purpose in writing this epistle was to share the fellowship and communion that he and the other apostles had with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes with the reminder that John wrote these things so that the readers' joy may be full.

Transcript

Shall we turn in the word of God to the first epistle of John and commence our study in the will of the Lord this week on the precious truth that it contains particularly for the blessing of God's people and incidentally I'm sure there will be ministry in the gospel of God's grace for any who know not the stadium. I would like to read the first four verses by way of introduction to this epistle. Where John has written by the Holy Spirit these wonderful words, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life.

For the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full.

May God bless the hearing and reading of his word, we very humbly but very earnestly pray it will be by the power and in the power of the Holy Spirit we shall enjoy together the ministry of the precious truth that this epistle contains. I'm sure that there must be necessarily a background that we approach this epistle upon. As we think of the writings of John the apostle, particularly do we think of his great gospel that he has written, and within that gospel how he has revealed to us that every person and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And how in his epistle he goes on to reveal not only the deity of the Lord Jesus, but particularly the incarnated life of the Lord Jesus when he was here below. John has a very unique ministry. I often think of the precious fact that when you look at the epistles that you find in your New Testament you have three great lines of truth.

You have what we can call and do call church truth, and for all pertaining to church truth we must be indebted to the beloved apostle Paul, to whom God instrumentally has given to us all that we should know in relation to the truth of the church. Then we have what can be called kingdom truth. Now kingdom truth is not a New Testament truth merely at all.

Kingdom truth is an Old Testament truth as well as new, and perhaps one of the oldest presentations of truth in the word of God from the beginning to the end. Presenting to us that coming glory of kingdom that will yet be when our savior will be king of kings and lord of lords over the earth. And then we have what we can call Christ truth.

Relative to the person of Christ himself, and I believe particularly John in a very unique way presents to us, there's no other narrative writer in the New Testament, the person of Christ. You begin the reading of his gospel and you find him introducing that gospel by a presentation of that blessed one as the eternal word, who before time ever began was in the beginning, and the word was with God and the word was God. The very opening of the chapter 1 presents to us the glorious eternal character of the son of God as the eternal word.

And John cannot begin to write without presenting the greatness of the person of the son of God. In like manner you have it in relation to his epistle. The very introductory words that we read in verses 1, 2 and 3 present to us the person of Christ who is the word of life, who is the incarnate word of life, and in the glory of his incarnation he presents the blessed person of the son.

You have very similarly in the book of the revelations. John cannot begin to write without presenting the judicial glory of the beloved son of God as son of man, who is to be the judge of all the earth as you read the opening chapter of the revelation. John brings you immediately face to face with the person of the son of God, with the person of the son of man, with the person of the coming judge of all the earth, that blessed person.

It thrills the heart, it blesses the soul to be occupied with Christ, and surely we must and we do confess that was John's blessed joy, to enjoy the person of Christ and he seems to have enjoyed it perhaps above all others. When you look at his gospel, the subject of his great gospel is the son of God, presenting that blessed one in all the glory of his deity, and the manifestation of his person when within this world God manifests in the flesh. When you look at the epistles of John, the epistle particularly is occupied with the father and his family, and you may divide the epistle into two great divisions.

In chapters one and two you have the family and the father together. The father with his family, and the responsibilities regarding the fellowship, the communion, not only the relationship but better and greater still the communion of the family with the father, and the father and his family are presented in the first two chapters. The last part of the epistle chapter three through five present the family and their responsibilities within the world.

For the greatness of realizing and the importance of realizing, we who are in the family of God, we have a great responsibility to represent our father within this world. Now it might be well also before we go into our

chapter immediately, to consider the meaning of what it is to be a child of God and in relationship to God as father. There are only five or six references in the Old Testament to the title father in relation to God, and they are usually in its creatorial relationship.

They have nothing at all in particular to bring before us the intimacy of relationship as a child with the father. But nevertheless God revealed himself in the Old Testament, but there's a great deal of study that we could follow and many of you may have done so. To realize the revelation of God in the Old Testament.

Let me just give you three examples which will suffice that we may understand the meaning of it. God revealed himself by the various names that he gave of himself and spoke of himself to his dear children. By way of example Abraham in chapter 17 of Genesis in verse 1. God said to Abraham, walk thou before me, I am the almighty God, walk thou before me and be thou perfect.

