

# It All Depends On Jesus

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 November 2022

Preacher: Tyler Neighbors

[ 0 : 00 ] So, we're going to be in 1 John tonight, and thank you all for letting me be a part of your fellowship and getting to open God's word with you.

1 John is probably one of my favorite epistles in the New Testament. A lot of times when you hear pastors talking about assurance of salvation or trying to counsel someone on maybe a decision, if they're ready to make that profession of faith, you hear them counsel them a lot out of the book of 1 John.

1 John. There's so many things that you can take from this letter. There's several themes that are very prominent. There's themes of fellowship. There's themes of avoiding sin. And there's themes of finding forgiveness in our failures. You know, a lot of people, they forget that this was a letter that was written to a church, to people that were already believers.

So, when it says in this book that God is faithful and just to forgive us of all unrighteousness, he's talking to believers, people that are still finding struggles in their sanctification.

So, in this book, there's hope for people that are lost, and there's hope for people that are saved, too, that are still struggling to become more like Christ and to grow in their relationship with the Lord.

[ 1 : 25 ] There's also themes of protection from false prophets, and we're going to see a lot of that in this letter. And if I get to continue this series later, we'll dive more into that.

But the big one, and again, like I said earlier, the big one that generally people go to for this epistle a lot is for assurance of salvation. And you see that in 1 John 5.13. John states that as the purpose of writing this letter.

It says, I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. And again, notice, again, it says who he's writing to, to you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

So, these are believers. These are people that are struggling with their faith. For me, I'm able to relate with these people a lot that John is writing to. That's one of the reasons this is my favorite book to just sit down and read through and to study through.

In John's gospel account, you know, there's five books written by John in the New Testament. There's the gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and then Revelation. But in his gospel account, he says something similar.

[ 2 : 37 ] That's the reason that he's writing this. In John 20, verse 31, But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

And again, that's John 20, 31. So, above all else, one of the things that John wants us to see in these letters, and these things that he's writing to us, is that Jesus is the source of eternal life. There's salvation and no other name except the name of Christ. But one of the things that I love about John that we also see from him, in his letters and in his gospel account, we see a closeness to Christ that we don't really see from other apostles.

I mean, yeah, all the apostles were close to Christ. They were in his circle of 12 followers that he heavily invested in. But within that circle, there were three people. There was Peter, James, and John.

And in that, we see that they got to experience a lot of things with Jesus that the other apostles didn't. There was the transfiguration. There was the raising of the synagogue leader's daughter.

[ 3 : 50 ] There was the Garden of Gethsemane. There was all these experiences that John got to have with Jesus that not everyone else did. And we even see how John addressed himself.

Does anyone know how John addressed himself in the gospel? The one that Jesus loved. You know, when I first read this, I thought that was kind of peculiar. Like, is he writing this in hopes that the other disciples will see this one day and get a load of this?

Or if he was trying to play favorites? I don't know. But I don't think that was the case at all. I just think that John was just trying to show that there was an intimacy with the Savior that he had.

And you see this in the opening verses of 1 John. Verse 1 says, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.

Now, there's a lot of theological implications that we're going to jump into here in a minute with this verse. But as John's writing this in his old age, it's believed this is one of his later letters in life and that he was writing this to the church at Ephesus.

[ 5 : 00 ] I just have to believe that John's looking back on his life and that his time with Jesus, and he's remembering those times. That he got to spend with Jesus, maybe sitting around the campfire at night while he teaches.

He's experiencing life with Jesus as he is raising people from the dead, as he is healing the sick, as he reclined at the table with them at the Last Supper.

John's remembering all these personal moments that he's had with Jesus. And I believe that in his letters that this really comes out. But before we dive into the theological implications of what's going on here, like I said, he was writing to the people at Ephesus.

And it's believed that he was writing against Gnosticism. Does everyone know what Gnosticism is? I'm not smart enough to explain it in depth, but I can tell you the basic principles of what John was talking against.

Basically, it was that all flesh is evil, which basically meant for the Gnostics that Jesus couldn't have been God. He couldn't have been man. That's just completely impossible because all flesh is evil, so a good God can't become flesh.

