CIC 11-22-26

Testimont 1John 1:1-4



This is Moses. One evening around dinner time, Moses started barking strangely; it was a warning. He was a very smart dog. He knew roughly 50 words and commands. We went outside to see why he was so agitated. As soon as we opened the door we smelt the smoke and saw that the neighbor's house was on fire. Connie went inside to call the fire department, and I ran across the backyard to get the people out.

There was a large deck system on the rear of this triple-decker. I looked in the ground floor windows and knocked loudly. No answer. Second floor. Though the kitchen window I saw an older couple sitting there having dinner. I knocked loudly. They ignored me. I knocked louder and yelled, 'your house is on fire.' Again, I knocked, and yelled, 'your house is on fire.' He finally responded and came to the door.

A single woman answered the door on the third floor. She panicked and said, 'I just bought a new mattress, what should I do?' I said, 'let's not worry about the mattress. Let's get out of here.'

In the end, the firemen extinguished an ordinary chimney fire.

I saw the flames, smelt the smoke, and felt the handrail of that porch system. I am an expert witness to the event.

Today, we are **going to move from** my testimony to John's testimony, to your testimony.

- The week before Thanksgiving I like to **open the service up** for your voice to be heard, your experience to be shared.
- It is a delight to have you here with us on **Flannel Shirt Sunday**.

John is the only apostle to **die of old age**. He lived long enough to see threats to Christianity. John's solution has parallels for us today - to testify what we have seen and heard.



Testify

1Jn 1:1-3

I saw, heard, touched, and now have testified about the fire. Let's see, hear, touch, and testify to what the Holy Spirit has done.

1. Context.

A middle-aged John wrote poetically: 'In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He existed in the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it (Jn 1:1-5 NLT).' He used the Greek concept of *Logos* to show **the majesty of Jesus**. It **wonderfully declares** the *otherness of God*.

That …

- He existed before creation.
- He is fully God.
- He is Creator.
- He is life itself.
- He is **undefeatable light**.

The church of John's time was troubled by …

1. **Lack of love**.
2. **Roman persecution**. If Christians believed that Jesus was just a little Greco-Roman demi-god, they would not have been persecuted.
3. **Gnosticism**. Gnostics claimed secret knowledge.
   - They believed that **flesh was evil** and spirit was good.
   - They reasoned that '**God could not touch this evil world**.'
   - And so, **Jesus was only a spirit**, not really human.

Friends, Satan looks for open doors in our culture to destroy faith as well.

That is why, a **few verses later** John added, 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us (Jn 1:14 NIV).'

If you don't read v. 14 with the poem, it *could be interpreted* as saying **Jesus was not human** but a Greco-Roman demi-god.

I saw. John saw.

2. Real Jesus, 1Jn 1:1-2a.

An **older John** wrote another poetic piece about the real Jesus: 'We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands (1Jn 1:1 NLT).'

John saw an **earthy and real** human Jesus.

As humans we **share five common senses**, senses that we can trust. Sometimes I make a midnight run to the restroom. I cannot hear anything, or see anything, but my toe tells me when I hit something. I feel it.

- **Gnostic philosophy** denied that God could become man because the earth was evil.
- **Philosophies out there today** deny reality itself. There is no such thing as objective truth – only what each of us perceive as truth.

John's senses verified the real Jesus …

- He heard Jesus say, '**Lazarus**, come out (Jn 11:43).' He did.
- He saw Peter get out of the boat and **walk on water** to Jesus (Mt 14:29).
- He leaned against Jesus during **a meal** (Jn 13:25). Imagine the moment he saw **Thomas reach out** his hands and touch Jesus' side (Jn 20:27).

John heard, John saw, and John touched.

Why are the senses important?

'He is the Word of life. [2] This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him (1Jn 1:1b-2a NLT).'

- **Jesus is life**, life itself from the beginning. In his **biography of Jesus**, John wrote that **Satan** was a murder from *the beginning* (Jn 8:44).
- **Where God is** there is order *not chaos*, there is unity and peace *not division or strife*, and there is life *not death*.
- Jesus lived, ministered, died, rose from the grave, and gave us his Spirit **to continue the mission** of spreading life.

