



1 John

# Lavish Love

**Fullness of Joy**

**1 John 1:1-4**

Message #1 of 10 – S705

**Sermon given on September 18, 2016**



**Sunday Morning Service**

Pastor Rick Lancaster

# Fullness of Joy

## 1 John 1:1-4

### Opening Comments

- Turn to **1 John 1**
- Today, we begin a new series through the first of three letters that the Apostle John wrote
- John wrote a total of five things collected into the New Testament
- The Gospel of John, three general epistles, or letters called 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John, and he also wrote the last book of the Bible the Revelation
- John was one of the twelve disciples that Jesus chose to walk with Him during His 3-year ministry
- He was also one of three of Jesus' closest companions
- Was with Peter and his brother James with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane
- We can't be certain when these letters (1-3 John) were written
- It is generally believed that they were written late in John's life
- Probably between 80 to 85 AD
- At this point, John is the last remaining of the original twelve
- And he has the distinction of being the only one of the apostles that died a natural death
- Judas, the traitor hung himself, and the other ten died martyrs deaths
- Much of John's later life was spent in Ephesus where this letter was written
- It is not addressed to any particular church or person – it is an open letter
- Meant to be read and then passed along to other churches
- The people in the churches were second and third generation Christians
- Something like spiritual lethargy was creeping into the church
- Later John was exiled to the island of Patmos where he was given the Revelation, wrote this about the church in Ephesus **Revelation 2:4**  
**I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.**

- This letter is to encourage them to return to their first love, >40 references to love in this letter
- One of the key verses is **1 John 3:1**

**Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!**

- After fifty years of serving God and witnessing the power of God working in miraculous ways, John is overwhelmed by the thought that God's love is most powerfully manifested in His acceptance of us as His children
- John is amazed that God would even do it – he is marveling at the extravagance of God's love
- I have entitled this series **Lavish Love**
- The word 'lavish' means, 'using or giving in great amounts – expended, bestowed, or occurring in profusion, unlimited – to expend or give in great amounts or without limit'
- I have three goals that I hope to accomplish through this series
- First – **Know God's Lavish Love**
- Second – **Return God's Love**
- Third – **Lavish God's Love on Others**
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **1 John 1:1-4**
- **Pray**

### Teaching

- **Fullness of Joy**
- God created us with the capacity to love and with a need to be loved
- Because it is His desire that we would love Him and let Him love us
- In fact, you can't be truly happy until you let God love you and you return His love back to Him
- All through this letter John is going to encourage us to love God
- Over forty times in these 5 chapters he will refer to love
- Interestingly, none of those references to love are in the first chapter
- This morning, look at the first four verses
- John is going to tell us why he is writing this letter

- Let's begin
- **1 John 1:1-3**
- Keep your finger in 1 John and turn to the gospel of **John 1**
- John says he heard, saw, and touched the Word of life
- John said something similar when he was inspired to write the gospel that bears his name
- **John 1:1-2, 4, 14**
- Turn back to **1 John 1**
- John is reminding them that Jesus was a real person
- A person that could be listened to, could be seen, and could be touched
- John is reminding them of the incarnation of God the Son in the person of Jesus from Nazareth
- At about this time a very dangerous doctrine was being developed and was creeping into the church – Gnosticism
- It would be another century before it was fully developed but it was being put forth as an alternate truth to the gospel
- Gnosticism has two basic principles
- First – salvation comes through the acquisition of secret knowledge
- Second – universe is comprised of two parts – material & spiritual
- They believe that the material world is inherently evil and only the spiritual is good
- We don't have time to explore all the reasons that is wrong, but we need to understand why John is starting his letter this way
- The Gnostics were denying the incarnation of God the Son
- In their false doctrine, Jesus couldn't be God become flesh as the gospel of John teaches
- If the material world is evil, therefore all flesh is inherently evil, and if Jesus was a man, then He would be inherently evil, which God cannot be
- So if Jesus was God, He couldn't have been a human
- Some Gnostics believed that Jesus only seemed to have a body
- You couldn't actually touch Him and He didn't leave footprints as He walked by the sea

