

Know What's Real - Life

We are in a battle for truth. We are taught many things by many people in life and a lot of those things are presented with extreme confidence as though they are truth. But then we hear something else that sounds just as good to us even though it opposes the first thing.

Where we then find ourselves is in the position that we have to choose which one we believe. We pick what's "real to us". But the problem there is that when we get to pick what's real, we pick what favors us.

What we need to know is.....what's real!

This is nothing new....even in the church. John dealt with this back around 90 AD. And as he writes 1 John, he writes it to expose the heresy of false teachers and to confirm the faith of the true believers.

John wants us to know what's real.

We must remember that "The main things are the plain things". The basics of the gospel are not confusing. They are plain and simple truths.

1 John 1:1-4 (NKJV)

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, concerning the Word of life— 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

A little bit about John.....John was a real man, ok. He was a hard worker. It enrages me when we see these Jesus movies and John is always about the smallest disciple. He's always scrawny and if you watch, he always is weirdly snuggled up to Jesus. He always looks kind of unmanly.

John was a fisherman. Throwing heavy nets out and pulling them back in. It's not like fishing from your jon boat at Lake Nellie. A jon boat is not named after John the disciple....

He was in a big boat on the Sea of Galilee. This sea is HUGE and rough. John was not a wimp. (boiled alive, survived patmos, last living of 12). He was a worker. (work matters)

John along with his brother, James, were called the “Sons of Thunder” by Jesus. (tag team) I think he was strong and rugged and probably quite and intense guy. These were the two that wanted to cast fire down from heaven and destroy an entire village. (Jesus is not for wimps)

But John becomes the closest to Jesus of all the disciples. He’s John the beloved. He was in Jesus’ inner circle. He witnessed some of the greatest events any man has seen. He was there for Jesus’ transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared from heaven.

He was seated next to Jesus at the last supper (honor). Then from the cross, Jesus assigned John to take care of His mother, Mary.....this was a guy that was close to Jesus.

It’s likely that no one on earth knew the love of Jesus like John. He writes in John 4:19, “we love because He first loved us”. As John the beloved, he knew that he was loved beyond measure. He got it.

And this is why he has the authority to write this letter to set the record straight and state what is real, what is true. To dispel the lies the world was teaching then and is teaching now!

1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

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, concerning the Word of life—

That which was from the beginning is Jesus and the message of the gospel. Right off the bat John states that Jesus is eternal and so is the gospel. It is unchanging. It does not need “updated” or “revised”. It’s not subject to change due to current worldly fads or philosophical thinking.

John 1:1 (NKJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever! So is His Word! He IS the Word!

John has heard this truth first hand in a 3 year working internship. He has seen Jesus daily. Not just saw His physical appearance but seen miracles, compassion, love, grace.

He even touched Jesus.

Luke 24:39 (NKJV)

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

This was after the resurrection. Evidence that Jesus rose from the grave and that when He ascended to heaven, He was in a physical body! John touched Him! It’s real!

1 John 1:2 (NKJV)

the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

Here John gets repetitive but it's an assurance that what He says is reality. In spite of what the world is trying to tell us about Jesus. Believe what John says, it's the truth!

Eternal life was manifested to him.

Eternal life is not heaven, it's knowing Jesus here today.

John 1:4 (NKJV)

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

This is significant because light is truth and it exposes darkness which is falsehood. There is life in Jesus, and this life is the light of men. It's the truth of what every person's heart is searching for!

When people are feeding themselves with drugs, alcohol, sex outside of marriage, abuse of others, watching trashy movies and tv shows.....their heart is searching for Jesus. That's why these other things are only a temporary fix. Snickers satisfies? No, JESUS SATISFIES!

I know it can be easy to say that John had it easier than us..... He got to see Jesus, touch Him, travel with Him. But John still had to exercise faith in Jesus. He still had to believe that Jesus was Who He said He was.

Remember Judas? He had the same experiences. He heard the same teachings. But He never exercised faith in Jesus, He never repented of his sins and trusted in Jesus. Have you?

John goes on to express this life in Christ. What should it look like?

1 John 1:3 (NKJV)

that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Even though John is stating what HE did, here WE are called into action. What we have seen and heard we DECLARE to you!

This is why work matters. Most people spend half of the hours they are awake, at work! Are you declaring what you have experienced with Jesus?

Christianity is a show and tell religion. Too many people want to just show the world who Jesus is.....and I think we should. But can you stop there?

Remember show and tell in school? What if the kid just stood there and held something and didn't say a word. Would you know what they were showing? Maybe? Probably not.

Someone would speak up and say "WELL.....what is it!"

You can't just share the gospel by how you act. They might not even tie it back to Jesus. They just think you are nice. Lots of people are nice. That doesn't mean they love Jesus. It might just mean they have been taught good behavior.

We are responsible for telling people not only Who Jesus is, but what we have experienced. Tell them about your salvation. And tell them about what God continues to do! Testimony! It's one of our greatest witnessing tools and one of our greatest weapons against the enemy!

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

So why is it so important to declare this stuff to others?

John said "we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

We speak of these things because we want others to experience the same thing. We want them to be saved. We want them to have victory over the enemy. We want them to know peace, to find joy, to know their life is valuable.

To fellowship with us. Not just hang out with us, not just be our friends. This is to become a part of it, to join the family of God. We want to share this amazing gift that we have received! (prob)

John, as an old man, it was recorded in historical writings (not bible), that they would bring him up and sit him in the front row. He would stand up and say - "God is your Father, you are His children, you need to love one another."

Fellowship is the answer to spiritual loneliness. Being around other believers and talking about Jesus reminds us that we are not alone. That He is with us and He works through others to remind us of that.

The reason we are all here together today is because we have one thing in common, we have fellowship with the Father through His Son, Jesus!

Right? I'm not speaking to you today because you and I are all good looking. It's because we know Jesus!

1 John 1:4 (NKJV)

And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

This is the whole point, I know you are probably glad I finally have a point. Don't blame it on me, I'm following what John wrote!

But the point is, all of this is written so that your joy may be full. Joy is the answer to spiritual emptiness.

Psalms 16:11 - In Your presence is fullness of joy

Sin has caused unhappiness and emptiness throughout mankind. Earthly pleasures only last for a season but God's pleasures last forever but at God's right hand are pleasures forevermore.

A life that is real is one that is based on these facts:

- Jesus is the Son of God
- He came in the flesh, died for our sin, was raised from the dead
- This is authenticated but the fellowship among God's people
- The result is daily fellowship with Jesus Himself
- It's filled to overflowing with joy

If the Joy is not there, then trace it back to find the disconnect. Are you fellowshiping with Jesus daily? His people? You believe?

The night before He was crucified, Jesus said "your joy no one will take from you."

NO ONE can take Jesus from you. No one can take His presence from you. If you are lacking, where is your disconnect?

The truth of God is: the first and only requirement for the happiness of people is that Word that was with the Father from the beginning, which they heard, which they saw, which they handled with their hands, and which they have declared to us, and which we have embraced by faith.

The fellowship that we enjoy with Him and each other is in that One, and what a joy it brings! Hallelujah! The truth is Christ, He is Christianity, He is our faith! This is REAL LIFE

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.