[ 6 : 13 ] And they were coming out of the church and they were basically corrupting the teaching of the church and drawing people away from the truth of who Jesus was.

So with that in mind, with that background, when we talk about talking against false teachers and protecting the church against false prophets, this is a lot of what John was preaching against, what he was trying to defend the church against, was these Gnostic views in that special knowledge and spiritual enlightenment was just for the spiritually elite or the socially elite.

It was called special knowledge. It wasn't for everyone. So anyone else that wasn't lucky enough to be in that elite group to get that special knowledge, sorry, you're just going to have to trust everyone else's word for it.

So I want to read verse 1 and 2 to you again, and we're going to jump into the text here. So that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life, the life was made manifest, and we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

So there's something very crucial that John is doing in these opening verses of his epistle. First of all, he's starting with the truth that Jesus is both God and man.

[ 7 : 43 ] He is divine and flesh. He starts off with that which was from the beginning. So John automatically is starting off describing Jesus from an eternal perspective, that which was from the beginning, this eternal perspective.

He doesn't say that which came into existence eventually. He doesn't say that which God thought of halfway through the creation narrative. No, that which was from the beginning, which was made manifest to us.

Again, going back to John's gospel, if you get a chance to read these side by side, it's really neat to do that. You see a lot of similar language between the gospel of John and his epistles.

But I want to go to John chapter 1. In this opening section, you see a lot of similar language that John is using to describe Jesus.

So starting in John chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

[ 8 : 49 ] All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And then, skipping ahead to verse 14.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, again, even in John's gospel, we see Him making this similar case, that Jesus was both divine and completely human. Alright, so does anyone know what that theological term for that is?

Fully God and fully man. It's a hypostatic union. So, whenever I first heard that word, hypostatic, I immediately thought, well, Ritalin would solve that.

But hypostatic union. And that's describing the fullness of God and the fullness of man complete in Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 52 ] He wasn't half God and half man. He wasn't mostly God and partly man or the other way around. He was completely God and completely man. And that's important in this.

Because, well, first off, let me ask you this. Why is that foundational truth important for our faith? That Jesus Christ was fully man and fully God. Our whole salvation is wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ.

You know, one of my favorite things about being a dad is getting to teach the Bible to my kids. You find yourself trying to break things down to the simplest way that you can explain something to your kids.

But in all actuality, what you're really doing is just getting down to the bedrock truth of Scripture. So whenever I was teaching the Gospels to Skylar, I asked her, so Skylar, what does the Gospel mean?

And I taught her that the Gospel means good news. Good news of Jesus. That's what the Gospels mean. And for me, I can't think of a better news that we as believers can accept than while we were still helpless, sinful people with no hope of ever getting back to God, a perfectly holy God came down to us, took on all of our frailties, all of our humanity, so that He could make a way back to the Father for us in a way that we never could.

[ 11 : 21 ] That's good news. And I love that John is emphasizing this. This is a foundational truth of our faith. This is what some people would call a tier one issue in doctrine.

That's a non-negotiable. Jesus was fully God and fully man. Because if He was not fully God, then how could we believe that He had the power to save us from our sins?

If He wasn't fully God, how could we believe that He had the power to raise up from the dead and conquer the wages of our sin? If we didn't believe that He was fully human, how could we believe what the Bible says that He took on all the temptation that we go through?

How could we believe that He could die for our faith if He wasn't completely mortal? This truth is foundational. Like you were saying, it's foundational for our salvation. Our whole salvation is wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ.

And that's really what John is trying to hit at here in his letters is that salvation can't be won any other way. There's no other path to God except through the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 30 ] And if you miss that, then everything else falls apart. Everything else in the Christian faith rests on the person of Jesus Christ. If you miss that, you've missed it all. So, John is, again, going back to this idea of Gnosticism.

They believed that this special knowledge, that this spiritual enlightenment was only for the select elite, right? Well, again, John is coming to them saying, I've seen Him.

I've experienced Him. I've touched Him. I've heard Him with my voice. I was just a common fisherman and I have this knowledge. The salvation that Christ offers is for anyone that calls on His name.

And then John is here to tell us how we can have that. So, after that, John goes into this idea of fellowship. And this is one of the things that we see throughout the book of verse John.

