

The Word of Life

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[0:00] ■■■■■■■■■■ a warm welcome to this time of worship as we worship our living God a special welcome of course to those who are visiting with us we ask the Lord who bless you your time with us this evening the same announcements as this morning just to remind ourselves that this Tuesday God willing this Tuesday at 7.30 the WFM meets in the church hall that's open of course to all the women of the congregation with Elizabeth Ferguson sharing about her work helping out at pregnancy support 7.30 on Tuesday also there's a Kirk session and Deacons Court this Thursday so again please do remember us in prayer as we meet to discuss both the Kirk session and the Deacons the various aspects that must be done also

I said in the morning I've been told and I know my place so I've been told to announce that there will be a meeting tomorrow night at 7.30 again in the church hall a quick meeting some tea some chat and a very kind presentation from the congregation to Emma and I again just to say as I said in the morning thank you for your warmth and kindness not just in gifts but just as a congregation it has made our first few weeks first five weeks of marriage much easier to be with congregation and it's been a busy few months together so I thank you personally over the last few months there's been quite a lot going on so it's been a real blessing to serve together so yeah just to have our heart and warm thanks for your kindness towards us so tomorrow evening a very short time of tea and chat and presentation I promise I won't say anything at all and apart from thank you and 7.30 in the hall all more than welcome let's carry on our public worship of God we can sing to his praise from a Scottish Psalter

Scottish Psalter and Psalm 130
Psalm 130 it's on page 421 of the Blue Psalm books
page 421 of the Blue Psalm books
Psalm 130 on page 421 Lord from the depths to thee I cried
my voice Lord do thou hear and to my supplication's voice give an attentive ear Lord who shall stand if thou O Lord should mark iniquity but yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be the whole Psalm stand and you sing if you can so Hach swims whom who shall for the grave who shall

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Last week we came to an end of our short series looking at what is a minister or what is an overseer and now we begin our new series a short look through this short letter as we begin this new series this evening really the first four verses we are studying but really this first four verses gives an insight into the rest of not just 1 John but really the rest of all the short letters of John that follow there really is two main reasons we summarize these letters these three letters of John but even this first letter of John two main reasons to provide safeguards for Christians to provide safeguards for the the young church he was writing to the new Christians he was seeking to guide safeguards that would worship

God right worship Jesus in a way they've been called to worship him they worship him truly we'll see this in a second heresies had begun to creep in wrong teachings and John is concerned that the church understands truly and properly who Jesus actually is so if we get Jesus wrong then we don't worship him properly we either worship him as he is or we don't worship him at all so first of all John's providing safeguards to make sure this young gathering of Christians know truly and understand properly who the Jesus they serve is then he also more gently wants to encourage them and really to offer them assurance again and again this is not for this week we'll see this God willing perhaps next week in our next wee section here but John at times is so gentle there's points where he's harsh and there's points where he has to be harsh in this letter where he has to address quite simply the errors he is seeing and the errors they are facing but he's never harsh on its own he's never harsh just to be nasty no he's harsh because he cares for them we see that he often calls them in chapter 2 we see that my little children he loves these people he loves these brothers these sisters so his concern is twofold first of all that they worship

[27 : 55] Jesus properly and secondly that they have full assurance that they are known and loved and kept by Jesus so as we begin this new study that's our hope with the Lord's help over the next few weeks that as we read and take time to study just slowly what John is sharing to this young gathering of Christians that we ourselves would find the same benefit that we ourselves would have our own minds perhaps reset we would be reminded as to our first joy as to who Jesus truly is to us those of us who know him and those of us who as of yet don't know him as we hear about Jesus about the love of our saviour and the keeping and care of our saviour that you would hear perhaps truly listen for the first time what it is to know him and to love him and to serve him so taking this evening just with God's help the first four verses looking at it very broadly very broadly seeing two things these verses two ways

John talks about Jesus and then two ways he talks about us as God's people he says that Jesus is eternal in his person and he is tangible in his reality so he is eternal in his person and he is tangible in his reality we then see that we as his people are to be vocal and we as his people are to be joyful first of all Jesus he is eternal in his person as we said John is writing this in a time where heresy and bad heresy not just wee mistakes but real heresy has crept into the church this was written around we can say for sure perhaps 50 60 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus so a short time really great heresy has crept in to the church

