

Theme: Authentic faith is built upon Jesus, the True Word of Life, is proclaimed in the Gospel, and produces fellowship and full joy as we walk with God and His people.

I. Intro - The Getty Kouros - Counterfeits

- A. Picture of the Getty Kouros - impressive ancient statue
- B. Offered to Getty in 1983; documents attest authenticity
- C. Document from 1952, scholar saying it was authentic
- D. But the postal code on the letter did not exist until 1977
- E. Other anomalies began to surface; still debate if it is authentic or a counterfeit
- F. There have always been counterfeit faiths as well
- G. How do we know what is the authentic faith once for all delivered to the saints?
- H. Our series on 1 John - Authentic

II. A Complex Beginning

- A. The paradox of John's prologues
 - 1. John is probably the easiest Greek in the NT
 - 2. But his prologues are complex, philosophical, amazing pieces of writing
 - 3. They really stand out from the rest of the writings
 - 4. But they introduce key ideas & elements for writings

B. A complex introduction to 1 John

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. 1 John 1:1–3

- 1. A long run on sentence - vv1-3 is one sentence
- 2. What is “the Word of Life” - Jesus, or the Gospel?
- 3. What is the relationship between Jesus & Gospel?
- 4. What is relationship between Jesus, Gospel, & life?

C. A critical introduction

- 1. The prologue gives key to understanding the letter
- 2. It lays out central thing in determining authentic faith
- 3. It also tells us about real life & our call

III. The Authentic Word of Life

A. The main character - the Word of Life

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. 1 John 1:1–2

- 1. The Word of Life is central to this prologue

2. What is 'the Word of Life' - Gospel or Jesus?

a. Some say it is the Gospel

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. 1 John 1:1–2

1. Relative pronoun - seems more impersonal
2. Word - logos - usually refers to Scripture or Gospel
3. Heard - points to Word as message

b. I think it is really Jesus in view here

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1. John uses relative pronoun for people
All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. John 6:37
2. Seeing, touching verbs - person, not speech/writing
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. 1 John 1:1–2

3. A clear link with the Gospel prologue where the Word is Jesus

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning...In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1–2, 4, 14

B. The Word of Life was manifested to us

1. Word of Life was heard, seen, looked at, touched

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- a. Appeared/manifested - 2x
- b. Verbs of appearing, hearing, seeing, touching - 7x
- c. Hear, see, touch - increasingly concrete

2. Authentic faith based on authentic appearance of Jesus

- a. Authentic faith must be in the real Jesus - not one of our own making
- b. Especially combating Gnosticism & docetism
 1. Gnosticism - flesh evil; John - Word became flesh

2. Docetists - only looked like flesh; John - I touched Him!

c. Proper understanding of Jesus is non-negotiable

C. Jesus is central to authentic faith

1. He is the revelation of God in the flesh
2. He is the only path to the Father
3. Jesus is central to John's marks of authenticity

IV. The Authentic Gospel Proclaimed

A. The appearance of Jesus leads to proclaiming the Gospel

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1. We proclaim - 2x (not actually in v1 as in NIV)
2. We proclaim to you - apostles to others
3. We testify to the Word of Life - we point to Jesus

B. Gospel proclamation built upon Jesus

1. As we see Jesus, we proclaim the Gospel
2. This is the natural outgrowth of seeing Him
3. He is the Authentic Word of Life - and because of that we proclaim Him

4. The Gospel is about His historical appearing and work - not our subjective testimony

V. Authentic Fruit - Fellowship & Joy

A. The purpose of proclamation - fellowship and joy

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. ¹ John 1:3–4

1. Gospel proclaimed so that they may have fellowship

- a. If the Gospel is proclaimed & people believe it brings them into fellowship
- b. Fellowship - koinonia - participation; share; common
- c. A new relationship is developed - with God & us!
- d. The Gospel brings us into common life with God & His people
- e. Authentic Christianity is not a philosophy - it is a spiritual rebirth into the family of God

2. Gospel proclaimed (in writing) to complete joy

- a. When someone receives the Gospel - joy
- b. But not just joy - fullness of joy - 6x in Johannine lit
- c. Fullness of joy - koinonia with God & His people
If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:10–12

1. Fullness of joy - remaining in Christ by obeying commands

2. The command - love one another as He loved us
3. The full joy promised in the Gospel is only found when we are in proper relationship to God and His people

B. Authentic Jesus & Gospel - Authentic Fellowship & Joy

1. When we receive & proclaim Jesus as He is, there is real fruit of fellowship and joy
2. But a counterfeit Jesus leads to a counterfeit Gospel with counterfeit fruit

VI. Applying the Authentic Word

A. Do we have faith in the authentic Jesus?

1. We have spent the last 2 months in the Gospels
2. We have seen the authentic Jesus
 - a. Fully God and fully man
 - b. Sovereign Lord and Suffering Servant
 - c. Full of compassion but also judging sin
 - d. Understands our struggles but uncompromising on God's will
3. Is this the Jesus we embrace - or one of our own making?
4. There is a perennial temptation to remake Jesus into our own image, to our own liking, rather than submitting to the authentic Jesus and being molded and changed by Him
5. Embrace the authentic Jesus today - for the first time, or fresh and anew

B. Communion - The Table of Authentic Fellowship

1. Here at the Table we see God's uncompromising war against sin - broken body and shed blood
2. Here we see God's great compassion to fallen humanity - broken body and shed blood
3. Here, by the Spirit, we experience real fellowship with the Father and the Son - and the Church

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. ¹ Corinthians 10:16–17

Introducing the Authentic Word of Life

¹ John 1:1-4
 April 12, 2015
 Communion
² John 1:3

Teaching keywords: Christology; Deity of Christ; Gospel; fellowship; joy

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. ² John 1:3

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