**Kingdom Family**

1 John 1:1-4

Trinity Church – July 7, 2024

Rev. Catherine Howie

**Prayer** – For Colaws?

**Opening** – new series

 My new Facebook:

Photo of cover/profile

 Saturdays in July, 9-10am

 at The Well Coffeehouse

**Introduction** – my family growing up

 Looked at others, seemed better Photo 1

Details? At odds with one another, dad alcohol, died when I was 16 – very unideal

Mom’s 75th birthday, we shared, Tom’s comment (never sure what he’s going to say!)

Not perfect, but it’s mine! Photo 2

**Text**

Go to 1 John 1:1-4 (Will each verse fit on one slide?)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

4 We write this to make our joy complete.

**Literary and Historical Context**

Three main themes in these four short verses that introduce the letter

>> Study hint – look at what is repeated in verse 1, solid Bible study technique

(Will this all fit on one slide?)

That which was from the beginning,

which we have heard,

which we have seen with our eyes,

which we have looked at and our hands have touched—

this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

4 occurrences of *which* in v. 1, can also mean *who*

Not named: What/Who is from the beginning? Who is the Word of life?

1. Jesus - Christology

Get out something to take notes on, we are going to make a list

Re-read the passage, phrase-by-phrase, with Jesus in mind and note all we learn

 From the beginning

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created…

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word…

Fully God

Heard, seen, touched

Fully man

Word

 Reinforces Gen 1:1 and John 1:1

Word of life

 Jesus said he was the way, the truth, and the … life (John 14:6)

The Life appeared (born into the world)

 Born into the world - Incarnation, God came in human flesh

The Life is eternal

 No beginning (further explains 1:1), no end

With the Father

 Unity of the Godhead

Appeared to us (John and others)

 The same Jesus of John’s Gospel, fully God-fully man

Fellowship is with the Father and the Son

 Human fellowship is based on Trinitarian unity

Jesus is the Christ

 Christ is Greek for Messiah (Hebrew)

Summary: 1 John is rooted in the reality that Jesus, the eternal word of life,

came to earth in human flesh (not a celestial substance).

What is the repetition tied to? The senses

Who had John heard, seen, touched?

v. 2 – seen

v. 3 – seen, heard

1. Physical Senses – created for us to know and experience God

 Science says our senses evolved to keep us from danger – not primary purpose

**Created good by God**

Adam and Eve in the Garden (heard, saw him [hid], tasted/touched goodness)

 Heresy that our souls are good and our physical bodies are bad[[1]](#footnote-1)

 Physical bodies and way to experience the world was created by God

 **Confirms the Incarnation of Holy God**

John had a firsthand relationship with a REAL person

 Scientific method is based on the senses, empirical observation

Eternal God, Creator, came into our world and made himself accessible to us

Refers to before AND after the Resurrection[[2]](#footnote-2)

 **Points to the Sacramental[[3]](#footnote-3)**

Sacraments (baptism and communion) are experienced physically

Jesus invites us to participate, not just hear about others’ experiences

Experience is an important part of our existence

Hugs – just hear that someone loves you, or receive a hug?

 Baptism – won’t forget that you got wet!

 We eat/drink, participating in the Last Supper, not just remembering

1. Fellowship – with Christians and with God
* Proclaim – report, make known openly (518)
* Testify – bear witness (3140)

So that (verse 3) for the purpose of fellowship

 Koinonia – relationship, association, joint participation, intimate sharing

Not a side benefit or issue – central to Christianity, in the creeds

“I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal) church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins…

 Saints are not just Christians who have died – all who follow Jesus

This unity/fellowship is modeled after the Trinity (verse 3)

**Current Context – Kingdom Family**

1. No hierarchy – John is not pulling rank as he proclaims he saw Jesus, he is including

There is no hierarchy in the family of God.

All are welcome.

All are needed.

 12 disciples were all needed

 We know mostly about Peter and John

 But ALL were needed – impulsiveness of Peter AND steadiness of John

This took them time to learn!

Remember he and James asked to sit on the L and R of Jesus

Same in our families (even if our family members don’t live together)

And there are seasons, little ones, empty nest, aging parent, etc.

All are needed, complementary roles.

If family members are gone, they are missed.

When we receive Jesus, we are instantly a member of the family of God.

 (coheirs with Christ, son of God, etc verses)

 That means you’re stuck with me… and I’m stuck with you

 Just like brothers/sisters, don’t always agree, but loyal beyond reason

 Charitable love of the Trinity is our model

 Fully for one another, giving without expectation of anything in return

 Practically -

Safety to discuss/work things out without being canceled

 Safety to try things and fail without being teased/made fun of

 Never be abandoned (sorry for church-hurt – that isn’t OK!)

 More?

We are family even before we know one another.

In every place we have lived, we have always had deeper connection with Christian neighbors

1. Kingdom Family Values

 Trinity family values (Growth Track graphic)

ENCOUNTER – Experience God in community

We miss you when you aren’t here – all are welcome, all are NEEDED

DISCOVER – You are Made for More

 We are gifted to bring wholeness to the family of God, not for self-gain

CONNECT – Transformation happens in relationship

Get in a group, radical hospitality

In a group? How can you help your group become more of a family?

 LIVE SENT – Develop a personal strategy to share the love of Jesus

 There’s more room in the family of God

 Who do you know that needs family?

Two group: Includers and those who don’t feel fully part of the Trinity family yet

To both, same question:

How can you reach out to include someone in the Trinity family?

In the same way John is reaching out, hand extended

What if we all reached out to two people this week?

What if we didn’t wait for someone else to reach out?

* + - Young to old, and old to young
		- Spanish speaker to English speaker, and English to Spanish
		- New believer to seasoned believer, and long-time Christian to new Christian
		- Introvert to extrovert, and extrovert to introvert

 Summary:

1. What is FAMILY CHURCH?

Everyone is included, important, needed.

When you aren’t here, you are missed, we are incomplete

Come to church!

All have equal value, each has a role.

Your gifts, personality, make us all better

Groups make doing life together easier.

Difficult to know 100 people well, but 15-20 is doable

We are on mission… together!

Shared purpose makes a group tighter

War buddies, athletic teams, small towns, and family of God

We have our mission, which is a part of the Mission of God

 Part of something much bigger!

What is central to family? Family dinner.

 Why? Looking at one another across table

 Senses involved – taste, touch (hold hands/pray), smell, hear, see

 The more senses are involved, the more dynamic the connection

 Teaching/education principle

Family is sacramental

**Response** – Communion

 Jesus doesn’t ask us to just remember, but to participate

 He didn’t just come to the 12, or to those alive on earth around 30 AD

 He came for every person

 This is a call to be family, not to be on the outside looking in

1. Gnoticism says that matter is evil and the spiritual is good. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Many think that these words apply to the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.” Didymus the Blind, c. 313-398, in Bray, G., ed. (2000). *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude* (p. 166). InterVarsity Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sacrament - *a Christian rite (such as baptism or the Eucharist) ordained by Christ and is a means of divine grace or a symbol of a spiritual reality* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)