



## The Hope of the World

### 1 John 1:1-4

**PRELIM. NOTES:** Last Sunday on Easter - we had most people in this Worship Center for a service, ever! No other promotion or advertising than Operation Andrew! Good job!

We had more people indicating a spiritual step of commitment, including praying to receive Jesus Christ, than in the past!

If you take that seriously we WILL reach the 4 year goal of **70-100%** growth in worship attendance! (ahead of time). Last weeks attendance was a “picture” of meeting that goal....

- Next step is to invite your invitee to a small group like SS. They need that.... You don’t attend SS regularly? **Then that’s where to start now!**

### THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

#### 1 John 1:1-4

INTRO: In the letter of 1 John, John gives reasons as to why the book was written.

- The **FIRST** reason for 1 John is to promote joy (1:4).
- The **SECOND** reason he gives us this book is to prevent sin (2:1). In other words, that we might be strengthened by the Word of God and that we might be kept from sin in our lives. Not that we will ever, on this earth, be sinless, but that we will sin “less” as we get the Word of God in our hearts.
- A **THIRD** reason for the little book of 1 John is to provide

protection for believers, or to protect the saints of God (2:26).

- The **FOURTH** reason for the little book is in order to provide assurance (5:13). You see, God wants you to know that you are saved. God not only wants you to be saved, but He wants you to know that you are saved.

Today I want to start with the first four verses.

### I. JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF REALITY.

“Once upon a time....”

Remember how exciting those words used to be? They were the open door into an exciting world of make-believe, a dream-world that helped you forget all the problems of childhood.

Then—BAM! You turned a corner one day, and “Once upon a time” became *kid stuff*. You discovered that life is not a playground, but more like a battleground! And fairy stories were no longer meaningful. You wanted something real.

The search for something real is not new. It has been going on since the beginning of history. Men have looked for reality and satisfaction in wealth, thrills, conquest, power, learning, and even in religion.

There is nothing really wrong with these experiences, except that *by themselves* they never really satisfy. Wanting something real and finding something real are two different things.

Like a child eating cotton candy, many people who expect to bite into something real end up with a mouthful of nothing. They waste priceless years on empty substitutes for reality.

This is where the Apostle John’s first epistle comes in. Written centuries ago, this letter deals with a theme that is forever up-to-date: *the life that is real.*

#### Jesus is the SOURCE of reality.

There is a three-fold reality in Jesus given in these verses.

1. He points out that Jesus Christ is eternally real. Look at how he begins in v. 1, “*That which*

*was from the beginning.*” Then notice what he says down in the middle of v. 2, *“which was with the Father.”* He is talking here about the eternity of Christ. Christ was in the beginning.

2. Secondly, look at what he says (v.1b), *“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.”*

John is saying, “this Jesus I’m talking to you about was not imaginary.” This Jesus had a real existence in eternity. Then he says, *“our hands have handled.”* He is saying that Jesus had a real body, that the Word was made flesh, that Jesus Christ partook of human flesh. You see, when Jesus walked on the earth, those who did not know and understand, still saw Him, even though all they saw was just a man.

You cannot get rid of Jesus Christ just by refusing to believe in him. He’s real whether you acknowledge him as real or not. He Is Savior, he is Lord, he is the Messiah, he is reigning and ruling today in heaven, and he will come again to judge all things, including you, **WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IN HIM OR NOT!**

3. John says “I want you to know He was personally real. To me.” Look at v. 2, *“For the life APPEARED.”* The word appeared means to become visible. John is saying not only was Jesus real eternally, not only was Jesus Christ real historically, but Jesus Christ is real personally. He’s real in my heart and in my life.

And that’s what it all boils down to for each of us. It’s Jesus Christ a religious figure to you, or is he really real to you. Do you *know* him. Not just *know about* Him? Do you *believe in him*? Or do you *believe Him*?

## **II. JESUS IS THE MASTER OF RELATIONSHIP.**

In v. 3, John says that Jesus Christ is the master of relationship.

**1 John 1:3** *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us.*

He is saying that coming to know Christ brings you into *fellowship*. The word fellowship occurs two times in that verse. Fellowship is a very special

word. It is the Greek word that really means to have something in common. It means to partake of something together.

ILLUS: Somebody said fellowship means two fellows in one ship.