- Others said that Jesus was a natural man born to Mary AND Joseph
- At His baptism the Christ Spirit descended upon Him and stayed with Him until right before He died – That the man Jesus died on the cross, not the Christ
- That is a denial of the incarnation and the atoning death of Jesus
- John will say later that this is a serious error **1 John 4:2-3**  
**By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God...**
- So serious that your very salvation depends upon this **1 John 2:22-23**  
**Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**
- To call yourself a Christian you need to believe that Jesus was 100% God and 100% man
- Need to understand this, because Gnosticism is still alive today – Mormons, JW, New Age Movement, Emerging Church
- Verse three says that believing that is the prerequisite for fellowship with God the Father
- ‘fellowship’ is another of John’s favorite words
- Has a deep and rich meaning = root meaning of deep sharing of things in common
- Imagine that, God wants to share life with you
- Think of the most famous person you might want to spend time with
- I think I would like to spend some time with Benjamin Netanyahu
- If I get to go to Israel in March, I think I will invite him to have lunch with me
- What do you think my chances are of getting an hour with him?
- Slim to none, and he is just the Prime Minister of the little nation of Israel, but God, sovereign ruler of the universe wants to share my whole life with me – that’s radical
- He is not a distant God, disinterested the things of this world
- God cares deeply about every bit of your life **1 Peter 5:6-7**  
**Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**
- The word ‘cares’ in that verse is in the present active tense

- Means God is actively caring for you
- But it doesn't always feel like that does it?
- Sometimes it feels like God is not there, or that He doesn't care, or maybe He is too busy with the rest of the world to pay attention to us
- Or maybe you feel like your life has disqualified you from God's care
- You've done things you know are wrong, and think maybe God has given up on you
- Maybe you've sinned one time too many and now God is done with you
- God doesn't care for you because you have done something that warrants His care
- It is an expression of His grace – He cares for us because that is His nature
- Sin is a problem – it breaks our fellowship with God
- It is in fellowship with God that we experience the grace of God most fully **2 Peter 1:2-4**

**Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...**

- John finishes this section telling us what he hoped would result from this letter
- **1 John 1:4**
- The Bible has a lot to say about joy **Nehemiah 8:10**  
**The joy of the LORD is your strength.**
- People often confuse happiness with joy
- Happiness depends upon external circumstances, which are always changing
- Joy depends upon our faith, it wells up from within us as the Holy Spirit bears spiritual fruit in us
- John wants their and our joy to be full = permanently full/filled
- That happens as we walk in fellowship with God the Father through faith in Jesus Christ

- This world will steal your happiness – chronic pain, bad report from doctor, loss of a job, people will betray you, accidents will happen, spouses will do the wrong thing, children will rebel
- But if you are in intimate fellowship with the God who loves you and sent His Son to save you, out of you will flow the joy of the Lord
- Next week we will look at the rest of the chapter – tells us how to fix it when we are out of fellowship with God because of sin
- We are going to finish in a minute or two
- If you are here today, or are listening to my voice, you need to know something, you were created by God to be the object of His love
- He created you so that He could love you, with His lavish love
- He created you so that He could share life with you in fellowship
- How much of your life are you sharing with Him? If coming to church is all of your life you share with God, that's less than two percent of your week
- One of my favorite verses **Psalm 16:11**  
**You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**
- Your spiritual strength and joy are dependent upon your exposure to God, just like you tan is dependent upon exposure to the sun
- The more of your life that you share with Him, the stronger you will be and the more joy you will experience
- God didn't create you so that could spend 2% of your life with Him
- He wants to be a part of 100% of your life
- And if you let Him in, you know His strength, peace, joy, grace, and mercy in new and exciting ways every day
- Let's pray and commit to give Him more of your life today
- Amen–**Pray**