OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND HIS SON

Lesson 1

1 John 1:1-10

Key Verse: 1:3

“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.”

This epistle was written around 80-90 AD. At that time, Christianity began to face false teaching of Gnosticism, which denied Jesus’ coming in flesh, stressing a secret knowledge (gnosis) known only to special people. It was after the martyrdom of Apostle Peter and Paul, the blossoming time of the gospel. Christianity seemed to be in great danger. Apostle wrote this epistle certainly to defend the Christian faith from false teaching and encourage believers in Christ. The theme of this epistle can be the position of the Christian in the world. Our time is not much different from the time John wrote this epistle. We see strong opposition toward Christians, ever increasing as the end time is approaching. How are we to face it as Christians? Or how are we to stand up to it? John used the expression “we know that” (11 times) and “you know that” (3 times) repeatedly. There are certain things we are to know in our Christian life. The first thing we are to know is the truth about ourselves, who we are. We are of God. The expression “we are born of God” is written 7 times (2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18 (2)) and “children of God, 5 times (3:1, 2, 10; 5:2, 19). The second thing we know is the truth about the world. The whole world is under the control of the evil one. These two things are clearly written in 5:19, “We know that we are children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.” The whole world lies under the dominion of Satan, in the grip of outright evil. We should not be fooled or misled by it. The evil in the world cannot be taken out; it is to be destroyed. Knowing the terrible end, how are we to live in the world under the control of the evil one?

John says in 5:5, “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” In this epistle, “His Son” (1:3, 7; 3:23; 4:10, 14; 5:9, 10, 11, 20; 9 times), “The Son” (2:22, 23 (2), 24; 5:12; 5 times) or “The son of God” (3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12; 5:13, 20; 7 times) is written 21 times in 5 chapters. It really stresses importance of believing that Jesus is the Son of God. In Revelation, “the Lamb” is mentioned 30 times (5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14 (2); 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3), while in the whole New Testament 34 times. We say that Revelation is the book of the Lamb from being slain to reigning, and through whom we were purchased and have become his bride in the glorious hope of the wedding of the Lamb and living in the New Jerusalem and reigning with him. Then we can say that 1 John is the book of the Son of God in whom we believe and overcome the world. And the core of our faith in the Son is having fellowship with the Father through his Son (1:3). John tells us the importance of the inner circle among Christiaan community. The fellowship among Christians is vital to stand up to the world, and Christian fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. In that fellowship there is joy and strength to overcome the world. May we go deep in the essence of Christian life.

Today’s passage is about Christ Jesus, the Word of life and our fellowship with the Father and his Son and hindrances to this fellowship.

**First, Jesus, the Word of life (1-2).** This epistle of 1 John has no introduction, no mention of the sender or recipients or greetings. It starts with 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.” What an amazing and surprising start! What is Christianity? Christianity is all about Christ. Here, John descried the Incarnation. The eternal God became an audible, visible and touchable man, confined by time and space. God in heaven came down to the earth and lived in the world during a certain period of time in history. It is a history that man landed on the Moon and came back. God’s coming into this world as a man is a historical fact. That which was from the beginning is the understandable description of the eternal being. He came to the earth and walked and lived among men. Apostle John continued, “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.” With just voice, we cannot be 100% sure whose voice that is. John added, “which we have seen with our eyes.” His ears and eyes confirmed the person. Hearing and encountering the person is not enough to testify to the person. He goes further, “which we looked at and our hands have touched.” John investigated him, living together for three years, along with other disciples. John once relined next to him at the Last Supper (Jn. 13:23), surely touching him. This very person John experienced was not a phantom, but a perfect man. Furthermore, the very person John experienced is God-man, a perfect God and a perfect man. This was a truly mysterious yet factual experience. His name is Jesus and his title is Christ; so, called Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

John said continually in verse 1, “This we proclaim concerning the Word of life.” The Word of life refers to Jesus. He wrote in John 1:1 and 2, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.” As we studied in Revelation 19:13, “His name is the Word of God.” Here, the Word is *logos* in Greek as embodying an idea. Logos is the cause of all things. According to John, the Word is the person Jesus. In 1 John, Jesus is the Word of life. Here, life is true and eternal, a life quite different from the life men have in this world. Life outside God is not life. Men are spiritually dead being cut off from God and destined to die though they are living now. We can say that men just exist with no true life. But Jesus is the Word of life, clearly expressed and revealed.