Let me explain what fellowship is. Some of you guys like to fish. I had a man say to me one time, “Pastor, did you realize that two-thirds of the earth’s surface is water?” He said, “What do you think that means.” I said, “I’m not sure exactly what it means.” He said, “the surface of the earth is two thirds water because a man ought to spend at least two-thirds of his time fishing.”

Now that’s a fisherman for you. I’m not a fisherman. Every time I’ve ever been fishing, the fish get lockjaw, go on strike, and refuse to bite. But some of you like fishing. If you are one of them, Cabela’s - you don’t need a floor plan any more.

**So you see, if a couple of you men who like fishing got together and the subject of fishing came up you would immediately have something in common and you could talk together about fishing because you are both interested in fishing.**

That’s what the word fellowship means. But it is a Christian word. It means to have the things of Jesus Christ in common. It means to enjoy Jesus Christ together. It means to be one in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Christ of relationship.

But then there’s also a vertical fellowship. Look at what he says, *“And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”* Can you imagine the meaning of that statement right there. That’s an overwhelming statement. Think about that. He’s saying that we, little, teeny, insignificant creatures that we are, have fellowship with the Father and Jesus. Here we are, nothing more than a speck in God’s creation. We have the opportunity to have personal fellowship with God.

You say, Well, pastor, how do you maintain that fellowship and how do you increase that fellowship? Here’s how you do it. By the Word of God and prayer. In the Bible God talks to you, and in prayer you talk to God. Isn’t it a shame that we don’t avail ourselves more of fellowship with the Father.

## **III. JESUS IS THE OBJECT OF REJOICING.**

Look at v. 4. *We write this to make our joy complete.* He didn’t say that you may have one-fourth joy. And he’s not talking about one-half joy. Jesus Christ is talking about complete joy. That your joy may be full.

You know there's not a lot of joy in this old world. If you look into the eyes of the average people that you meet in the world today, you won't find a great deal of joy. Their eyes are hollow, scared, lonely, filled with anxiety.

ILLUS: I was thinking about it earlier today — these wonderful songs we are singing. Did you know that there are no songs rejoicing about being lost? Have you ever thought about that? Did you ever hear anybody singing songs about how glorious it is to an atheist?

Do you know that God is the author of music? In the Bible says in Revelation 18:22 that someday when God removes his presence from this old world that music will disappear? They'll be nothing to really sing about after that.

### **[THE CHURCH IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD]**

Now John introduces his letter with three amazing thoughts about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is:

The source of REALITY

The master of RELATIONSHIPS

The object of REJOICING

Now listen to me very carefully. If Jesus Christ is all of these things, and is therefore the *hope of the world*, which I believe he is, and I believe that most of you believe he is too - then since the church is the body of Jesus Christ, then the church becomes the hope of the world too.

**1 Corinthians 12:27** *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

**Ephesians 1:22-23** *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Because we are, according to God's own words, his hands and feet and arms and heart to express to the world **who** he is. And **what** he is. And what he **has done**. And what he **wants to do**.

Listen to me. I believe that the most important "institution" on planet Earth is not the government. It's not the corporations. It's not the business's. It's the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST!

The Church of Jesus Christ, because Christ lives in and through it, because Christ in this day is revealing himself by it, is the hope of the world and

the most important organization or an entity that exists.

And if that is so, you and I, who claim the name "Christian" had better make sure our priorities reflect the spiritual realities we "say" we believe.

Just as John introduces Jesus Christ in the trifold way we have seen, so the church must reflect those realities to the world.

1. **Jesus is the source of REALITY** and his church must be a place where people come and experience Christ's reality.

- We have to stand on the real truth of the Bible.
- We have to be people who reflect God's character.
- We have to care about the things God cares about.

2. **Jesus is the master of RELATIONSHIPS**, therefore his church must demonstrate true biblical fellowship with one another.

And we must give spiritually seeking people opportunities to form relationships with Christians so they can discover that Jesus Christ is real.

If people do not see the reality of Jesus Christ in his followers lives they will NOT believe the things we say about Jesus Christ. are

### **[Community Penetration]**

I want to talk for just a moment about the third part of our four year goals, which are about Community Penetration.