We see John talking about, this is how you know you have fellowship with Christ. This is how you know that you are walking in the light and not in the darkness. You see this all throughout the epistle of John and it starts here.

[ 13 : 32 ] But what are things that bring fellowship to people? What are things that create fellowship? Assembling? Yeah. You know, there's all sorts of social groups for common interests now.

I really stepped in something a few months back. You know, we had some bills coming up that we were trying to figure out how we were going to pay. And Nicole has these old Star Wars collectible toys that were still in the package.

Like mint condition Star Wars toys. And I thought these are going to be worth some money somewhere. Well, I happened to be a member of a Star Wars fan page on Facebook. I love Star Wars. I love all things Star Wars.

So, this is what happened. I posted pictures of these, I called them toys, on this Facebook page. And I said, does anyone know how much these toys would be worth?

Basement doors started slamming open from every house of a tired mom in the area. and people were just attacking me left and right saying, how could you call these toys? We have devoted our lives around these.

[14:38] And they were saying some pretty nasty things to me because I had the audacity to call these things toys. And so, there was just this fellowship of insanity that was coming at me because of their common nature and this common interest in these, I'll just call them idols.

They weren't toys to these people anymore. They were idols. No, I was the sacrifice to their idols. But anyway, fellowship, the foundation of it is that there's a common interest.

There's a common interest that brings people together. And in verse 3 and 4, let's read that. That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us.

And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. So, John is writing this and he says this again to these believers.

He's saying that he's writing these things to them. Why? So that they can have fellowship with each other. And this fellowship isn't founded on a common activity that they do together or toys.

[15:57] He says that our fellowship is in the person of Jesus Christ. Now, there's two reasons why fellowship is unique in the Christian faith. The first one is that our fellowship is diverse.

While we have a common interest in the person of Jesus Christ, the people that that brings together is just a diverse body of different people that are all coming together for a common purpose.

You know, you see people from different socioeconomic class. You see the white collars, the blue collar workers. You see people from different cultures, people with different family backgrounds, people with different family dynamics that are all coming together.

Young, singles, parents with endless amounts of kids. They're all coming together for the sole purpose to bring glory to Christ. And they're coming together in peace and in joy.

I can't think of another type of fellowship that would do that, that would bring that many different people together for a common purpose. And you know, this goes all the way back to Paul's writings whenever he was talking to these different churches that just all of a sudden found themselves in a culture shock.

[17:08] Because when Christ lifted the veil and all of a sudden salvation was for everyone and people were worshiping in spirit and truth, different cultures were coming together. So these people that were used to just being a select group of Jews in the synagogue, now all of a sudden there's people from different cultures coming together.

All of a sudden there's, you know, where Jews used to, I used to have to imagine what the potluck fellowships were like at this. You know, Jews that were used to kosher foods, now all of a sudden Ragnar the barbarian has his blood pudding and pork rinds at the table.

And they're also, what are we doing with this? Like, how do you reconcile this? And there was a lot of turmoil on that in the early church. But Christ is their peace.

As Paul said, Christ is our peace. Despite all of our differences, the unifying bond that we all share is Christ. And John is proclaiming that same thing here.

John says that our source of fellowship is with Him. And as I said, there's not another earthly common denominator that can bring that many different people together in peace and in unity.

[18:12] And that doesn't mean that it's always smooth going at church. Yeah, there's differences. We have our debates and things like that. That's just part of still living in a sinful world.

But the truth is we can still choose to be unified in Christ over any difference that we could bring to the table because that bond is stronger than anything that the world could throw at us.

The next reason this fellowship is unique that we have in Christ is that it's eternal. Revelation 7, verses 9-12.

In Revelation, which John also wrote, we see that this diversity that has created the church, it's not going to go away in eternity. John said that there was a multitude from every nation, tribe, and

tongue that was before the throne praising God.

So this fellowship that we have is eternal. Unlike any fellowship that we have in this life, everything that we can hold to that's earthly, including relationships, bonds, ties, it's got an expiration date on it.