John is concerned mostly with the heresy what we would call today of Gnosticism we covered this before actually a few weeks ago in the prayer meeting it's a very complicated heresy we could simplify it by saying that the heresy of Gnosticism it taught that Jesus and his humanity wasn't really human he was something missing he was almost as if he was just he appeared to be human but really he was just a very good ghost he was all spirit and nothing physical he appeared physical but it wasn't real it wasn't truly there and John is trying to combat that and we'll see that more in a second verse 1 that which was from the beginning which we have heard which we have seen of our eyes looked upon and touched of our hands concerning the word of life the person of Jesus our saviour he is eternal we read of course in John the gospel of John chapter 1 the words we all know so well in the beginning was the word and John here echoes as he writes this pastoral letter he echoes his own gospel writings that which was from the beginning that which was from the beginning echoing John 1 he's reminding the readers that the Jesus they know the Jesus they first heard about he hasn't changed the Jesus perhaps

John himself first told them all about he hasn't changed despite what heresies come in despite what new teachings come in over the last 30 40 years for this congregation John reminds them that which you heard from the beginning and that which was from the beginning he has not changed which we have heard about all you are taught about Jesus is unchanged all the heresies come in all the wrong teachings come in but Jesus is the same and the glorious thing here is that John the gospel of John chapter 1 in the beginning it echoes of course further back doesn't it to Genesis we covered this before but just as a quick reminder when John in his gospel says in the beginning he takes us right back to the gospel language we find at the start of creation in the beginning as we read in John's gospel all things were made through Jesus all things made for Jesus everything is his the world the creation it is his all things were made through him and all things belong to him by writing here that which was from the beginning

John is reminding us and reminding his hearers that Jesus has it all all belongs to him the whole gospel is his the whole creation is his despite what else is taking place nothing changes who Jesus himself truly is Jesus in his person he is eternal the incarnation the coming of the second person of the trinity being born into his own creation Jesus becoming man taking on human flesh becoming like us in all ways apart from sin that was just for John just as pivotal as creation itself the incarnation was as significant as creation itself why?

[34 : 10] because creation itself and all that takes place it shows us right from the start the very first week of creation we see that God is in full control we saw this the last few weeks in the primitings right from the fall oh when Satan appeared in the garden when mankind fell when we saw the prophecy the promise from God that Satan would be crushed under the heel of the coming saviour right from the start we've seen the prophecy the prophecy to be fulfilled in Jesus that which was from the beginning right from the start all the way through God has been telling his people and showing his people the saviour is coming the saviour is coming with Jesus of course he came now John reminds these people that he has come that Jesus is truly the son of God you once knew that you once believed that keep holding on to that we think well okay that's fine for the poor souls that John was writing to but us here in Tolstead

North Tolstead we aren't falling into heresy we aren't falling into Gnostic belief no one here is claiming Jesus was a ghost well no I certainly hope not we're not but the truth is like like the Christians that John was writing to we also are so liable to so quickly fall away and forget just who Jesus is it's true isn't it we saw that a few weeks ago in the prayer meeting we're quite uneasy when we think about his human nature he was fully human like us in all ways but he grew in knowledge he grew in wisdom as scripture itself tells us we saw the example it sounds silly but it's very important we grasp this that Jesus as he followed his father his earthly father's trade as he followed Joseph's trade he didn't start making perfect furniture perfect johnny work straight away he learnt he grew in his skills he grew in wisdom and knowledge and in favour of God and man as scripture tells us but Jesus is also of course we know eternal that which was from the beginning not just the beginning of creation but from before that itself that we worship a saviour this evening who is before time who is outside of time yes of course he entered into time yes he took on flesh and yes at this very moment he lives forever fully man and fully God in his resurrection body yes he still has the marks in his hands and his side of his love for his people but he is eternal make no mistake about it our saviour is eternal he is from all time and to all time we worship a saviour this evening who is eternal an unchanging saviour and just as

John's readers and John's listeners had to hear that we have to be reminded of it this evening too for all the changing tides of his life for all the changing realities from us from day to day as the phone goes as the letter arrives and as perhaps your whole world is taken upside down as everything you know just crumbles away perhaps as you find yourself in a situation where you are at a loss what to do and what to say so on and so on whatever situation perhaps we may have faced this week whatever situation perhaps you're in even just now whatever darkness perhaps you're in just now if you know him if you love him be reminded here from John that we worship a saviour that is eternal it doesn't change with the changing times of our time it doesn't change with the changing opinions of our day he is an eternal saviour we also see though he is tangible so his person is eternal his reality is also tangible that which is 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 why does

John take such great time and care to make sure the readers are reminded that Jesus was seen and touched and heard because of the heresy they were facing they were being told by these very charismatic preachers very charismatic very convincing preachers that yes Jesus is God and yes he is real but he wasn't here physically he only ever appeared as a spirit in fact the Gnostics taught that human things that created matter was bad it was evil therefore Jesus couldn't be human that means he was evil they were being taught utter rubbish they were being faced with heresy growing day by day and week by week and John quite simply reminds them that the Jesus who you love who you worship he was real he truly came we heard him all the teachings all he said