And to Abraham he presented himself as the omnipotent God, the almighty one. Later on in the book of Exodus chapter 3 when Moses was before the burning bush and the God of glory appeared unto him and commissioned him to go and deliver his people Israel. Moses said what shall I say to them when they ask who sent me? And God said tell them I am that I am.

And once again God revealed himself not as the omnipotent one but as the eternal everlasting I am the self-existent one. Later on in chapter 6 of the book of Exodus God told Moses I've revealed myself to Abraham Isaac and Jacob but I've never revealed myself as Jehovah to them and now I'm going to reveal myself as Jehovah to my people Israel. Which was the redemptive name of God to his earthly people and a precious name of great meaning as well as multiple meaning in the old testament scriptures.

Now these were revelations of God. Omnipotent, the eternal character of his being, the eternal one and Jehovah the redemptive one for Israel. But may I point out to you God never could be revealed as father until the son of God came.

You remember the words of John in chapter 1 verse 14 as well as verse 18. Verse 18 particularly may I quote no man has seen God in any time but the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father. He hath revealed him, he hath made him known, he hath manifested him.

It was not until the son came the one whose heart filled the bosom of the father. The one in whose bosom the son was the delight of the father. Not until that son came who knew the father's heart could the heart of the father be revealed.

Let me quote to you very carefully Matthew 11 and verse 27. The words of the Lord Jesus when he said no man knoweth the son but the father. Now just pause for a moment reflect on them.

No man knoweth the son but the father. And we cannot enlarge upon that nor qualify it. The complete knowledge of what the son is only the father knows.

But then the Savior went on to declare neither knoweth any man the father but the son. And he to whom the son will reveal him. Only the coming of the son of God incarnate was it ever made possible that the father in the intimacy, the greatness, the infinitude of his blessed fatherly heart of affection could ever be revealed.

You may have noted very carefully in your study of John's gospel that all the way through it approximately 120 times the father is mentioned. For by the manifestation of the son incarnate it was the father whom the son revealed. How did he reveal that father when he was here? He revealed him by the words which he spoke.

He revealed him by the works which he performed. All the thoughts, all the words, all the work the blessed son of God did when he was upon the earth in the days of his earthly flesh and ministry. Were the outpouring and the revelation of the well could he say it did to Philip.

When Philip said Lord show us the father. And it suffices us Philip have I been so long time with you yet sayest thou to me show us the father. He that hath seen me hath seen the father.

My beloved let me repeat. It is only by the life and the death and the resurrection of that blessed son of God in the days of his flesh. The father in all of his character and please let me state may I impress it upon you.

Whatever name God takes and reveals it is a reference and it is an unfolding of the character that that name implies. Whether the omnipotent one, whether the omniscient one, the eternal one, whether Jehovah it is the meaning of his character and his being that it communicates. And take that precious name and may I say it with joy it is the most precious name that any person can address God with.

Father how precious, how much do we enjoy, how great is our intimacy with this priceless privilege. When the savior could say I am the way the truth and the life no man come upon to the father. But by me I believe some of the happiest words that fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus when spoken by him on the day of his resurrection.

When to Mary he said in chapter 20. Go to my brethren tell them I ascend unto my father and your father. Unto my God and your God.

O beloved he brought us to the father. In case there may be one person who cannot address God as father in that relationship as his child. May I state very briefly and quickly how to become a child of the father.

Let me quote John chapter 1 verse 12 and 13. But as many as received him the father's son to them gave he the right the privilege the authority to be called the sons of the children of God even to them that were born not of blood nor the will manner of the flesh but of God. It is through faith in Christ we become children of God.

As Paul well declared in Galatians 3 26. For we are all the children of God through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Beloved we humbly and earnestly pray that every one of you can say to the glory of God to the happiness of your soul.

Thank God I can call him father. How precious are the words of Paul in Galatians 4 6. God has sent forth the spirit of his son into your heart whereby ye cry Abba. That blessed Aramaic word of dearest intimacy.

Abba. Father. Oh may I repeat it.

You have only three times the expression Abba in your New Testament. You know well that it was the son in the garden in the agony of Gethsemane who cried out of his heart to that dearest of all to him. Abba.

Father. If it be possible let this cup pass from me. And then you have in Romans 8 the precious truth that you and I can indeed say Abba.

Father. And Galatians 4 6. That God has sent forth the spirit of his son into your heart whereby ye cry Abba. Father.