John saw. John heard. John touched. John testified about what Jesus did.

Why does our testimony matter?

Because **Satan uses worldly philosophies** to bring death. **He steals** purpose, community, and life from people.

- John and the early Church had a **problem with Gnosticism**.
- *We have a problem* with **today's philosophies** (Col 2:8, 1Ti 4:1).

I am not going to go thoroughly this, but **this chart shows you** why we hear phrases like 'my truth,' or 'I am glad Jesus works for you. It is not for me.'

Today's Philosophy & Belief

- John Locke (1600s) – we can't know the real world, only 'ideas.'
- David Hume (1700s) – we can't know these 'ideas' are real.
- Friedrich Nietzsche (1800s) – there is no objective truth, only perspectives.
- Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) – life has no grand stories that give meaning.
- Michel Foucault (1926-1984) – truth is shaped by systems of power.
- Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) – language is unstable, meanings are never fixed.

This is why **young people gravitate** towards political activism. They long for meaning and community.

But a man who has had an experience with the living God is never at the mercy of a man with a philosophy!

Faith in Jesus is not a theory to debate. He is real. It is a testimony to share.

John's poem now reaches its climax.

3. Proclaim It, 1Jn 1:2b-4.

Today passage (vv. 1-3) is **one long sentence**. We **don't see it in the English**, but the verb is at the end. Because John wants the climax to be - 'proclaim.'[1] 'And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. [3] We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us (1Jn 1:2b3a NLT).'

Friends …

- What have you heard from the Holy Spirit?
- What have you seen God do?
- How has Holy Spirit touched your life?

You are an expert witness of the things you have seen and heard God do in your life.

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[1] *apaggellomen* – perfect tense.

- It is **more than a story** to treasure in your heart.
- Like at a trial, you in the witness box. **Witnesses share** for the sake of the community *not* themselves.

Like John's, your testimony *leads directly* to eternal life. Eternal life!

- **Eternal life depends** upon their identifying with your testimony.[2]
- As **they hear** your story, they identify and believe.

Our proclamation **leads to** community and joy: 'So that you may fully share our joy (1Jn 1:4 NLT).'

- **This is the abundant life** that Jesus promised to us.

What has God done for you?

STOP – count to 4.

You have good news. Just like …

- Jesus told the **demoniac** to 'Go home to your family and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been (Mk 5:19 NLT).'
- Jesus told the **leper** to 'Go to the priest and let him examine you … This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed (Mk 1:43 NLT).'
- The **man born blind** 'Told the Jews that it was Jesus that made him well (Jn 5:15 NIV).'

You have good news to share! You have seen. You have heard. You have been touched. Now testify about what the Holy Spirit has done.

Pray.

Public Testimonies

For those who doubt the value of what we are going to do:
Public Testimony …

- Gives hope to others.
- Honors God and humbles us.
- Turns us away from our troubles and to God.
- Is essential for Pentecostal epistemology.
- Solidifies the story and redeems the pain.

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[2] 'Fellowship … is dependent … upon their own identification with his proclamation', John Christopher Thomas, *The Pentecostal Commentary on 1John, 2 John, 3 John* (Cleveland, TN: The Pilgrim Press, 2004), 70.

- Builds trust for the future.

Our **Pentecostal** tradition is in some ways pre-modern:

- An oral tradition with songs and testimony.
- Biblically based – we are people of the book.
- A physical tradition with bodily movement such as clapping, raising hands, and even dance.
- An emotional tradition of joy, sorrow, and hope.

But **we are uniquely placed** by God *to counter the demonic philosophies* of this post-modern generation.

Guidelines for Testimonies.

1. Be short.
2. Glorifies God and not your past.
3. Pace your testimony so it can be tolerated.
4. Do not hold the microphone.
5. Imagine pastor has a 'mute' button. During our Z6 prayer time, I use the 'mute all' button to keep things moving. We want to keep things moving.
6. Be short.

Maybe you have not received a recent testimony. Now we are going to have a time of prayer as we sing one more song.