

To be clear, the intention of this lesson is not necessarily to teach, but rather to illustrate. The idea of iron sharpening iron speaks to equality and a mutual benefit received by all involved. I do not presume to instruct anyone here how to teach God's word (homiletics), as no doubt there is much I could learn from all of you. Likewise, I am not expecting that any of the details in this 1 John study will be new to some of you, though for others there certainly may be an insight or two brought forth that previously was overlooked. In addition, I am not a Greek scholar, and it is important to me that all understand this, and that it not be assumed I am presenting myself in a manner above what I have achieved. However, I do believe exegesis should be important to all Bible teachers, and that there is a distinct difference between exegesis and exposition. Dr. Grassmick defined exegesis as, “The skillful application of sound hermeneutical principles to the biblical text in the original language with a view to understanding and declaring the author’s intended meaning.” Without reference to the original author and audience, original language, and other historical and cultural factors, one is hard-pressed to understand the meaning of the passage. Put another way, though we can always find present application for the Bible’s teachings, we must be careful about placing modern applications and debated theological issues upon text that was written over 1900 years ago.

The more we understand the language of the Bible, the better we can communicate the truth of the text. However, the Sunday worship service is not a seminary classroom, nor is the majority of the congregation equipped to understand us if we go too deep. They are though, often going through difficult life challenges and are looking to us to serve as God's instrument to deliver the word that will exhort, comfort, convict, and guide them as they face the week ahead. This is truly an awesome responsibility. The challenge that a teacher of God's word faces is to take all the information we learn about the passage, and selecting how much of that study to include in our message so that we remain accurate and faithful to the fullness of the text, while keeping relevant, practical, and applicable to those hearing our message. In addition to what we include, how we choose to present it, especially in dealing with insights from the original language, is crucial to an effective message that both honors God and ministers to God's people. The goal is to have a practical balance between not mentioning anything from the Greek at all in our messages, and humbling ourselves in a manner so as not to go over the heads of the congregation or sound as if only a scholar can possibly understand the Bible. Obviously, a teacher of God’s word should also have the integrity of knowing his limits, and not attempt to present an expertise from the Greek that in fact he does not have, and rather which he just repeats from the studies of others. All the more reason to learn as much as we can, and to make the best use out of the study tools available to us.

The following, verse-by-verse, discussion of the opening chapter of 1 John will spotlight specific exegetical observations that were included in the teaching of the text to the Sunday congregation

at Calvary Chapel of Lake Elsinore. It is not meant as an exhaustive presentation of the entire message(s), and is obviously not a transcript. Likewise, it is not meant as an exhaustive exegetical study as might be fitting a written commentary. These were sermons. Chapter one was taught in its entirety over two Sundays, verses 1-4, then verses 5-10. Both of those messages can be heard at the church website, www.calvaryle.org New King James is quoted throughout.

(Any material in parentheses is either a summary of what was stated to the congregation in the messages, or an addition for enhancement purposes for this study)

In the introduction to this book, I offered brief comments citing the Apostle John as author, an unknown date of composition, though relatively late compared to the rest of the New Testament, an intended but unknown original audience of Christians, and one intended purpose being to declare the truth about the Person of Jesus Christ. He is fully God and fully man (hypostatic union), two distinct Natures - Sinless humanity which does not diminish His deity. Acknowledged the challenge for our minds to grasp but at the same time declare this as foundational Christian truth that has always been under attack. (Five and half minutes of introduction)

Verse One

*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—*

WORD - Greek, logos. Reference opening to Gospel of John and the usage of logos. Distinction and yet, equality, the Word was with God and the Word was God. Similar use also of, beginning, between the two books.

WE HAVE HEARD, WE HAVE SEEN - Both in the perfect tense, something that happened in the past but the effects are still felt today. John expressing the impact of hearing and seeing Jesus is still with him today. Illustration of a woman describing the birth of her child. She could use a simple past tense (aorist) but if she used the perfect she would want us to know the impact of that event is still with her today. (ἀκηκόαμεν, *akēkoamen*, ἐώρακάμεν, *heōrakamen*)

WE HAVE LOOKED UPON, HAVE HANDLED – John leaves the perfect tense and now these are simple past, the aorist tense, but the key is the meanings of these words. Looked upon is to analyze, to study, to examine closely (ἐθεασάμεθα, *etheasametha*, from θεάομαι, *theaomai*). Handled is not the common word for touch found throughout the Bible, but is far more intense (ἐψηλάφησαν, *epsēlaphēsav*, from ψηλάφω, *psēlaphō*). An example is when Jesus rose from the dead and challenged the disciples to "handle" Him to prove He was not some sort of a ghost (Luke 24:39). The Greeks used the word to describe someone in a dark room, grasping at the

furniture to find his way out the door. John is already countering some false beliefs about Jesus, later formalized in Gnosticism. These pre-Gnostic ideas taught that matter, the physical, was evil by nature. Thus, the challenge to the truth of Jesus, being the Holy God in human flesh, and the false teachings that would arise in opposition. John is countering that idea by saying how he handled Him - that He was real, physical, material.