This is also going to be something that will be hard for us to understand. The world has changed, and is continuing to change. If we are going to, not just bring people into the church, but bring them into the Kingdom, so that their lives are forever changed, for many it's going to take more than just *telling* them the real truth about Jesus. It's not simply enough to proclaim "in word" the gospel. We have to *show* them. We have to live it out.

The whole gospel is "word and deed." Jesus preached *and* did miracles. Jesus preached, healed the sick, and raised the dead, and **we have got to go and sacrificially love our whole community the way Jesus did**. He died for people, who were His enemies. He poured Himself out for people even if they didn't follow Him.

GOAL: This church will be the most effective church in reaching people for Jesus if we ever get to the point when our community starts to say this about our church, *"I don't believe what they believe, but I'm really glad they're in this town, because if for some reason they weren't in this town, we'd have to raise taxes. They're putting so much value into this town, they are loving the people of this town so much, 'I don't believe what they believe,' but I'm so glad they're here."*

That's Community Penetration. And when we do that people will be coming into the kingdom because they'll see Jesus in his church! Until that happens, we're not doing the whole gospel.

**3. Jesus is the object of REJOICING** and if his church does not reflect the joy of knowing God -- not some fake, pretending superficial act that we put on, but a deep abiding joy that we have during good times and yes even when things are bad.

A joy that says, "I cannot say I enjoy having this sickness or this problem, but I am so glad that I know that God has not left me and is sustaining me in spite of it."

Joy that transcends circumstances. Joy that radiates trust.

**That's the church that becomes the hope of the world.**

Listen, as we move forward with a clear vision of what God wants to do in his church - including evangelism, discipleship and community penetration goals -- when the church becomes a vehicle for the Lord Jesus Christ to flow through, as we know He wants to do. When we are committed to that, then there is no more important thing that any of us can commit ourselves to than to the goals and ministries of his Body, the church.

**Some of you are wasting your lives.** You have claimed the name "Christian". But you are standing outside of the mainstream of God's activity. Why? I'm sure it varies, person to person, family to family. Maybe you're hurt, maybe you've moved, maybe you got too busy. Whatever it is its time to get it right again.

Do not waste of life that God gave you! You were put on this earth for a reason if you are a

believer. No one lives forever. You have only so much time. This world needs you right now!

You are God's hands and mouth and ears. You are part of God's body. But if you have amputated yourself from it, your effectiveness in your usefulness has been greatly diminished.

You witness to someone and tell them about Jesus and they get all excited and then what? What do you do then? No, you can't even be an effective witness, because now you have to admit to them that you don't even relate to the church.

In the days ahead I plan on asking many of you to "step up" and be counted in God's church. I'm asking you today.

And I'm not going to be ashamed to ask you to reset your priorities, because you know what? Nothing is more important than the priority that you place on your part in God's church. Because the church is the hope of the world. Your job is not the hope of the world. Your happiness is not the hope of the world. Your success is not the hope of the world. It's not like they have eternal impact.

You need to put the same, care and commitment to your service of the Lord as you give to your work or your family. No, greater! Some of you need to stop making your church commitments second-rate commitments in your life. Things that you can just call 10 minutes before-hand and say "I can't be there."

Because the local church is the hope of the world -- because it stewards the only message that can impact a person's eternal destiny! If we really believe that, how can we not want to put our best talents and decision-making ability to work in the local church body to which God has called us?

No one will ever get to the end of their life and say, "I wish I had put more time and energy into my business, my job. I wish I had spent more time at the office. I wish I had made more money."

But there will be a lot of Christian people who get to the end of their lives and say, "I wish I had served the Lord more fully." "I wish I hadn't waited and waited until I got serious." "I wish I had lived for the Lord in a way that people around me were attracted to him too."

So I am not going to be ashamed to ask you to make some changes. I'm asking you to do that today.

**He's the source of reality.** Is he real in you?

**He's the master of relationships.** Are you in a relationship to him and his people?

**He's the object of rejoicing.** Is your spiritual life healthy enough to have joy? To have the peace that passes understanding?

- **John 20:21** Again Jesus said, **“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”**

#### Invitation

- Do you know him? Then it's time to step up and publicly acknowledge it. Get started in the Christian life. Let us to his glory grow.
- What do I do to reengage with God's church here? Come to the Pastors Class..... Step up today and say I'm going to take that step so I can prayerfully find God's place.
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**Matthew 16:18** **And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**