So John continued, “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.” Now John says clearly that the life is the eternal life and he proclaims the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to the people.

Jesus said in John 5:24, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” Jesus continued in 5:26, “For as the Father has life in himself, so he had granted the Son to have life in himself.” He is the author of life (Jn. 1:4; Ac. 3:15) and the giver of life. The Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it (Jn. 5:21).

Here John said, “this we proclaim concerning the Word of life” and “we proclaim to you the eternal life.” In verses 1-3, the word “proclaim” is written 3 times. In verse 3, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard.” The Word of life, the eternal life, is not of human-origin, but from the Father. Jesus, the Word of life, is to be proclaimed. Something of human origin can be discussed for improvement or more benefit, but not that which was form the beginning and which was with the Father. We remember an angel’s proclamation or announcement at the time of Jesus’ birth, “Today, in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:11). Apostle Paul passed on to others as of first important what he had received, that is, Christ’s death and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The news of Jesus, the Word of life, is to be proclaimed to the dead. Then those who hear it can have life that is true and eternal. And this proclamation is to go on generation after generation till the end, until he comes again.

**Second, our fellowship with the Father and with his Son (3-4).** John says inverse 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.” Firstly, here we see the importance of Christian fellowship. Men are created as social beings. God established the family, which is a building block of a society. Human beings long for fellowship, true fellowship. The purpose of proclamation is to have fellowship among believers of Christ Jesus. Each one knows the grace of Jesus and lives a new life in Christ. They worship God together, studying the word of God together and praying together and singing together. They serve God together in a loving and truthful community. Our Bible testimony sharing is an significant part of our Christian fellowship.

Then John says, “And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” This is truly the essence of Christian fellowship from first to last. The ultimate purpose of our salvation in Christ Jesus is for the fellowship with the Father through his Son Christ Jesus. We can say that our God is the God of fellowship. He is the triune God, God in three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Three persons are in perfect fellowship. We also remember God’s wonderful fellowship with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:8 says, “The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day…” What an expression that God was walking in the garden speaking to Adam and Eve! Because of sin the fellowship between God and man was ruined. Now in the saving grace of the Lord Christ Jesus, our fellowship with God the Father is restored, and this fellowship is to grow forevermore. What an amazing grace it is that we can have communion with God the Father in Christ Jesus! God has been longing to have fellowship with men and men also have been yearning to have fellowship with God the Father. Now the fellowship became real. If we miss this fellowship, Christian fellowship is nothing. When our fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ is alive, our fellowship with other fellow Christians is alive and becomes true. Again, this is the essence of Christian life and fellowship. Apostle also wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:9, “God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” God’s calling purpose for us is to have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We can never be in communion with others until we are in true communion with God.

We are to make sure that without his Son Jesus Christ human beings’ fellowship with God is impossible. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” One world religion is total nonsense. This is the reason that the proclamation of Jesus the Word of life comes first before the fellowship. The dead and the living cannot have fellowship. Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:1-5, “…you were dead in your transgressions and sins… we were by nature objects of wrath…But…God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ…” In the same way, the dead should be made alive first. Then the living can have fellowship, true fellowship together in Christ Jesus.

It is truly a blessed life to have communion with the Lord day by day. We can have a deeper fellowship when our life situations become more difficult. This is as we studied in Psalm 23. David confessed, “He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:10, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” Particularly, Paul mentioned the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. Apostle Peter described the fellowship this say in 2 Peter 2:4, “Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” Through the fellowship with Father and his Son God wants us to participate in his divine nature. Our fellowship with the Lord will be culminated at the time of the wedding of the Lamb with his bride and to live together in the New Jerusalem as we studied in Revelation.

