1 John 1:1-7

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[0:00] 1,225, that's 1,225. It's the first book of 1 John chapter 1. So 1,225.

That's 1 John chapter 1. And we're going to read verses 1 to 7. 1 John chapter 1, verse 1.
To be able to share fellowship with the Lord's people here is always a privilege.
And I want us to look together at 1 John, and particularly the first few verses of that particular letter that John wrote.
I wish I was there. I wonder if you can look back perhaps to an event in history, and you say, well, if only I could have been there. I would just love to have witnessed it with my very own eyes. If only I could have seen, or maybe it's a sporting event.
[2:40] And you can look back and say, wow, what an atmosphere. What a kind of situation this must have been in. We thought all was lost, and then suddenly everything was changed, and our team won. I wish I was there. I suppose we all have moments like that, when we can look back and say, I wish I was there. And somehow we feel because we weren't there, we've missed out.

Yes, we've read about it. Yes, we've read about it. We've heard about it. But because we weren't there, we've missed out. And I suppose there are people in the world today, and we may be among them, who say that they've missed out because they weren't present when Jesus walked here upon earth.
It must have been wonderful to be where Jesus was. People who visited the Holy Land, they look around and they see various places, and they try to imagine what it would have been like in Jesus' day.
To be among the shepherds who went to the stable. To gaze at the infant Jesus, to look at Mary and Joseph, and to worship. It must have been great to be there. To be there when the wise men visited, bringing their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. And we may say, well, I wish I'd been there.
It must have been quite a spectacle. Or, I wish I'd been there when Jesus preached his sermon on the mount. I'd have loved to have been there when he spoke about the prodigal son, and how the lost son came back, and how the father embraced him. I wish I'd have been there to hear from the lips of Jesus these wonderful stories. I wish I'd have been there when he was crucified.
[5:00] And then, a few days later, I wish I'd been there to look into the empty grave. I wish I'd been there to see the risen Christ.

I wish I'd been there. And you may feel, well, you've missed out because you weren't there.
And yet I want to remind you of words that were spoken to Thomas all those years ago. Thomas, because you have seen, you have believed.
Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe. Believe. Now, John wants to show us that we haven't missed out because we weren't there.
John writes, and he tells us that he's seen Jesus, he's touched Jesus, that he's heard Jesus with his very own ears.
[6:02] And he wants us to enjoy fellowship as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as though we had been there.

You see, John is the last surviving member of the apostles. He didn't know what it was like to be actually present during Jesus' ministry. But he was passing from the scene of time.
And he wants the believers to know that they can have the truth. And knowing that truth, no matter what age they might find themselves in, to know Jesus and to walk with Jesus by faith was to have life that was abundant and everlasting.
Somebody has said he wrote his gospel, that men might have eternal life. And he writes his epistle, that they might know beyond a shadow of doubt that they had that eternal life.

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So John writes his epistle. And he needed to write it. He was writing to people that hadn't been present. He is getting towards the end of his life.
[7:19] And as he writes to these people who weren't there, there were others who were attacking them. There were a group of people called the Gnostics.

And they thought that they had an understanding of the truth, as others didn't have. They were attacking the ordinary, in inverted commas, believers, who they considered lesser mortals than themselves.
They had arrived at true knowledge. But their teaching was false. They didn't have a right understanding of who Jesus was.
But John is determined to show them the real Jesus, the authentic Jesus. And that knowing this Jesus was to have eternal life.
John says, in effect, you haven't missed out. And so as we look at these verses together, we have to notice that John introduces to us the historical Jesus.
[8:34] See what he says in chapter 1 and verse 1 of his epistle. He says, that which was from the beginning. It's a similar start, isn't it, to John's Gospel.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John is introducing us to the central person, the central character of the Gospel, even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
And he doesn't want anybody to be left in doubt as to who this person is. And so he shows us that the one who came into the world, this historic Jesus, is none other than the one who was eternally God, who became man.
Before the world existed, the Lord Jesus was. But the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, John says in his Gospel.
And John and others had come to believe that Jesus was indeed God made flesh. Right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, John heard Jesus, he saw Jesus, and he touched Jesus.
[10:06] He had a first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was an eyewitness. But he was an eyewitness to the fact that this one who was born was none other than God manifest in flesh.

