

1 John

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1 John 1:2-4

Vs. 2

- “...concerning The Word of Life.” – Life, specifically eternal life is prominent throughout John’s writings. And John is always more focused on the *qualitative* aspects of life with Christ rather than the quantitative. How long one may live to John is far less important than the breadth and depth of the richness of a life with Christ.

For John, life with Christ and the love of Christ are inseparable. Most of the world’s people would agree with Shakespeare’s famous line from Macbeth: **“Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”** For John, life with Christ could not be more different. This life is not small, meaningless, tragic, and empty. John knew a life in Christ that was filled with hope and energy and love, an adventure where you never knew where Christ would lead, but along the way miracles like wildflowers decorated your path and each step sent ripples into eternity.

- The Word of Life, God’s Life, is communicated to the world through Jesus Christ. This Word was the agent that God used to bring all creation into being and now he has brought something new into being: a new community not based on location but one that is connected by the shared love of Christ. John is quite clear that the evidence of God’s love in us is that we love one another.
- “and the Life was manifested...” is another way of saying “And the Word became flesh...” as John wrote in John 1:14. God’s Life of Love became a human being, a person. God’s Word of Life becomes part of the human

equation with all its conflicts, contradictions, and struggles. And this had to be if God was going to fully engage a sinful and fallen humanity. He could not connect with us as an abstract idea, a concept. To connect with us, to do all he desired to do His Word had to be manifested, His Word had to become flesh. It was the only way for the Father to know our sorrows and joys, our temptations, our needs and wants, and the pain of our sin. In spite of everything now people can look at Jesus Christ and *KNOW* that God loves us.

- “...we have seen and testify and proclaim to you...”: For the second time in just the first two verses John makes the point that WE have seen this Life made human. First, John is making the case that he is an eyewitness to the Word made flesh who was given the name Jesus. It seems he cannot emphasize this enough! Second, John wants us to be sure that we do not miss the plural pronoun he uses – WE! This is what WE have seen! Its’ not just one man’s report. There were others, many others! Apart from the thousands who saw miracles like the feeding of 5000 men plus untold numbers of women and children, Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:6 the risen Lord appeared to more than 500 at one time. WE saw the Word of Life who is the Son of God who is Jesus Christ and this is what we are sharing with you.

Vs. 3

- Now for the third time in the first three verses John reiterates the point that he is only sharing what he has seen and for the second time in the same three verses he says this is what we have heard. He is giving us first hand accounts of what he saw and what he heard. John and the other eyewitnesses are verifying the truth and reality of the Incarnation.
- To be clear, the one who is a Christian witness is not an innovator. He is not writing or speaking into some new concept of his own creation. He is a witness. But neither is the Christian merely some objective reporter. His witness is filtered through his own personal experience with Jesus Christ. He is sharing his own understanding based on his relationship with Christ. If the Dolphins win a football game, the objective ESPN reporter says, “The

Dolphins won.” If a Dolphin’s season ticket holder tells about the Dolphins victory, she will say “WE WON!” So John here is not merely an objective reporter. He is speaking to not only what he saw and heard, but also what he fully experienced deep within his spirit.

- Here too John returns to an idea he has hinted at and now addresses: the new thing the Word has created – a new community, a fellowship. The Greek word, as many of you know, is *koinonia*. When we speak of “fellowship” we usually mean gathering to eat and share small talk around a table. But the Greek word here means so much more. It describes the close, loving relationship between Christians and the Father and between ourselves and other Christians. It has a family imagery with God as Father, Jesus as the only Son and we ourselves as adopted children, brothers and sisters to each other and to Jesus. If we belong to Christ we are His Father’s children as well and as such anyone else who the Father adopts is our brother and our sister. Thus it is Jesus who is at the center. No one comes to the Father except that they go through Jesus. Christ brings us to the Father and stands for our justification. So John wants to bring the readers of his letter into fellowship with him and the other eyewitnesses to the Word and ultimately into fellowship with Christ and the Father. This is the passageway of salvation, discipleship, and fellowship. The lost connect with believers, who connect the lost with Jesus, who washes away the sin and its stains, and presents them pure and clean for adoption by the Father and we all may then have koinonia/fellowship together.

Vs. 4

- Joy is the singular outward quality of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Before the lost experience our love they will see our joy! Joy is found where people are forgiven, restored, made whole, and accepted and loved. Some of the most joyful Christians I have ever known would be those the lost would marginalize. Yet within the koinonia culture and environment of the disciples of Christ these people find all they could never find in the world.

- When you know Christ and have that koinonia fellowship with Him and the Father, you know what real joy is, what real life is, what real love is and how can you not want that for all who you know? So John writes what he has seen and heard so that those who read his letter will accept his testimony, experience the risen Christ themselves and come to know the same savior, the same Jesus that John knows. THIS will make his joy complete! Would it not make your own joy complete? To be certain that all those you know and love will be spending eternity with you in the Kingdom of God? To watch as those who were lost are now found and begin to experience the joy, the life and love of Christ in the here and now? Would that not make you joy complete?