

# How Our Joy Can Be Full - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

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*The main message of 1 John is about eternal life and fellowship with God, which is the purpose of proclaiming the life of Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 9:00

**Scripture:** John 17:3, 1 John 1:1-3, 1 John 1:5, 1 John 2:15, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 5:4, 1 John 5:20-21

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Idolatry Warning"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on the significance of the first letter of John in the New Testament, emphasizing its importance due to being written by John at the age of 95 after years of observing various churches and believers. Despite the prevalent confusion in Christendom, John's message remains relevant, highlighting the deep truths of life and fellowship with God. He stresses the eternal life found in Jesus Christ and warns against idolatry, urging believers to guard themselves from worshiping anything other than the true God.

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## Transcript

I thank you very much. There are many reasons why this letter is perhaps more important than many of the other letters in the New Testament. You know, all the parts of the New Testament are not of equal importance.

They're all the word of God. But some parts of the New Testament are historical. They just describe what happened.

But there are other parts like the teaching of Jesus. Very, very important. And the epistles.

I would say those are the most important sections of scripture. The teachings of Jesus in the Gospels and in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 and other places and all the epistles. But among the epistles, one John has got a special place of importance because it was written by John at the age of 95 after he had observed various types of Christians, various types of churches, the ups and downs of many believers, the ups and downs of many churches.

He saw the condition of the churches in the book of Revelation. And he's writing just four or five pages with a great burden inspired by the Holy Spirit. And I believe that it has a special relevance for the time in which we live because I don't know whether you know today in Christendom there's a lot of confusion concerning many, many things.

And it's good to go to listen to the words of an apostle who has walked with God for 65 years. So when you read this book, imagine that a 95-year-old man who's walked with God for 65 years, planted churches, done miracles, and in fellowship with God, the only living apostle left, all the others are killed, is speaking. You know, we give more weight to words spoken by more godly people, the same words as spoken by some young person.

It may be true, but we don't give as much weight to it. So I have always looked at this letter of John as something that has a very deep message, particularly when seeking to teach God's Word as to what I should emphasize in the last days. It's amazing to see the number of things John doesn't even mention in his letter in 1 John, which are some of the most popular subjects for preaching today.

John spoke in tongues for 65 years, but he doesn't mention it in his letter. He healed the sick and raised the dead, but he doesn't mention anything about healing in his letter. He doesn't mention a word about material prosperity, which a lot of preachers today say is the mark of God's blessing.

Many other things about political situations, and the Roman Empire was a very wicked and cruel empire. The emperor was a godless man. Christians were being persecuted, but he doesn't talk anything about discussing government or politics or what we should do to stand up for our rights.

The foolish, stupid things that Christians, many Christians today who are not filled with the Holy Spirit, talk about. There were a lot of problems in the world in John's time. There was slavery, for example.

There were many slaves in those days, and he's not talking about them. He's not talking about how to help all the poor people in the world. There were more poor people then than today.

It's very easy for Christians to be taken up with many good things, and the good can be the enemy of the best. I want to say to all of you in Jesus' name, if you want to preserve yourself till the day Jesus comes without going astray, read the first letter of John and see what he majors on. He first of all speaks about life.

He says, we have heard when John won, and we have seen with our eyes, and we have touched this word of life. He's writing to people who have never seen Jesus Christ, and he says, I saw him, and what I touched was that eternal life, verse 2, which was with the Father. When I touched Christ, I saw his life.

What I saw was that eternal life which was with the Father, and that's what we proclaim to you. He is not talking about doctrine. He's not talking about physical healing and material prosperity.

He's talking about a life which was with the Father from the beginning. He says, that is our message. He speaks about eternal life.

When you go to the end of his letter, you see what he says towards almost the last verse in chapter 5. He says in verse 20, we know the Son of God has come, has given us understanding, chapter 5:20, that we may know him who is true, that is God, and we are in him who is true, and in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, guard yourselves from idols, from anything other than this true God and eternal life.

When you worship something else, when you worship material prosperity, when you worship physical healing, when you worship anything other than this true God and eternal life, it is idolatry. Little children, guard yourselves from idols. And in the beginning he says, the purpose of our proclaiming this, verse 3, is

so that we can have fellowship, that you believers can have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father.

The purpose of proclaiming this life is that we can have a two-way fellowship, fellowship in the vertical direction, with God, fellowship between us as believers. If you are pursuing life, eternal life, and not other idols, one of the results will be that your fellowship with God will become deeper, and your fellowship with other believers will also become deeper. So the two subjects that John speaks about are life and fellowship, because that's what existed from eternity.

Way back in eternity, before there was a world, and before there was a universe, before there were angels, before there were demons, and sin, and Adam and Eve, long before that, when only God existed, what was there? There were no doctrines, there was no baptism, there was no tongues, there was no healing, there was no prosperity, there were no material things, but there was something else, eternal life. That existed then. And fellowship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that existed.

And when we look into the future in heaven, all these other things that we have temporarily on this earth will also disappear, but eternal life and fellowship will continue.

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