WORD - Complicated issue of the Greek philosophical idea behind the word, logos, and how to apply to Jesus. No time to develop it in full, but in a simple way if we think of an expression of the revelation of God by its existence. An illustration of flowers sent by a husband to his wife after an argument. The existence of those flowers speaks a message. Before Jesus opens His mouth to teach us any words, His existence speaks a message. He is the Living Word.

Verse Two

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—

A parenthetical aside, that reinforces the eternal nature of Jesus, that He did not come into existence at the virgin birth, but has been with the Father in the Triune Godhead for all eternity, though now in the incarnation, manifested to us.

Verse Three

*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.*

WE DECLARE - Finally, the main verb of the sentence arrives. (Diagramming)

THAT - Key word expressing purpose (ἵνα, *hina*). We could say, in order that, or, for the purpose of. The purpose being, that the reader would have fellowship with the Christians like John, whose fellowship was with the Father and the Son.

FELLOWSHIP - The Greek word, koinonia (κοινωνία, *koinōnia*), is hard to give an exact English meaning. Fellowship, communion, oneness are all ideas. (Here I expressed the difference between our relationship with God, and enjoying fellowship with God, which I see as two separate issues, the latter being the focus of the verses to come in this chapter. John is writing to Christians, encouraging fellowship, not evangelizing the lost. However, I wish to present the gospel in each message, and our need to individually personalize the cross, though my church audience as well is mostly if not entirely those already saved. This was a good place to explain our relationship with God, based on the merits of Jesus and His finished work, which we receive by grace through faith. Our relationship is that of children, referencing John 1:12. Elsewhere, it is clear we are adopted children, joint-heirs with the only begotten Son of all things.)

Adoption was very common in 1st Century Rome, and the laws were such that adopted children actually had greater rights than blood children. The reason behind such laws was the thought that one is stuck with the children he has by birth. A parent might have a child that grows up to be a scoundrel and one whom the parent wants nothing to do with later in life. However, adoption is a choice. The adopting parent knows what he is getting when he chooses to adopt, and yet chooses to do so anyway. This speaks to the great security we have in Jesus Christ, due to our relationship. However, our fellowship can be strained, just as a parental child relationship is strained on earth when the child wants to rebel and disobey. Keeping these two terms clear and distinct is important in understanding this letter. (Further exhortation was given of the importance for Christians to have fellowship with each other in the local church, and not try to live solo. However, the local church is not a social club or simply a place for friendships because our fellowship with each other must be rooted in our fellowship with the Father and His Son, and it is tragic if a local church can be a place of comfort for the lost who is never confronted with his need for fellowship with God.)

Verse Four

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

YOUR - (Mentioned very briefly as an aside a manuscript issue as to whether, your, or, our, is the original. Advised a small point not going to deal with, but did mention it because it is in the footnotes of the Bible.)

THAT - Another purpose clause (*ἵνα, hina*), focused directly on a purpose for writing the letter. (I then referenced three different quotes from Jesus, in John's Gospel, about the Lord's desire for us to have fullness of joy, His joy within us. Closing with the exhortation that we can have joy in the midst of trials and suffering, and that understanding this letter will aid that process. This ended the message that Sunday)

(In opening to this message, I reviewed the prior week's teaching on the distinction between relationship with God, established at salvation, and fellowship with God which speaks to daily Christian living. A reminder that John is writing to Christians, and not seeking to evangelize with the verses that follow. Just about 3 minutes time in this review)

Verse Five

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

(Explained light used as a symbol of holiness and purity, in contrast to darkness. Light reveals. This foundational truth of God is important in terms of our fellowship with Him)

Verse Six

*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, **we lie** and do not practice the truth.*

(Explained walk used to describe a continual progression, not a momentary act, but a progression in sin/darkness)