May I say that the gateway to the epistle of John in its precious truth that it conveys is this. To tell us what it means to have fellowship with the father. Fellowship into which we have been brought with the father as well as with his son.

What an honor. What a priceless privilege. But let's go to our chapter immediately.

I wanted to know that John begins this precious truth of the chapter as he speaks of the Lord Jesus being manifested. And please note the opening words. That which was from the beginning.

Now John is not referring to Genesis 1 1. Neither is John referring to John gospel chapter 1 verse 1. John 1 1 takes you back further than Genesis 1 1. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God John wrote in his gospel. And it goes back into the eternal past. But if you look at the family.

And if you look at the fellowship of the family with the father. He goes back to the beginning of that blessed manifestation when the son became flesh. Read Luke's gospel.

And if you look at the introduction, the opening words of Luke's gospel. Luke takes us back to the beginning. And he places the birth.

Yes, the conception and the birth and the early days and the manhood of the Lord Jesus. And John refers to that manifestation of the son of God in his incarnate body. That which was from the beginning.

And note the proof of it. Which we have heard. Which we have seen.

Which we have seen with our eyes. Which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life. John is not penetrating back into the eternal past.

He could not penetrate with his ears, with his eyes and with his hands. To that eternal past. Nor even to the beginning of creation.

But oh, he is speaking a precious truth. And he is speaking to convey to you and to me the blessedness of it, that it was to him and to his fellow companion apostles. We heard him.

There's no question of doubt the first time John heard his voice. You may read in John 1. When the Baptist said, behold the Lamb of God. Which taketh away the sin of the world.

Behold the Lamb of God. And John with his companion Andrew followed him. And Jesus saw them and said, Whom seek ye? Rabbi, where dwellest thou? He said, come and see.

And so they heard him. They saw him. They not only heard him in the days of his flesh.

They not only saw him in the days of his flesh in that blessed incarnate form. We gazed upon him. We looked intently upon him.

And then we handled him. What reverent words are these? Suggesting the priceless privilege of the one who is the word of life. The one who is eternal life.

The one who came from the Father is eternal son. And took upon him that human form. We heard his voice.

We saw him. We gazed with intent upon him. And we had the privilege of handling him.

Oh I think of those priceless words following his resurrection. As he appeared in the midst of the disciples. And they were struck with fear and terror.

Supposing they had seen a spirit. Handle me and see. A spirit hath not flesh and blood as ye see me have.

Flesh and bones as ye see me have. And oh beloved the privilege. Please may I say.

What John is conveying is what he and his companion apostles heard, saw, gazed intently upon. And then at the blessed privilege of even handling. And knowing in intimacy the blessed one.

Who was eternal God. But manifest in the flesh. Now you might say and I might say.

How could we ever do that? Beloved please let me suggest how. True. We could not.

We have not been with him in the days of his flesh. As children we used to sing a hymn. Concerning his earthly life.

And usually the refrain ended I would like to have been with him then. Oh no. Not possible.

But beloved let me say. We have the record of that life. There on the pages of divine inspiration.

The manifestation of that human life of our Lord Jesus is written. And the beloved apostles have written it out in full. And you and I. We can hear his voice.

You and I. Can gaze upon him with our eyes. You and I can be more intently considering who he is. What he was.

In the days of his pilgrimage. From the manger to the cross and beyond his post resurrection day ministry. And you and I. Oh may I say it lovingly.

You and I can handle him. Do you ever notice in the book of Leviticus. At the consecration of the high priest and the fellow priest.

Aaron and his sons. That Moses took of that which was upon the altar. And he filled the hands of Aaron and his sons.

With all that spoke to the heart of God of Christ. And the word consecration in the old testament means. In the Hebrew meaning.

The filling of the hands. Oh how I pray that as I come here today. And through the week and the will of the Lord.

My hands will be filled with Christ for you. To minister him to your heart. This is part of the fellowship.

And John. Is seeking to impart the preciousness and the truth of it. But read on.

As he goes on to say. Our hands have handled the word of life. For the life was manifested.

Please let me repeat with emphasis. It's the manifestation in an incarnate form. Of the son of God.

In a body of flesh. That life which was eternal life. Who was the word of life.

Was manifested. We have seen it. And we bear witness.

And show unto you that eternal life. Which was with the father and was manifested unto us. My the glory of that blessed one.

