

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 6TH-7TH, 2025 // FIRST JOHN

WHO IS JOHN?

John was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus and lived from around 6–100 AD.

- John was probably the youngest apostle and was the only one to die of natural causes around 93-94 years old.
- John wrote Revelation, 1, 2, and 3 John, and his account of the life, ministry, and identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John.
- John was the brother of James, and together Jesus called them “Boanerges,” which means “sons of thunder.”
- As John grew and matured, he became a pillar in the church at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9), ministered with Peter (Acts 3; 4; 8), and became known as the “Apostle of Love” in the early church.
- John fled from the region near Jerusalem in 70 AD and settled in Ephesus as an elder in the Ephesian church.
- In 90–95 AD, John was exiled to the Island of Patmos by Emperor Domitian, where he wrote the book of Revelation.
- He returned to Ephesus in 96 AD, where he lived and ministered the remainder of his life until his death around 100 AD.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF 1 JOHN

John wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus probably around 85–95 AD.

- There was a growing group of false teachers:
 - Denied Jesus’ humanity (Docetism).
 - Claimed spiritual elitism and minimized sin (Gnosticism: spirit=good; body=bad).
 - Rejected apostolic teaching and authority.
 - Broke fellowship with the Church at large.

WHAT IS 1 JOHN ABOUT?

1 John is a very pastoral treatise against these emerging heresies.

- John writes to the Believers in Ephesus to strengthen, encourage, and point true disciples of Jesus to truth.
- John goes to great lengths to set boundaries on the content of the Christian faith AND give true Believers assurance of their salvation.

WHY STUDY 1 JOHN?

We need to be grounded in the truth of Jesus.

- Heresies like the ones John wrote against are still present in the Church today:
 1. “Spiritual But Not Religious” Moral Relativism
 2. Christian Beliefs Detached From Christian Morality
 3. Progressive Christian Theologies That Redefine Sin
- Our beliefs are important, but our behaviors are important indicators of what we believe.
- Sloppy Christian living that excuses and downplays habitual sin is often a result of poor theology.
- We need to be reminded that the regenerated life in Christ should look and be completely different than life outside of Him.

THE WORD OF LIFE (1 JOHN 1:1-4)

The false teachers plaguing the church in Ephesus taught that Jesus’ body was not a real, physical body, but only appeared to be so.

- They also taught that the body was just a prison in which the spirit was incarcerated.
- So, because Jesus never had a physical body, and ours doesn’t really matter, any “sin” committed in the body has no connection to or effect on a person spiritually.
- Those who followed this new teaching considered themselves as the spiritual elite—they alone held true spiritual knowledge.
- The unenlightened ones were the ones outside of their group who didn’t understand this true and secret meaning of Jesus’ identity.
- They were arrogant, unholy, and without love.
- John begins his defense of the truth of the gospel with a robust teaching on the doctrine of Christ.

“FROM THE BEGINNING” (V. 1A)

Both Gen. 1:1 and Jn. 1:1 refer to “the beginning”—who was there at the beginning?

- The second person of the Trinity: Jesus the Son.
- But also, the beginning of the entire story of Jesus’ life on earth is that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (the incarnation, Jn. 1:14).
- These claims of the false teachers about Jesus not having a body were untrue.

A FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT (VS. 1B-2A)

This “word of life” (the message of eternal life made available through Jesus, God’s Son) is something that John observed firsthand.

- John saw Jesus with his eyes, observed Jesus’ life and ministry in person, and even touched Jesus with his hands.
- This “word of life” (Jesus) was revealed to humanity, and John witnessed it.

TESTIFYING AND DECLARING (VS. 2B-3A)

John received an amazing opportunity to walk with Jesus on earth as a disciple, but with that opportunity came an amazing responsibility: to testify and declare of the eternal life that was revealed to him.

- John’s ministry was declaring what he had seen and heard about Jesus so that others would hear and know eternal life.

FELLOWSHIP (V. 3B)

John proclaimed the Word of Life (Jesus) so that those who would believe would experience fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Church (“fellowship with us”).

- Fellowship (“koinonia”) means mutual partnership in a common cause or shared life.
- Those who place their faith in Jesus experience a beautiful relational union with God.

JOY THAT IS COMPLETE (V. 4)

For some people, the greatest obstacle to faith in Christ is the false belief that the Christian life is miserable, sorrowful, and no fun at all.

- In Jesus, there is a greater joy available than anything the world can ever offer!
- Joy that is “complete”—not a fading or changing emotion, mood, or “vibe.” It is a deep, unchanging, fulfilling gladness from God.

GOD IS LIGHT (1 JOHN 1:5-7)

The word pictures of light and darkness are common in John’s writings (“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.” John 1:4).

- Light is a word picture of truth, knowledge, and righteousness.

- Darkness is a word picture of falsehood, ignorance, and sin.
- V. 5 says, “God is light (truth, knowledge, and righteousness)—this is God’s nature!

“There is absolutely no darkness in Him”—there isn’t a shred or speck of sin, falsehood, or ignorance in God’s nature.