[ 19 : 20 ] No matter how strong a fellowship we have with someone or with some particular group, there's an expiration date on it. But this fellowship that we have with Christ, through Christ, with His church, it doesn't go away.

It's not going to end. It's something that we get to be part of for eternity. So, knowing this, the fellowship that we have is eternal, how should this change the way that believers think about the church?

Knowing that this is an eternal fellowship that we are part of now, how should that change the way that some believers think about the church? I was at a church there were two senior adult ladies classes.

They used to be one class, but they split ways because they got crossways in some way, shape, or form. Each class didn't like the other one and refused to coordinate with each other because they would each say about the other class, well, that's a class for the old ladies.

You're the same age. Anyway, I just thought that was hilarious. One of the approaches that I see a lot of people take towards the church is they view it as like they would any other fellowship they have.

[ 20 : 36 ] They kind of see it as a country club for Christians. And they come to church with this idea that, well, it's about me. Well, I need to have my desires met. Well, John is saying here in this passage there's something much bigger going on than our preferences.

There's something much bigger going on here than any earthly common denominator that we could bond over. Christ is the source of our fellowship and He is going to carry that into eternity.

See, we as sinful people are able to enter into this eternal fellowship not because of anything that we have done or any righteousness that we bring to the table but because a good and a perfect God first entered into fellowship with us by taking on flesh by becoming one of us and dying for our sins.

So that we could have a way back to Him. That's how we're part of this church. It's not a card that you sign. It's not a weekly attendance record.

We are part of a body of believers because we have been blood bought by a sinless Savior that died for us. And that's a fellowship that's going to continue into eternity. So in the hypostatic union of Christ we see a depth of love that's beyond anything that we could have ever imagined or hoped for.

[ 21 : 58 ] Not only did Jesus become man but to complete the work that He came to do the Bible says that God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us.

He took on the curse of our sin. He took on all the wages of the sin that we deserved whenever He became man. He didn't come to live a lavish life.

He was worthy of worship but He didn't go around proclaiming people no come and worship me and it wasn't like that. It said that He didn't consider equality with God something to be attained but He came to die for sinners.

And that's the good news of the gospel and that's something that we can hold to. So assurance is one of the first responses that I think that we need to take from this passage that God has done a marvelous work for our salvation and something that nobody else can take away.

And it wasn't to instill doubt in our salvation either. It always makes me cringe a little bit whenever I talk to people that believe that you can lose your salvation.

[ 23 : 09 ] Christ did not come and die on the cross to instill doubt in our salvation. If you are truly saved, the Bible says if you are free, you are free indeed. He has set you free from the eternal consequences of your sin.

And to say that you could somehow lose your salvation, I mean, are you saying that Christ's death on the cross was not enough to secure your eternity? I mean, His death and resurrection was enough to secure our salvation.

So, I think that one of the things that we can take from this is that we have an assurance that we can always approach the throne of grace with boldness as Hebrews says. again, not because of any righteousness that we bring, not because of anything that we have done to earn this presence

towards the throne of grace, but because we know that Christ has done everything needed for us to be able to receive grace, to receive forgiveness for our sins.

And when we become a child of God, we enter into that eternal fellowship that knows no end. this is one of my favorite epistles to go through.

And, you know, as you study the book of 1 John and as you read through the other letters and accounts of John, you really just see what a priceless gift we have in Christ and what He's done for us.

[ 24 : 25 ] So, I'm going to close in prayer. Father, thank You for this time that we can study Your Word. Lord, thank You for what Christ has done for us. Lord, the reason that He came, Lord, was so that He could make a way to salvation for us.

And, Lord, we thank You that He has done everything that we need to be able to come back to You.

Lord, there's no way that we could have ever earned that ourselves. Lord, there's no way that we could have ever created any righteousness for us to be able to have fellowship with You again.

So, Lord, we rejoice that Christ has done all that we need. And, Lord, I pray that that would give us assurance. Lord, that that would give us boldness, Lord, to be able to proclaim what Jesus has done to the lost.

And, Lord, I just pray that as we continue to study through 1 John, and, Lord, also as we study other passages on our Wednesday Night Bible studies, Lord, that Christ would be exalted. And, Lord, that You would be praised above all else.

I pray for all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. you