John himself was there to hear it John as one of the apostles as one of his disciples he heard all that Jesus said he heard all the public teaching all the parables all the preaching Jesus did but more than that John also heard the things which are not recorded for us in scripture the day by day conversations of a saviour to his disciples John heard it all for these three or so years he was with Jesus John heard Jesus speak everything these believers believed John heard it first hand and he reassures them it was heard by us the us is speaking of himself and the other apostles the we there the plural that they have heard Jesus they can testify everything they taught is true you can go ask the other apostles who remain they'll back up what we say about Jesus everything he said he truly said it we heard him but also we saw him we saw him that which we have heard which we have seen with our eyes they saw

[41 : 05] Jesus in his full humanity they saw him walking and getting tired they saw him getting hungry and thirsty they saw him eat and drink they saw him laugh they saw him cry they saw him go through the full range of human emotion they saw it but they also saw his deity didn't they John himself can say that we heard it this morning with Peter of course from the mount of transfiguration John can say he saw a glimpse of who Jesus truly was in his full glory John saw the resurrected saviour he saw Jesus he saw the resurrected Jesus eat and drink and speak he saw it he heard Jesus he saw Jesus we also see this very interesting phrase it's almost as if he's repeating himself he's not really there's more to it going on here that we've heard which we have looked upon which we have looked upon literally we have gazed upon we heard him we saw him we gazed upon him and of course the sense there the tone there's one of wonder one of wonder they didn't just follow him and listen to him and see him and do it robotically no they were in wonder as John thinks back to the years he spent with his saviour walking with him listening to him seeing him he remembers also the wonder the wonder of seeing

God the son of God the second person of the trinity in full humanity he saw the miracles he heard the teaching he saw the lives being changed he saw the disciples lives being changed he saw those who came to Jesus for healing their lives being changed he saw that and they gazed on in wonder they loved and loved their saviour they heard him they saw him they gazed on him in love and very interestingly he also makes clear to say we touched and have touched of our hands John is at pains to make clear to them that he was real not just a nice idea not just a figment of imagination not just some spirit or some ghost no Jesus was real he walked and he talked and he was physically present in his full humanity his full deity fully

God and fully man like us in all ways apart from sin he was there living breathing walking talking healing preaching teaching carrying the sorrow and sin and burden of his people on his shoulders until the cross and then resurrected afterwards John touched this man he held on to this man he dined in the lap beside this man beside Jesus Jesus is eternal but also Jesus is tangible John reminds these young Christians this young church this struggling perhaps church in the face of great trial and great heresy and great blasphemy seeking to destroy them Jesus quite simply is real because summarize this section Jesus is eternal he's unchanging but also dear friends your brothers your sisters do not forget that Jesus is real he was seen he was heard he was gazed upon in wonder and he was touched he was touched we have a living saviour a truly living saviour this destroys the anti the gnostic thinking of the day the gnostic teaching it also destroys for us our own heresies in our day in one sense the gnostic heresy that Jesus was a ghost and that whichever things that's actually that we think that's gone it hasn't gone it hasn't gone the teaching that Jesus wasn't truly human it carries on and it carries on that Jesus was simply not what he claimed to be that is so strong today there's some churches who claim the name of

Christ of course we're not they claim the name of Christ who won't talk about Jesus being truly God they don't believe it dear friends we think we're so safe here perhaps in North Tulsa so far away from that world we're not there's folks in our villages folks who we know who perhaps will believe that Jesus isn't who we say he is and we like John have to be ready to say he is real now we can't say with John that we touched him we can't say we've heard him or can we of course not physically but like John we can say we have heard all Jesus has said to us we have seen his glory and we have seen in our lives the touch of our saviour as he has changed and transformed us we are living witnesses John was a living witness he literally of course saw Jesus walked alongside

Jesus but we also are living witnesses our lives as Christians testify the same thing John is trying to show here that we worship a living saviour who reigns and who rules who is real who is not just some ghost but no he is a living breathing eternal saviour that then shall lead us to what shall lead us to being vocal his people are vocal we see that here as John carries on this first section life may manifest and we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life verse 3 then that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you we see it and we proclaim it that is how we should be as Christians there is no such thing as blind faith those who think and those who say and at times

