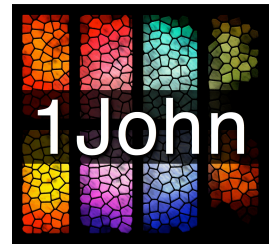


1 John
4. 1-6
March 24, 2013
Luke Knight



Truth and Deception

- John believes that without Jesus, humanity wouldn't have the literal hope of life, we'd be lost in death. Without Jesus we live in darkness, confusion, a kind of blindness.
- So when he writes concerning living in darkness or light, or knowing spiritual life or death, he's quite serious, because he wants us to know life! True, abundant, real life! (Jesus wants it for us, so does John)

V1

- Though deep down we believe there is a difference between the truth and a lie, our culture wrestles with this constantly. Trying to distinguish between the two.
- We live in a society that celebrates tolerance and pluralism to some measure. Our culture says whatever you choose to be true, is.
- John says, living at a time not too different from ours, that there is a difference between the truth, and deception. Not everything can necessarily be right or true.
- He believes we define the truth by Jesus.

V2

- By saying that Jesus wasn't really human, wasn't made of physical matter, his literal death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin is questioned, and we're right back where we started. A broken humanity, without hope of renewal or new life.
- According to the Scriptures the truth is not just a philosophy, or idea, or system of thinking...the truth is a person. The truest thing in the universe is

Jesus. So Christians believe that humanity's quest for truth, whether we know it or not, is a quest for Jesus.

- Truth and love must go hand in hand, this is what the Scriptures teach us. As Paul says in Ephesians we must, "*speak the truth in love.*" (Ephesians 4) so that we can mature together, not driven, and tossed around by every idea or philosophy we hear that sounds right in the moment.

V3

- Community is fractured because Christ's authority and worth is dismissed or not emphasized. This is HUGE. Our unity and wholeness in community rests on the centrality of Jesus within it.
- If we remove Jesus, or lessen his importance, we cease to experience genuine community.

V4. 5, 6

- An emphasis on Jesus is not necessarily a betrayal of pride or opposition to people. If someone really knows Jesus, their whole life is consumed by the fact they want others to know him, too. It's not about exclusion, it's actually about inclusion.
- In Romans 9. 1-3, Paul models this incredibly, it's one of the most dramatic pieces of his writing.
- This is a comforting thought: even though the world resists Jesus at times, and trends, and philosophies come and go, Jesus' Spirit, in Christians is bigger than all that.
- Everything must be measured by Jesus; the truest thing in the universe.
- Christians simply point to Jesus and say, "*look, this is truest, purest, most loving, compassionate, courageous, enduring person I've ever encountered, and everything I'm told, or taught must be measured by how it relates to him.*"
- Our prayer is that our quest for truth goes deeper, and we can guide others in their quest for him, also.

Discussion Questions:

- Why are passages like this uncomfortable to navigate in this day and age?
- How vital has Jesus been to your understanding of truth, and belief in God?
- Do you see people around you on a “quest for truth”?
- How can we aid them in their quest?
- How can Christians emphasize the inclusivity of Jesus, but still stress his exclusive claims? (How can we invite, unite and welcome others, but still stress Jesus’ importance and magnitude?)
- What does “speaking (or living) the truth in love” look for you on a daily basis?
- Historically, Christians have struggled with holding onto right thinking *about* Jesus, but also right living *for* Jesus. How have we succeeded?