Then verse 4 says, “We write this to make our joy complete.” This joy is a deep emotion that comes from this fellowship, different from worldly joy. This joy is the source of strength for our Christian life and spiritual battle as Nehemiah 8:10 say, “the joy of the LORD is your strength.” Jesus also said in John 15:11, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

May we grow in the fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, having joy in our deep hearts so that our fellowship in this Christian community may be kept true and grow to withstand the opposition toward Christians in this end time.

**Third, hindrances to the fellowship (4-10).** Verse 5 says, “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.” In our fellowship with the Father, it is vital to know who God is and who are. John starts with God. It is very important to start with God always. As we studied in Psalm 23, David starts this Psalm with God, saying, “The LORD is my shepherd.” We don’t know who we are unless we know who God is. Self-centred human beings always want to start with themselves. When we start with ourselves, we fall into endless confusion. At any situation, God should come first. This is a very significant spiritual principle. Again, here John said, “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light.” He started with God, specifically the holiness of God, mentioning, “God is light” and adding, “in him there is no darkness at all.” While darkness refers sin, light refers to holiness and purity. That God is love come later (4:8, 16). In God’s creation, he made light on the first day and separated the light from the darkness (Ge. 1:3-4). Without understanding the holiness of God no one can know God’s love. Hebrews 12:14 says “Without holiness no one will see the Lord.” That God is light and in him there is no darkness at all shows his perfect holiness and righteousness. Hebrews 12:29 says, “God is consuming fire.” His holy and righteous anger burns against sin as a consuming fire. God is light. He is the Holy One (2:20). Holy is His name (Lk. 1:49).

Then verse 6 says, “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.” In verses 6-10, the word “claim” is written 3 times. Verse 8 says, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” Verse 10 says, “If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” Those who claim such as these are the ones who have no truth of God’s word in themselves and they live and deceive themselves and make God to be a liar. They do so to prove themselves before people. Those who have the truth proclaim it. They don’t need to claim such things because God knows them.

Let’s look at verses 6 and 7, “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” Those who believe in Christ Jesus and fellowship with God the Father are the ones who were rescued from the present evil age and were transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. (Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:12-13). Their kingdom identity has been changed. So John says in 2:15, 16, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.” James 4:4 say, “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:2, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” We are always aware that we are not following the pattern of this world, in the way of thinking, the way of living and the way of dressing. Paul also said in Ephesians 5:8-10, “You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.” One excellent way of walking in the light is to find out what pleases the Lord in every aspect of life at each time.

Again, verse 7 says, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” In the light, everything is shown; dust and various other things become visible. Nothing can be hidden. People can hide their sins in the darkness, but not in the light. Living in the darkness seems to be comfortable, while living in the light, difficult. However, when we walk in the light, the darkness of sin cannot assail us. Rather, as we look up at Christ Jesus, who died for our sins shedding his blood, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. And we can have fellowship with one another in this grace of cleansing and purifying.

Then in verses 8-9, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” It is important to recognize that we are sinners with the sinful nature whereas God is holy. We need the grace of forgiveness of sins at each time. Those who say “Jesus saved me from all my sins and now I have nothing to do with sin” are greatly mistaken in self-deception and delusion. They live in self-righteousness. Unconfessed hidden sins and an unrepentant life break our fellowship with God and with one another. However, when we recognize our sinful nature and repent, confessing our sins before God, he forgives us our sins. It is a meaningful description that he is faithful and just. As we thought of, 1 Corinthians 1: 9 says, “God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” And Philippians 1:6 says, “being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it onto completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” He is our faithful God despite our human weakness to fulfill his purpose in calling each of us. And he is just and his justice makes us just as the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (Ro. 3:26). When repent, confessing our sins, our faithful and just God forgives us our sins and cleanse us from all righteousness. We all may go deeper into the life of repentance before the holy God.

Then verse 10 says, “If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” God says in Romans 3, “There is no one righteous, not even one;…All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one…all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:10-12, 23). God never lies. It is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, “The Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you…” (Jn. 5:37-38). We should watch out whether God’s word has place in our hearts and lives.

We thank God for Jesus, the Word of life which was with the Father and has appeared to us. What a grace it is that we can have fellowship with the Father and with his Son and in that we can have true fellowship with one another. May we enjoy this blessing in the life of repentance having the place of God’s words in our hearts and lives.