

It's all about the Center Pt. 6

I John 1:1-4, CBC, Wednesday, October 22, 2025 187 (Red) Blest Be the Tie

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** real physical Jesus, **concerning the word of life** CENTER, 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; John and other apostles took this in personally w such mundane things as **looking and touching—these are the things of life!** John begins with THIS as authority to speak from God; **II. The Center Determines Fellowship** **the center is the glue, no matter what say about what we believe/value, how would you determine the glue holding us together?** v. 3 gives subject/verb **v. 3 what we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you also why?** Purpose #1 **So that you too may have fellowship with us** koinonia/glue/center—remembers hunger, response to gospel, led to opening hearts/homes, meals, shared memories, personality, laughs, service opportunities, LIFE together—**John says, if not careful, they will lose it w him b/c secessionists have different glue/gospel; partnering with them breaks fellowship with John/others, why?** koinonia/fellowship/glue/center of **what share together tied to One proclaimed --and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and w His Son, Jesus Christ** **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, understanding, makes sense, feeling of purpose and service—important, but NOT center—**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?** IF gospel brings not merely into truth, purpose, service, but into right relationship with Creator, Redeemer, Final Judge, THEN MUST focus on cultivating that relationship with God in way that leads to spreading roots of that relationship with others first inside, then outside of people of God (those inside truly saved have Spirit to fight sin, those outside need to hear—those God has prepared WILL hear) don’t assume the gospel, watch focusing on parts of kingdom of God without focusing on life from/according to God of kingdom; **Is this really the glue here at Cornerstone, b/n most Christians in other churches—what does fellowship with God, with Jesus look like for you?** what shows not only honor, attention to Him/dependence on Him, but that your life is filled with His priorities/mission, not just the Christian priority you are focusing on—Stott summarizes this section w challenging reminder/call to action: **This statement of the apostolic objective in the proclamation of the gospel, namely a human fellowship arising spontaneously from a divine fellowship, is a rebuke to much of our modern evangelism and church life. We cannot be content with an evangelism which does not lead to the drawing of converts into the church, nor with a church life whose principle of cohesion is a superficial social camaraderie instead of a spiritual fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.** **Final thoughts on this fellowship as glue—how to pursue koinonia around spiritual fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, Ps. 81:8-10** (Carson: For Love of God vol. 1 May 28) Historically, of course, the response of the people was disappointing: “my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me” (81:11). In that case, they were not promised the satisfaction symbolized by full mouths. Far from it. God says, “So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices” (81:12). Of course, the nature of the idolatry changes from age to age. I recently read some lines from John Piper: **“The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but endless nibbling at the table of the world. It is not the X-rated video, but the prime-time dribble of triviality we drink in every night. For all the ill that Satan can do, when God describes what keeps us from the banquet table of his love, it is a piece of land, a yoke of oxen, and a wife (Luke 14:18-20). The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but his gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable, and almost incurable”** (A Hunger for God [Wheaton: Crossway, 1997], 14). **“Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.”** This fits w Men’s Fellowship book Rico Tice Chapter 3 about why little evangelism; **read v. 3** But one more result from right center; **III. The Center Determines Joy v. 4 these things we write so that our joy may be made complete** not writing to just slap them on the hand, to tell them the truth so that knock out the opposition, **what do you hear?** Purpose #2: hear Pastoral care—I can’t rest easy knowing that some that have come to the gospel are not knowing the joy, the completeness that should come w it—there is a heaviness, confusion, tension that should be lifted through the gospel—so in one sense, speaking of their loss of joy (promised in John’s gospel through the gospel)—comes from having wrong focus, understanding of God and gospel – it’s that important; what is? true fellowship between believers—focus on fellowship, believers? YES, but OBJECT is glue—result is joy **Jn. 15:11,16:24,17:13,II Jn. 12** Burge says it this way **“Christian community is partnership in experience; it is the common living of people who have a shared experience of Jesus Christ. They talk about this experience, they urge each other to grow more deeply in it, and they discover that through it, they begin to build a life together unlike any shared life in the world.”** P. 55 not just coincidence of shared experience of God where compare spiritual walks, it is living and experiencing the Father and the Son together as believers. Burge, **“Christian fellowship is triangular; my life in fellowship with Christ, your life in fellowship with Christ, and my life in fellowship with yours.”** P. 55 mystical union enjoy w Christ becomes substance that binds church together—net result of such community will be joy; writes so HE will have THIS joy which is tied to fellowship which is tied to Christ—**what would have to change (or be a prerequisite) for your joy to be tied to THIS kind of triangular fellowship?** (OR how would you head toward this?) **do you feel this attachment to ones around you? Can someone walk away from us and you ache—desire for them weighs on you?**

Psalm 81:8-10 “Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! 9 “Let there be no strange god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god. 10 “I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

John 1:4 “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

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.

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.