

LOVE ONE ANOTHER: JOY COMPLETE

August 5, 2018

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1 John 1:1-10

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—²this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

The 1st Letter of John is not what it is without the Gospel of John. The very opening of the letter echoes with words from the prologue of John's gospel: words like "the beginning," "word," "life", and "with" God. And the phrase "joy complete" echoes John 15, when Jesus teaches his disciples "I am the vine, you are the branches... I say these things to you so that your joy may be complete." To understand "the message" (1 John 1:5) is to know the message of Jesus as presented in John's gospel: love one another (love is "the light" and loving is "doing what is true"). 1 John is meant for the church who claims the name of Jesus and yet struggles to love one another.

Big Ideas

1. Jesus doesn't just love us first, Jesus loves first.
2. The church has often been about condemnation, correctness or duty first, and not love.
3. Love is the only thing strong enough to make the turn.

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Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. What are some regrettable or unattractive things Christianity gets known for?
3. Who you have the hardest time loving? People who have wronged you, or hurt you, or who think/believe differently than you?
4. What do you think it means for the people who claim Jesus to “love one another”? What are some concrete ways we can do this as church?
5. What does it mean to embrace joy as the true “spirit” of the church?

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