

It's all about the Center Pt. 5

I John 1:1-4, CBC, Wednesday, October 15, 2025 **My Hope is Built on Nothing Less**

Conference, Membership Class; if these believers were “in the right, but shaken as to ‘the truth’”, how do you bolster assurance? **I. Identify the Center vv. 1-2** v. 1 **what was from the beginning**, we there from beginning of Jesus’ ministry/incarnation; **what we have heard; what we have seen w our eyes;** eyewitnesses **what we have looked at**—word similar, focus on seeing what comes into focus as look into it fully (**do you know what we’ve got here?** (Jn. 1:14 same word—we saw, beheld His glory, I Jn. 4:14) **and touched w our hands** Yarbrough, “John saw and touched the deceptively mundane stuff of eternal redemption” p. 29—real physical Jesus, **concerning the word of life** CENTER something about existence that goes on—life! is there any alternative to death? Yes—word of life! Jn. 1:4 message tied with person, v. 2 **and the life was manifested** transcendent God spoken of w awe in OT, seen by us; NO WAY we could experience all of v. 1 and not say “**the life was manifested**”; contra those who denied Jesus is the Christ I Jn. 2:22, 4:2, II Jn. 7 **and we have seen, and testify, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us**—this Jesus is the Eternal One, same substance, same quality of life as God Himself; I Jn. 5:11-12 Jn. 1:2 **He was in the beginning with God** not known apart from communion w Father; **whether eternal nature main focus or implied, saying that what is before you, before what we all can see/know is not just “out there” or back then, but it has come to our senses;** v. 1 **Word of life** both message & person; deity manifested in humanity; John and other apostles took this in personally w such mundane things as **looking and touching—these are the things of life!** “Though from John’s point of view truth would by no means be antithetical to much of what naturalistic science affirms today, it would be markedly less reductionist. Truth is as much a matter of what God, by word or deed, in creation or redemption, has revealed as it is of what humans observe and infer. Ideally, divine revelation and humble human inference work together, and when they do, truth in a full sense can emerge. Precisely this concurrence of divine self-disclosure and human reception is what John writes about here as he ‘testifies’ or ‘bears witness.’” Yarbrough, P. 36 tough quote worked on last week says that there is more than just WE can observe and understand; God’s revelation of truth includes ALL HIS means of revelation which includes creation, but also eyewitnesses and those who have received commission from Him to proclaim; John begins with THIS as authority to speak from God;

II. The Center Determines Fellowship

the center is the glue, no matter what we say about what we believe/value, how would you determine the glue holding us together? By what breaks fellowship/trust—I Jn. 2:19, long before they left, where was their energy focused (goals, values) think for ourselves—easy to say “not on same page” w/o taking responsibility to GET on same page (push it on preacher, others) **think, “what bores you, what makes you continue—what do you text about when just unfiltered”—THAT’s where your heart is—THAT is your true glue—why important? Subject and verb of whole section here;** v. 3 **what we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you also** why is this One so important—why so important that you focus on this object—**why centrality on this One?** Purpose #1 **So that you too may have fellowship with us** here is our word koinonia—sharing together (business partners, owning land together)—want that not to be broken—remembers hunger, response to gospel, led to opening hearts/homes, meals, shared memories, personality, laughs, service opportunities, LIFE together—**this all blown apart as church broken up** (2:19) **and John says, if not careful, they will lose it w him** (and his whole work of ministry) how? **b/c secessionists have different glue/gospel and partnering with them breaks fellowship with John/others, why?** **b/c while like each other’s food, personality, hospitality, and football team, true koinonia/glue, what share together tied w much deeper roots of fellowship--and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and w His Son, Jesus Christ** word used for son consistently used b/n Father Son, different word used when John wants to refer to us as children of God—keeps the distinction b/n God and us—chief fellowship John concerned about is sharing trust in the Christ who came, died, rose again; Gary Burge, John’s emphasis is entirely pastoral and practical 1:3-4—mind on fabric of Christian community and how its fellowship and joy are affected by dispositions concerning Jesus—assumes intimate fellowship in Christian community only possible when there is consensus about identity and presence of Jesus **here what John is claiming?** If you want fellowship w God, you will have fellowship w us, and our fellowship will center on proclaiming Him (Jesus, the one described in vv. 1-2 that we were with **I Cor. 1:20-23, II Cor. 4:5;** not just agreeing with words, but fellowship with, life from this One, **word of life**—that’s why birthed into it, born again! (spiritual birth like but not physical, Jn. 3:3-8,16, Jn. 5:24, Lk. 20:34-36, I Jn. 3:1-2, 14)—but comes back to their situation—it’s simple, to listen to them, to fellowship with THEM is not to have fellowship w God—Kruise notes fellowship only used 4x in I Jn. V. 3, 6, 7—NOT in John’s gospel or II or III Jn—perhaps term used by those who left as they said fellowship w God comes apart from fellowship w John and company p. 59, etc. . . . but not just mutual assent to common purpose, but something created as people walk in light as God is in the light—once this is established, then share commitment to common purpose such as partnership w author in proclamation of the Word of life; **Stott says purpose of proclamation stated not in terms of salvation, but in terms of fellowship, which properly understood is the meaning of salvation in its widest embrace** **What is basis of fellowship?** Both sides pulling for these people—if niceness key, trouble—in fact, II Jn. 10-11 says don’t even give hospitality b/c fellowship at stake w true gospel; so personal but not personal, not me against them—**real question, who has fellowship w the Father—this drowns out all other questions—tensions will always be there, but if fellowship w Father really fills screen, it will weed out wrong emphasis’—if this is true, how should it affect what we ALL look for and where we ALL place our effort at church regardless of personality, season of life, or specific area of burden?** don’t assume the gospel—under Contemporary Significance, Burge wrote, we live in culture eager for religious experience—old Barna poll showed 2/3 of those in pews do not believe in exclusive character of Christian message; almost half of evangelicals said the same thing (Me: that’s my point in saying “go to hell”; NOT that I know, but that IT MATTERS—can’t just be sloppy about center, don’t talk about center, NOT be Jesus