I think of the words of John again in John one fourteen. The word was made flesh. And dwelt amongst us full of grace and truth.

And we beheld his glory. The glory is of the only begotten of the father. Now beloved may I repeat again.

John realized. And the apostles all realized. Through that life.

The heart. The greatness. The glory of the father.

Was revealed. And then he goes on to declare in verse three repeating it. That which we have seen and heard.

Declare we unto you. You know something particularly. He does not say that which you heard.

He omits the word first of all. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. For they had heard.

For may I repeat again. The epistle of John is a family letter. It is written to the family of God.

And to the family of God particularly. Many texts can be used in making the gospel clear and plain we know. But the whole letter is written to the family.

And John says this is the purpose for our writing. This is the purpose for bringing it to you. Not only to present to you the incarnate son of God as we know he was.

But here is the purpose in verse three and four. As he says that ye also may have fellowship. With us.

Meaning with himself and the companion apostles. May I point out to you something precious in Acts two and verse forty two. Remember the very first day of Pentecost when those converts confessed the Lord.

We read in verse forty two they continue steadfastly in what? The apostles doctrine. And next fellowship. And then the breaking of bread and bread.

Fellowship. My beloved may I say we need to get back to some Pentecostal fellowship. And you know that I am not inferring the speaking in tongues.

We need to get back to the fellowship that God through his son brought us into. To his son. To his father.

Our fellowship said John is with the father. And with his son. Jesus Christ.

What's the fellowship the father enjoys? What's the fellowship that the son enjoys? Beloved I cannot say anything greater to you than this. The fellowship of the father's heart is his delight in his beloved son. This is my beloved son.

In whom is all my delight. Hear ye him. And oh that we may realize.

Where does the father find his fellowship? He finds it in all of his complete delight in the person of his beloved son. Where should I find it? My beloved may I say very very earnestly in such days as we now live in. This is what we need.

To strengthen and to balance our souls and our hearts and our lives and our consciences in the midst of all that we're surrounded with. To know we should permit nothing to harm. To break.

To sever the fellowship which we have been brought into with the father and his son. The father finds his delight in the son. Where does the son find his delight? You find his delight is in the father.

And you and I by grace divine fellow believer have been brought into that fellowship. To enjoy fellowship with the father. To enjoy fellowship with the son.

Many times I hear some of my brethren say what fellowship do you belong to? Well I hope you belong to this one. I'm not interested in anything better than this. There is nothing better.

Oh my fellow believer. My fellow believer. There's nothing that can sever the relationship.

But there can be much as we can learn and will learn that may mar the fellowship. Then what John in his purpose as he writes says before us is this. Our fellowship which we the apostles have enjoyed is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ.

Now note the fourth verse as he goes on to say. I said and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full. Beloved may I point out.

Would you remember the words of the psalmist in chapter sixteen verse eleven those precious closing words. In thy presence is fullness of joy and at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more. And may I state in closing that I fully believe and I say it with confidence and I say it pleading with my own conscience and my own soul.

In the days in which we are now living how we need to realize we have been brought where we can still have our joy and find it where the apostles found it too. In fellowship with the father and with his son Jesus Christ. How did we get into this fellowship? There's only one way.

We've gone into it through life in Christ. Please may I say the basis of this fellowship is not L-I-G-H-T. It's life through this meaning to life.

But the basis of fellowship with the father please may I say the youngest child in the family. The oldest child in the family. The oldest believer to the youngest believer.

Because of life in Christ they're in this fellowship and that fellowship with the father and with his son we should be enjoying. Delighting in where the father's heart delights. In his son.

Delighting where the son of God delights. In his father. What a fellowship.

Now may I say to you it's a big one. It takes in every child of God. And God grants that we today who are his children may surely say Lord help me day by day to maintain to enjoy my fellowship with thee and with the son.

His faithful communion shall we pray. Father we have to say in the words of another how thou could think so well of me and be the God thou art. His darkness to my intellect but it's sunshine to my heart.

That thou didst bring to this earth sending him the son of thy love life eternal for us to bring us to thyself. Let me close our meditation. We pray that every child of God will separate from this gathering.

Breathing those precious words of intimate relationship in the joy of their souls. Lifting their heart up and saying I'm a father. We adore thee.

And grant that as the week continued we shall enjoy fellowship with the father and with his son. For we ask it in our savior's precious and worthy name. Amen.

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