The God-man. And so when John testifies, he testifies of him who was from the beginning.
Him who was from eternity. But man who could be reached and touched and heard and seen with the physical eye.
Earlier on, John had been arrested along with Peter. And in Acts chapter 4 and verse 20, we find him answering those who said to him, John, be quiet.
Peter, be quiet. Don't speak anymore about this Jesus and the resurrection. And they had replied, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.
[11:25] How could John be silent? And he continues to the end of his days telling us of this real, authentic, historical Jesus.

His message was the same, of course, as the Apostle Paul who writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 6. For God, who said, let light shine in darkness, made his light shine in the hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
That's a historical Jesus. The glory of God is seen in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we ought to be lost in wonder, love, and praise as we see this historic Jesus by faith.
The God-Man. But John saw in this historic Jesus the God-Man who gives life.
He tells us in verse 2, the life appeared and 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.
[12:54] John saw in Jesus the God-Man, but he also saw him as the one in whom was life. He was the very word of life.

He was the eternal life. Eternal life was to be found in him. Later on in his epistle chapter 5 and verse 20 he says he is the true God and eternal life.
Life was found in a person. Eternal life was found in this Jesus. The one who was truly God who became man.
It's the epistle isn't it of eternal life. And every believer no matter what age they find themselves in can have the very life of the Lord Jesus Christ in their life.
Christ in the believer and the believer in Christ. He is the vine. we are the branches and in him we bear fruit because his life is in us abundant everlasting eternal life.

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[14:16] The one who is eternal the one who conquered death and the grave as man is the only one who can give us this eternal life.

life that life is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. See what he says in 1 John 3 and verse 9 No one who is born of God will continue in sin because God's seed remains in him.
He cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God. The very life of God in the soul of man.
So the historic Jesus for John is not only the God-man but the God-man who gives this eternal abundant life.
And that abundant life that eternal life cannot ever be taken away. His seed remains in you and remains in me.
But John goes further. He not only introduces us to the historic Jesus as the God-man and the one who gives life but he actually tells us that we can enjoy fellowship with him.
[15:38] Verse 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.

Notice the train of thought that he has here. This chain that exists. We have fellowship with John. We have fellowship with John but also with the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Father. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us and with the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Father.
A wonderful fellowship exists amongst believers of all ages. We may be comparatively small as far as numbers go but we are part of a number that is being made up which we will be unable to count. A number that no man can number we are told in Revelation. And we will be made up called from all lands and all countries and all kinds of backgrounds brought into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
[17:10] Brought into fellowship with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. Enjoying that oneness and that unity in him.

And the wonderful thing is that though we may belong to clubs etc. in this life and the day will come when we will be removed because of death or moving away to another area so that we are no longer a member of this football club or this particular organization.
our names will be removed but our names will not be removed from the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a hymn that says that we enjoy mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is one.
The church is one and that fellowship that we enjoy so that I can have fellowship if you like with John because his fellowship is with the Father and with his son the Lord Jesus Christ.
I can enjoy fellowship with the things that he believed and that I can believe so that I have not missed out and neither have you missed out.
[18:31] Jesus introduces this historic Jesus to us. So it asks the question. Do you know the one who is with the Father?

One who is eternal with the Father? Do you enjoy the wonderful gift of eternal life in the one who was made flesh and dwelt among us?
Do you enjoy the fellowship of the Lord's people? Do you enjoy fellowship with the Father and with the Son?
Or are you still saying, if only I had been there, I too would believe? My friends, we don't have to be there to believe and to enjoy fellowship.
So John introduces a historic Jesus. But John also introduces us to the one he knew intimately.
[19:40] This wasn't a far-off Jesus. It was one he had an association with. And in the latter part of verse one, he brings it home to us when he says, which we have heard, 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.

John was there. We hear that John heard Jesus. And of course there was that physical hearing. There were times when Jesus took his disciples apart and taught to them personally. He addressed them in an intimate way.
John enjoyed the blessing of hearing the very words of Jesus with the physical ear. He'd heard Jesus when he was there by the lake of Galilee.
Follow me. And he'd left his nets and followed Jesus that he might be a fisher of men. He'd heard Jesus speaking to Nicodemus saying, you must be born again, Nicodemus, if you would have life.

