

Home Group Leader's Notes

Week of April 23, 2023

1 John 1:1-4

Sermon Series: *Absolutely!*

The focus of this week is on (1) understanding the truth of who Jesus is, (2) being able to share this truth, (3) and what this can mean in our lives.

ON AN ISLAND

You went on a three-hour tour (haha) and ended up on an island with four friends that work in the same office. They are able to find food and water, and you start a campfire.

After eating, one lady is in quiet contemplation. You ask her, "Would you like to share your thoughts with us?" She answers, "This accident has made me think about what I believe. I am reflecting on my grandparents. They used to pray at dinner and would always conclude with "in Jesus' name." I don't know what that means. I guess I should, but I don't."

One man speaks up, "They were praying to Jesus."

Then, they all look at you because you always pray before lunch. The lady asks you, "Is that what that means? And why Jesus? What's so special about a man who lived a long time ago?"

As you consider your answer, you remember that you found one page out of your pocket Bible. You reach into your pocket and find these words:

*"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**.⁴ We write this to make our joy complete."*

What can you share with your friends as to why Jesus is "so special?" Why would they want to know about Him?

I have put in red a few highlights of what makes Jesus special and what this means in our lives.

APPLY IT THIS WEEK

How do you feel about your own ability to share about Jesus and the good news of why He came? Do you trust in God to be His agent of good news? Do you walk and pray through your days, trusting that the Holy Spirit empowers you to fulfill God's work? We can all improve in our ability to trust in Him. He loves to answer these prayers.

The point of this exercise (above) is to help us know what we know about sharing Jesus with people. This is always good to review.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Why do you suppose that John mentions the senses so often? What does this reveal? Why is this important?

The point of the senses was the reality of their experience, that they were first hand witnesses. We, too, are first hand witnesses of Jesus being in our lives and of the work of God.

John's purpose is that "you also might have fellowship with us." For you, what does genuine fellowship with God look like? What does fellowship with others look like? Is this something that all people desire?

This will be a healthy thing to share with each other. Perhaps ask a few people in your group to be ready to share what this looks like in their lives.

Pastor Doug Baker shared that the tenets of ancient Gnosticism are in our culture today. How are we seeing this? How can we help our friends who are caught up in this? (Below are four tenets)

- 1) Freedom is found by escaping any natural created order
- 2) Freedom is found by looking within
- 3) Being a fulfilled human being means obeying your inner feeling
- 4) Being human means creating your own identity

- 1- This is seen in our culture through people confused about their identity (sexual, genus, etc.)
- 2- This is seen by people focused on inner spiritual strength, in "my truth" and "post truth," and in people ignoring God
- 3- This began in the '60s and has increased since then. This theme is in movies, interviews, and many children's shows and movies. It is still on the increase
- 4- Identity is the lead confusion in our culture.

PRAYER NEEDS

- Please pray for our kid's and student ministries. They are facing the effects of our lost culture every day
- Please pray for our Search Committee who are interviewing candidates soon
- Please pray for your Global Partners as they reach out to their worlds

Grace to you,
Steve