[47 : 52] Christians we ourselves might think our faith is a blind faith there is no scriptural basis for a blind faith there is no scriptural basis for an unknowing just hope kind of faith our faith is genuine it must be real our faith is a proven faith our faith is a faith in a real saviour not just some general idea no we believe in the real living Jesus Christ our faith can be proven historically proven biblically proven spiritually it can be fully attested in all its structure in all its ways there is no blind faith there is no room for blind faith it is wrong to say we have blind faith no we have a real faith that can be tested and tried and looked at and examined that is the faith we are striving towards why because our faith is not based in us it is based in our living saviour and because he is truly alive because he truly reigns and rules at the right hand of God at this very moment in time we can know our faith for sure it is true as we said we are living witnesses as the world sees us as your family and friends as this village looks on us and sees us we are living witnesses we are seen by this community we know that's the case not just the minister but all of us as Christians we are seen by this community they know those of us who know

Jesus they know that we call Jesus our saviour and they look at our lives they look at our conduct how we think how we speak how we act we are seen at all times our faith is looked at at all times and our faith must be based on Jesus him alone we're also called to follow in John's footsteps the apostles footsteps and to proclaim that we have seen we proclaim a true faith must be a shared faith once we truly understand who Jesus is once we truly understand for ourselves the beauty and the wonder of a living breathing eternal saviour who lives at this moment eternally for his people once we understand what that means for us the freedom and the joy that she gives us it should then lead us to be a proclaiming people a vocal people a true faith must be shared that which we have seen and testified to and proclaim to you verse 3 that we have seen and heard we proclaim brothers and sisters if we're being very honest if we are calling ourselves the lord's people and we are the lord's people but we find ourselves not wanting now I'm not saying not being able to we all have our own worries and anxieties and embarrassments and our own worries about how we share the faith and we can work on that in time and that comes through experience comes through prayer comes through relying on him but if we are Christians and we find no desire at all no desire not ability but no desire to talk about Jesus to others we have to ask ourselves have we perhaps lost sight of that first love have we like the people John is worried about here the folks

John are writing to here have we perhaps fallen into this belief that Jesus is not as wonderful as we truly think he is if we believe he's eternal and tangible and worthy of all praise and glory we must surely be driven to talk about him even just personally with brothers and sisters to talk about him to make him the basis of our conversation day by day but more than that to want to see others around us those we love and those we care for come to a saving knowledge of him for themselves we must be able to proclaim our saviour so that you too may have fellowship with us see that's John's basis of proclaiming the good news so that they would have fellowship with us the us being the apostles the us being the fellow christians why do we share the gospel why do we seek to see our family saved our friends saved this community transformed of course

God's glory first and foremost but why else because we want to see those we love come to know Jesus come to love Jesus come to serve Jesus come to know him as king and as saviour as friend if we've lost to that sense of love then let's go back to basics if we've lost that sense of desire to see this real saviour this eternal this tangible saviour being proclaimed if we've lost that sense of adoration and wonder for him then we have to go back to basics strip away all the nonsense strip away all the attachments and back to basics of what we're doing here why are we here this evening why are we here as a church body are we here to maintain or are we here to see God work we're never called to maintain we're not called to keep what we have we're called to be ambassadors to be ambassadors to be witnesses we must then go out and do the job we know that we hear that but this is a reminder for us we must along with john be willing to proclaim the beauty of our risen saviour so that those around us would have fellowship with us we'd see those we love so much join this congregation not for our glory for god's glory and finally and briefly we must be a joyful people verse 4 the wonderful way john concludes this section and we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete quite literally to complete the circle of joy to complete the circle of joy what's what's that circle well the apostles of course have joy in seeing christians being built up and john wants these christians then to have joy in seeing new people come to know jesus themselves and together we grow together we love together we serve together what is the source of our joy as christians is it not to see those around us come to know jesus for themselves the source of our pain is often those we love and those we long to know jesus for themselves we see them not following jesus we see them having no care for jesus and it brings us such pain our greatest joy then is to see the opposite to see those in our homes those who are neighbours or our family or friends come to know jesus truly and like the apostle here like john also there's joy in seeing fellow brothers and sisters growing in their faith perhaps brothers and sisters have wandered away and it should be our joy to see them return not just to this building but return to the lord faithfully that should be our goal our joy we should be able to help that take place it should be our joy to see brothers and sisters grow together side by side in the lord that is our joy we should be a joyful people john was a joyful servant of the lord he suffered many things we know that we'll see that god willing in the morning series as time goes on but he's suffered many things but he's a joyful man because he was serving his lord we're called to be joyful servants as we seek to serve an eternal saviour who is real who is tangible who still lives and believes who is still working out his purposes at the right hand of the father reigning and ruling our eternal high priest as we seek to serve him well we should do so publicly

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the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
for for now and forever more

Amen■■■■■■■■■