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[21:10] He heard Jesus addressing the multitude, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened. He heard Jesus saying, suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

he was actually present when Jesus went to the home of Jairus and reached out and touched that little girl and said, little maid, arise, little maid, get up.
He was present. He heard Jesus physically. He heard Jesus speak about the parable of the sower. He listened to Jesus' instruction as the 5,000 were miraculously fed. He heard Jesus say, I am the door. I am the good shepherd.
I am the resurrection and the life. He heard those things physically. John says, I'm declaring to you someone I actually heard.
[22:20] but it was more than just a physical hearing for John. And that's what I want to bring home to you this morning.

There wasn't just the physical hearing, was there? There was that spiritual hearing. The words of Jesus meant something to John.
They were words that affected his heart. They had dropped, if you like, the vital length. From the head to the heart.
And John believed from the heart. His ears were open. He had been effectually called, if you like, from his nets, follow me.
And he hadn't just heard physically, he heard spiritually. And he left all and followed the Lord Jesus. Jesus. But others heard Jesus and it made absolutely no difference at all.
[23:30] And we can easily illustrate that. There's a passage in John chapter 6. And in John chapter 6, Jesus is at the height of his popularity.

Thousands are flocking to hear him. And in John 6 and verse 35, he announces to those crowds, I am the bread of life.
And if you come to me, you will never go hungry, and you will never be thirsty. Of course, Jesus is speaking in spiritual terms. Because he goes on in that same passage to say, this bread that I'm talking about is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.
For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.
Now here's this vast crowd. They're hearing Jesus physically. Among them are the 5,000, no doubt, who had enjoyed a feast that Jesus had miraculously provided.
[24:46] But they didn't understand what Jesus was saying. How can this man, verse 52, give us his flesh to eat? Of course, Jesus was speaking of his death at Calvary.

He was saying, in effect, if you want to have life, you have to come to me. For if you eat the bread that I offer you, you will live forever.
The words that I am speaking to you, they are spirit, and they are life. They heard. And then in verse 66 of John chapter 6, we get these words, from that time, many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.
They heard physically, but they did not hear spiritually. It made no difference. They heard, but rejected.
They were present, but it made no difference. What about John? Well, when many turned away, Jesus turned to the apostles.
[26:06] apostles. And he says to them, in John 6 and verse 67, you do not want to leave too, do you?

And Peter, speaking for the others, including John, says, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
we believe and know that you are the Holy One of God. What was the difference then between John's hearing and the crowds?
Well, there was the hearing by faith. There was the spiritual hearing. Their ears had been unstopped to hear the message of salvation, to see that Jesus Christ was the bread of life and that in his death was life for them.
My friends, how are you listening to the Lord Jesus? If only I had been there, you say, but people were there and it made no difference, but we today can hear him by faith and take hold of him and know this historic Jesus as our Lord and Savior.
[27:37] The spiritual hearing so that you might say today in 2015, I have hurt.

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But John goes on and says he actually saw Jesus. You think you put this first, before the hearing, but it shows how important the word of the Lord is.
John, however, saw Jesus. Now we don't have a physical description of Jesus. He is described in Isaiah 53 and verse 2.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. So I would suggest if Jesus walked through Karageline today, it wouldn't mean that people automatically believed in him.
It just wouldn't happen, no more than it did in the days when Jesus walked here upon earth. They might see, but not believe.
[28:53] And again, there is the physical seeing which is different to the spiritual seeing. And again, we can illustrate it from John's own gospel. In John chapter 9, we have a blind man.

And Jesus puts clay on this man's eyes. And after washing in the pool of Siloam, this man is able to see.
Physically, he had sight. He could look up at the sky and the trees and the flowers, and he could look at people. Who has done this miracle in his life?
Well, he recognizes that it must have been a prophet who had opened his eyes. But he needs to see something more.
Later on, he's brought into touch with the Lord Jesus. He looks upon Jesus. And Jesus says to him in John 9 and verse 35, Do you believe in the Son of Man?
[30:07] Who is this man? Well, Jesus identifies himself as that man. He identifies himself as the Messiah.

And another miracle takes place. For his spiritual eyes are opened. And we read in verse 38 of John 9, Lord, he says, I believe.
And he worshipped him. He saw with the physical eye, but he saw with the spiritual eye. His physical eyes were opened opened, that he might see spiritually who Jesus was.
Of course, there were others present that day, the Pharisees among them, and we're told that they remained spiritually blind.
These men thought they saw. They were Moses' disciples. They were the religious authorities. eyes, but they didn't see Jesus as the Messiah.
[31:21] They didn't see him as God made flesh. They were blind to eternal things, blind to the fact that God had been made flesh and was living among them.