AS described w His goals, His heart AND still have same gospel—MUST find center or we have nothing—proving it as more and more slop (shallow) and exclusivity (centering around Christian nationalism, etc.—why revival of focus on politics? b/c neglected, b/c changing times, b/c NEED tangible mission/focus—**not just beating on politics as fighting for center, yesterday**, used to be doctrines of grace as brainy thing (Young, Reformed, Restless)—used to be worship wars—few because now all a band or NOT “worshipping”—so changed to what IS worship if not just music) (Emergent Church, NOW REAL versus deconverting b/c NOT REAL), today looking for place to belong, mission—cause to give life for; **Burge continues, what does it mean to hold to the scandal of the incarnation? Incarnation is the definitive revelation of God; cannot be compared w religious revelations offered by others Mohammed, Joseph Smith, New Age prophets, etc.—watch other centers of fellowship, where want to get deeper, where mission, where focused—don’t get rid of politics, desire for mission, family, material possessions/ finances, but prove to me that spending same amount of time unpacking the riches of God in Christ Jesus Eph. 1 style—if “have enough,” then in danger of not being in fellowship so much with God as with whatever “part of God” and His world that has your attention—Must be Eph. 4 diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit—Looking to Christ, individually, together; EVERY difference should force us to do this—OBJECT/CENTER what we proclaim is living, physical Christ who is GOD—fellowship with Father/Son center of OUR fellowship; “Here the thought of union w God is uppermost, and the thought of participation in some common object has dwindled to the point of vanishing” Marshall, p. 104 opponents in some way thought that could have fellowship w God w/o agreeing on Jesus Christ—says no way! You must have fellowship w US and **INDEED our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ** (cf. Jn. 17:3, 21-22) Is this really the glue here at Cornerstone, b/n most Christians in other churches—**what is real glue b/n you and other Christians in other groups?****

Luke 20:34–36 Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

John 1:4, 14 “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.”¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 5:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 15:11 “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

John 16:24 “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

John 17:13 “But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

1 Corinthians 1:20–23 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

2 Corinthians 4:4–5 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁴ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.

2 John 12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

--if dare, talk about Charlie Kirk—autopsy—why so large, what is link between politics and gospel—discussion groups bringing up about wife’s Catholic background—where at in present time, tied w atheists, Mormons, others—say that is political, then speaking of unashamedly promoting gospel—yes, not church, yes, not pastor—but representing gospel—if he learning how to bridge gap, then should carefully parse what role had and where not source of gospel application in politics and fellowship (syncretistic) Billy Graham even admitted that light of political exposure made him cross some gospel lines—1/24/11 Wichita Eagle quoting Christianity Today interview—“Looking back, I know I sometimes crossed the line, and I wouldn’t do that now.” Would have “steered clear of politics” “If the Rev. Billy Graham could go back and do anything differently, he would have “steered clear of politics,” he told Christianity Today. “I’m grateful for the opportunities God gave me to minister to people in high places; people in power have spiritual and personal needs like everyone else, and often they have no one to talk to,” he said. “But looking back, I know I sometimes crossed the line, and I wouldn’t do that now.” Graham also wished he had spent more time at home with his family, studied more and preached less.”

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