

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is fully God and fully man.

Our text for this morning is taken from the 1 Epistle of John Chapter 1:1-2:2

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life -- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us -- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. 5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed.

When the 1st Epistle of John was written there was a false teacher by the name of Cerinthus who was actively teaching in Ephesus. The Apostle John made his home in Ephesus after the destruction of Jerusalem when many of the Jews were forced to leave.

Cerinthus was a Jew from Egypt who rejected the vast majority of the inspired writings of the Apostles. He still held to the Sabbath and taught that Jesus was merely the physical son of Joseph. He completely and totally denied the two natures of Christ. That is that Jesus is fully God and fully man.

He believed in the Jewish idea of the millennium and believed that if Jesus received the Holy Spirit it was only during the time from His baptism to His crucifixion. Cerinthus also believed that people were without sin. Cerinthus was truly a false teacher. One who could properly be labeled as an anti-Christ whom Jesus foretold would come.

This brief history is important because the Apostle John by God’s Holy Spirit put pen to paper to combat the teachings of this man.

Teachers such as Cerinthus had and were creeping into the churches with their destructive teachings. These types of false anti-Christ teachers are still among us today. Therefore it was vital for the sake of the souls who were hearing Cerinthus’ false teaching, and for us today who hear the same kind of teaching to understand and to believe that **“God was manifested in the Man Jesus Christ.”**

Since the words of our text today are not the words of an anti-Christ false teacher but are instead the very words of God we pray that God would sanctify us through them because His word is truth. Amen.

Cerinthus never met Jesus. Everything he ever taught about Jesus was based on conjecture and assumptions. Even those things Cerinthus taught that approached the truth were riddled with problems and in turn were destroyed by further false teachings.

John was different. Not only in the fact that he was with Jesus during His ministry but John received the message of our text by the inspiration of God. And this is born out in the first hand experience of John.

John begins his letter with the simple phrase, **“That which was from the beginning.”** “That which” is a reference to Jesus. Jesus was from the beginning. For Jesus to be from the beginning is to say that Jesus was before the creation of the world. For this to be the truth it would completely shoot down Cerinthus’ claim that Jesus was merely the human son of Joseph giving Jesus the same sinful flesh as we have. But Jesus being from the beginning includes Him in the mystery of the Trinity and prescribes the fullness of the God-head to Him.

But John continues, **“...which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life.”** Jesus didn’t only remain in an invisible form. John states that the One who was Spirit from the very beginning became flesh. Which was accomplished by the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary and conceiving in her the Only-Begotten Son of God. John states that he heard Him. With John’s very ears he heard Jesus speak. John states that he saw Jesus with his very eyes. You cannot see a spirit. Jesus who was before the first ‘let there be’ became flesh. John states that he **“looked upon”** Jesus. Another way of stating this is that John ‘beheld’ Jesus. The difference between seeing and beholding is that we might see someone pass by in front of our homes on the road. In that way, you would see that person. Beholding is very different. To behold is to be around someone to the extent that you get to know that person. It’s not a simple glimpse of someone passing by a window while sitting on your couch. And then John states that his hands actually handled the Word of Life.

“The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.” By stating these things John was asking who can you trust? Someone who has never seen, heard, beheld, or touched Jesus? Or someone like Cerinthus or the thousands of false teachers since then who make claims by speculation. Trust in my report John is saying, because I have in a very literal way, firsthand experience with the Word of Life.

Even if Cerinthus would’ve had firsthand experience with Jesus it wouldn’t have made any difference because of the content of his message. John wanted to make it very clear that not only did he have that firsthand experience; he wanted to show the hearers of his letter that his message was the truth. John said, **“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”**

The only way to have fellowship with the Father and His Son is to believe that Jesus was no mere man. It is a fundamental doctrine to believe in the eternal nature of the Son of God. To believe otherwise separates you from the saving Grace of God found in His Son Jesus Christ.

John was worried about the souls of his children in Christ. He was worried that some of them might fall prey to this wolf in sheep's clothing and have their joy stripped from them. He wants them to know that his motives were only for the eternal welfare of their souls. So that they might in faith stand before this same Jesus who was from the very beginning, and at judgment stand before Him innocent on account of His blood.

If Jesus was the biological son of Joseph it would've been evident in the life of Jesus. John for a number of reasons makes this statement. **"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."** The biological son of Joseph could never make satisfactory payment for our sins. Even if someone naturally born of a man and woman could possibly remain sinless and died he could only justify himself by his actions.

But John states from firsthand experience that in Jesus Christ there was only perfection in every way. In Jesus Christ, there is no darkness at all! Not one little bit! This was evidence by the fact that Jesus was from the beginning with the Father. This was evidence by the fact that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. This was evidenced by the fact that John witnessed the entire ministry of Jesus Christ. Not by reports from Egypt but by hearing, seeing, beholding and touching the Author of Life.

As I stated earlier the need to believe this is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith and is backed up by John. **"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."**

The walk that is being referred to here is not referring to sanctification. The good works brought about by repentance. This walk is a reference to our faith. If we say that we believe in Him but hold to these false teachers words, we lie and do not believe in the truth. But if we believe in the eternal, perfect nature of Jesus, we have fellowship with one another. **"And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses of from all sin."**

Hallelujah! Your sins are forgiven! Because by God's grace and favor you do believe that Jesus Christ is eternal. You believe that Jesus was not conceived by Joseph. You believe that He is perfect in every way and by dying and rising from the dead your sins are forgiven. We have fellowship with one another. And not only that, we now have fellowship with God the Father by the work of that eternal, perfect, risen Son of God.

The other error of Cerinthus that was taken up by John was the nature of man. **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin."**

The error that we are not sinful is one that is still held to today in many different ways. Some believe that we are born sinless and only sin when we come to an age of understanding. Some believe that they are able to keep the law because they strip it down in their minds so it doesn't apply to them. But all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. When we hold up the Law of God we are condemned. To deny our sins is to deny Jesus Himself. We make Him a liar. All have sinned God says and if the response is to the negative we exclude ourselves from His saving grace saying that all that God has said is false.

But even here God is patient and loving. He gives us His word so that we may come to believe on Him so that we may not sin and hold to these errors.

“And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

If anyone holds to the false teaching that Jesus was only the son of Joseph, they're sinning. If anyone believes that they're without sin, they're sinning. But they have the same Advocate as you! Jesus Christ the Righteous. The same Jesus who you believe in for the forgiveness of your sins.

The One who became the propitiation for your sins. That is, the blood sacrifice for your sins. The Spotless Lamb of God who has taken away your sins. But not your sins only, the sins of the entire world.

Believing that **“God was manifested in the Man Jesus Christ”** is necessary for salvation. I thank God that you-all have been elected before the foundations of the world to believe in His name. Therefore take this message into the world and preach the word of reconciliation because the world also has an Advocate with the Father manifested in the Man Jesus Christ. Amen.