And it was a terrible blindness not to see Jesus. Jesus. And there may be somebody here this morning who says, if only I had seen, I would believe.
Would you? I don't know. But you weren't living then. But you can believe today.
You can believe by reaching out to him. and seeing him as he's revealed himself in scripture.
You can know him by the spirit working in your life, showing you him. We spoke of Thomas earlier on.
[32:26] If I can only see, he says, the nail prints, and put my finger into those nail prints, and put my fist into his side, then I would believe.

And then Jesus is present. Thomas, because you have seen, you believe, blessed, happy are those who have not seen, yet believe. So have you seen Jesus?
Have your eyes been opened by the Spirit of God? Have you a testimony? John had a testimony. Remember, how he gone to the empty tomb?
And he looked in, and we have his testimony. He saw the empty tomb. And the Bible says, he saw and believed.
Have you believed? And the final thing that John tells us here, is that he not only heard Jesus, he not only saw Jesus, but he had touched Jesus.
[33:42] Physically, John had actually leaned against Jesus at the Last Supper. This apostle had had physical contact with Jesus.

During the three years he had been with Jesus, he had listened, he had seen, he had touched. touched. Jesus, we know, was a tactile person.
He often reached out and touched those who would be regarded as the untouchables of the day. He reached out to people.
On many occasions, he'd taken children to himself. He touched them. And John had touched Jesus. And to touch Jesus would have made a difference, wouldn't it?

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Well, not always. Again, it's not too difficult to look at an illustration of this from the Scriptures themselves.
[34:50] in Luke chapter 8 and verse 40 onward, we have a story of a sick woman. She'd had a hemorrhage for 12 years.

She'd spent all her money and various quacks using the remedies of the day. But rather than get better, she got worse. And Jesus was on his way to Jairus' house.
He'd had an emergency call. And as he makes his way there, the crowds were jostling him. But this woman, she reaches out and she touches Jesus.
And Jesus asked the question, who touched me? And the disciples think it's such a ridiculous question. Peter said, Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.
Lots of people are touching me and yet you're asking, who touched me? Well, there was someone in the crowd who was reaching out by faith.
[36:09] It was more than a physical touching. It was a spiritual touching. She reached out. And that touch of faith made a complete difference to her life.

She was a changed person. The hemorrhage ceased. And the Lord commends her for her faith.
Now, we have not heard, we have not seen, and we have not touched Jesus physically. But John is saying to us very clearly, I'm telling you about this Jesus who I have seen, that I have heard, that I have touched.
and I'm writing this so that you might have fellowship with me and with the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Father.
And we write this, he says, in 1 John chapter 1 and verse 4, to make our or your joy complete.
[37:33] So, in conclusion, let me say this, we have not missed out because we weren't present.

Oh, no. We can still hear, we still see, and we can still touch by faith.
Oh, it requires a miracle of the grace of God. it requires a miracle of the new birth for our deaf years need to be opened and our blind eyes need to be opened.
And we need to be given the gift of faith to believe and to reach out to him. Seek it with all your hearts.
grace. But we can receive all this wonderful gift of grace. This wonderful gift of eternal life.
[38:35] We can receive the miracle of the assurance of eternal life through faith. So, reach out today while you have the opportunity.

And enjoy fellowship with the Father and with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who John, all those years ago, heard saying, I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No man comes to the Father but by me. So, in him is one who is the truth, who is the life, who is the way.
May we know what it is to come to him through faith, that we might know the Father and enjoy fellowship forevermore.
Let's pray together. Father, thank you for the historic Jesus. thank you that we're not following a fairy story.
[39:52] We're following the truth. We're following one who said, I am the truth. Thank you, gracious and eternal God, that we have in your word these wonderful stories of Jesus.

And these are written that we might believe. these are written that we might know eternal life.
So bless us each one. And if there is one here this morning who has not trusted in the Lord, we pray that their ears will be unstopped.
We pray that their eyes will be opened. We pray that they will be given the gift to reach out and take hold of Christ.
And this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[41:13] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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