WE LIE - (ψευδόμεθα, *pseudometha*) The Greek form can express the idea that we lie to ourselves. (A deponent verb. ψεύδομαι, *pseudomai*). I did not get into any discussion about the issue of deponent verbs in Koine Greek. Just a passing comment)

Verse Seven

*But **if** we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with **one another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son **cleanses** us from all sin.*

(Exhorted on our desire to live Godly lives, but the reality is we still need the blood of Jesus)

CLEANSSES - This is a present, active, we could say, continuous verb (indicative mood καθαρίζει, *katharidzei*). We would use the expression today, 24-7. The spiritual reality is that we, who are in Christ, are being washed in the blood of Jesus at every moment. As we seek to walk in the light, His blood is cleansing us from our failures.

ONE ANOTHER - This speaks to the fellowship of God and individual believer. (Some commentators see ἀλλήλων (*allēlōn*) as connected to John and the church, based on verse three. I think the context demands the idea of God, Who is in the light, and the believer seeking to walk in the light. This is a plural pronoun, always so found, but that is not relevant to the issue of whether the reciprocity is between two individuals or an individual and a group. This is an example of something I did not present in the message at all. Knowing how I am teaching the passage, it would only muddy the water to give an alternate view here, even if that view is held

by some scholars. Thus, I just declared that God and the believer are the "one another" here, and continued.)

IF - Not only here, but all the uses in these verses, speaks to a conditional nature. Maybe one is...maybe one is not. But if one is saying these things, then this is the result. (All examples of 3rd class conditional statements, as shown by the repeated use of ἐάν (*ean*) and the subjunctive mood of the verb in the protasis. Another detail not elaborated on in the Sunday message, but, as with all conditional statements, being crucial for the teacher to have a working understanding)

This concludes the first of three errors that John is correcting in this paragraph. Though we may not know the specifics of the false teachings John was dealing with, we can conclude the general problem, and see that there are elements of these three errors seen in Christendom even today.

Verses Eight & Nine

*If we say that **we have** no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

WE HAVE - In the present (ἔχομεν, *echomen*). We see the other extreme. First was the idea one could enjoy fellowship with God while walking in sin, and now the error is thinking one no longer has, in the present, any sin. This would imply the elimination of the sin nature we wrestle with in these bodies, in this life.

However, we can confess our sins and receive forgiveness. This is where recognizing context is important. The issue is not an unbeliever confessing every last sin in order to be born again, receive salvation, and enter into relationship with God. Rather John speaks to a believer, confessing sins committed as a believer, in order to restore the fellowship with God that the blood of Jesus, per verse seven, has already washed away the instant the sin was committed. Sometimes God may bring a sin to mind that we did days or even years earlier. Once convicted, we must then confess. However, the Savior had already forgiven that sin. We are cleansed from all unrighteousness, even those we may not be aware of yet. (This led to a longer exhortation about the faithfulness of God and the justice of God, with that justice being satisfied at the cross for every sin we may ever commit).

Verse Ten

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

The final error is related to the prior discussion. Here there would be an allowance for the sin nature, but the error is that there are never any acts of sin that come forth. (Here I contrasted the

error of saying we never sin that John addresses, with those today who teach we sin every minute of every day. Sin is a choice, an act, in thought, word or deed. We can't possibly walk in the light if we are helpless to sin every minute. Thus, I then gave application as to how we, as believers, can get greater victory in our thoughts, words, and actions.)

The conclusion of this message (which was almost a third of the entire sermon) brings these verses back to verse four (taught the prior Sunday). Verses 5-10 explain how we can have fullness of joy, which is the purpose for John's writing. A lack of joy is not, or should not, be based on outward circumstances. Rather a lack of joy for the Christian is when he continues to live with one foot in the world - continues to live with even that one pet sin he refuses to repent of. The sinful things that as an unbeliever often brought us pleasure, bring conviction and guilt when we know the Lord. Likewise, a lack of joy comes from a false expectation of what sort of victory is available. If we make the error of thinking one day we will never sin, and there is something wrong with us if we do, or maybe we are not even saved, we will be defeated and lack joy then too. Instead, the prescription is here, to confess our sins and continue to walk in the light. (I explained the difference in detail between condemnation and conviction at this point as well - with condemnation being from the enemy or ourselves, and drives us from God. Conviction comes from God, drives us to Him, and is for our good.)

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit and is not something we crank up by effort, but rather is produced by God, as we walk in the light, in fellowship with Him.