- Since God is light and no darkness is in Him at all, no person can claim to live in full fellowship with God while walking in sin at the same time (v. 6).
- Anyone who makes that claim is lying—lying to themselves and to others!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “WALK IN DARKNESS”?

Some have said that “sinless perfectionism” (a Christian never sinning) is the proof that someone is truly saved.

- This side of eternity, Christians aren’t going to be sinless. But if they’re truly in Christ, they’ll grow, and as they grow, they will sin less.
- “Walk[ing] in darkness” isn’t referring to occasional lapses of character and sin.
- It describes a settled direction of life—not the momentary sins all Believers struggle with, but a lifestyle pattern that reveals the heart.
- To “walk in darkness” means living in repeated patterns of sin, rebellion, or disobedience.
- It’s not falling into sin occasionally but practicing sin that is unrepentant, habitual, and characterizes your lifestyle. This is moral darkness!

IN CONTRAST, “IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE HIMSELF IS IN THE LIGHT...” (V. 7).

If we keep living honestly and rightly before God in truth, repentance, and with a wholehearted commitment to follow Him—

1. We stay close to God.
2. We stay connected with other Believers.
3. Jesus keeps cleansing us from our sin (progressive character transformation).

FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING (1 JOHN 1:8-2:2)

“IF WE SAY, ‘WE HAVE NO SIN...’” (V. 8)

In our world today, sin has been minimized, softened, and repackaged.

- Instead of calling something sin, we call it a struggle, condition, disorder, or simply “just the way I am.”
- Almost everything now has a diagnosis, and almost nothing has moral responsibility attached to it.

WE’VE BECOME EXPERTS AT EXPLAINING OUR BEHAVIOR BUT ABSOLUTELY ALLERGIC TO OWNING IT.

When we constantly place ourselves in the role of the victim, it becomes a way of soothing our conscience rather than dealing with the real issue.

- Playing the victim keeps us from ever confronting the root problem that the deepest brokenness in our lives comes from the sin within us.

John says that if we claim we have no sin, we don’t just deny a theological concept; we deceive ourselves (v. 8a).

- We create a version of reality that protects our pride but destroys our soul.
- You can’t receive cleansing from a Savior if you’re still pretending you don’t need one.
- Denying your sin is also an accusation against God. Why else would Jesus need to die (v.10)?

“IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS...” (V. 9)

Denying, downplaying, dismissing, or excusing our sins doesn’t work.

- Confessing our sin to God is what we must do to experience His restoration.
- We do this at salvation, but we also keep it up.
- When we confess our sin, we are willing to say (and believe) the same thing about our sin that God says about it.

“HE IS FAITHFUL...AND TO FORGIVE...AND TO CLEANSER” (V. 9)

We receive judicial forgiveness and cleansing for all our sins when we place our trust in Christ upon salvation.

- But what about the sins we commit after we’re saved? If forgiveness for sin could only come with confession, then we would all be damned because it would be impossible for us to confess every sin we ever commit!
- We are forgiven because our punishment was put upon Jesus, and we are cleansed by His blood.
- However, confession is still vital to maintaining a relationship with God.
- As God convicts us of sin that is hindering our fellowship with Him, we must confess it and receive His forgiveness and cleansing.
- This is what it means to walk in the light!

AN ADVOCATE (2:1)

We’re given this encouragement from Scripture so that we won’t sin. We’re not to do the deeds of unrighteousness and immorality.

- We must do everything we can to put our sin to death so it doesn’t reign over us!
- If we do sin, we have an advocate—a defense attorney who argues our case before the judge.
- Our advocate Jesus says, “NOT GUILTY!”

OUR ATONING SACRIFICE (2:2)

How can our advocate Jesus say that we’re not guilty?

- Because He Himself as the righteous one paid the full penalty for our sin as our atoning sacrifice.
- We’re not guilty in Christ because the debt has been paid in full, and God is faithful and righteous.
- Jesus’ sacrifice is sufficient not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world.

AM I WALKING IN THE LIGHT OR STUMBLING IN THE DARKNESS?

- To live a life of repeated patterns of sin, rebellion, and disobedience against God is to walk in darkness. There’s no life there at all.
- Walking in darkness while claiming to have fellowship with light is total nonsense. Don’t lie to yourself, God, and others.
- How can you step into the light of Christ today?

DO I SEE MY SIN CLEARLY, OR DO I EXCUSE, MINIMIZE, OR REDEFINE IT?

- Nobody truly wins when they play the victim. They stunt their own spiritual and emotional growth and stay stuck in the very patterns of sin and dysfunction that God wants to heal.
- What’s more important to you—protecting your pride or having the Lord restore your soul?
- There is an advocate and an atoning sacrifice.

AM I RELYING ON JESUS AS MY ADVOCATE AND ATONING SACRIFICE OR ON MYSELF?

- We’re to do everything we can not to sin, but if we do sin, there is help and hope.
- When you sin, do you run toward Jesus in repentance and confession or away from Him in shame with your excuses?
- Are you living like your standing with God depends on your performance or on Christ’s work?