

Teacher Class Plan

I John: Lesson #87 – Fellowship For Sunday, April 5th

Read I John: 1:1 – 2:6 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

Today we are starting to study a new letter. *Point out the large letter on the wall.* We are going to start studying from I John. There are three letters in all that he wrote: First, Second and Third John. This is the apostle John. He and his brother James had been fishermen along with Peter and Andrew. Jesus had called them to follow Him and be His disciples and later He appointed these four as apostles. John also wrote the fourth of the gospels.

When the apostle John wrote this letter he was getting to be an elderly man. It probably had been almost 50 years since Jesus was on the earth. By this time it is believed that both Peter and Paul had already died. It is possible that John was the last apostle alive. Let's look at some things that John will talk about in his first letter. *Review the I John poster with class.*

Memory Verse: I John 2:3 “And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”

John Reminds Them of the Truth About Jesus

- The church had grown greatly by this time and had spread all over the Roman empire. Since so many of the apostles were gone and there were so many places where churches had begun, there began to be people teaching things different from what the apostles had taught.
- Some in John's time weren't telling the truth about Jesus. Some said He wasn't really the Christ. Some claimed that Jesus was just more like a ghost or spirit, that He really didn't ever live in a fleshly body. Others denied that Jesus was really the Son of God.
- Because John had been there as one of Jesus' apostles from the very beginning when Jesus started His ministry, He could tell people exactly what He saw. He could help them to understand that some people's ideas about Jesus were not true.
- It is very important that we understand who Jesus was. John will make it clear...
 - That Jesus was very real. He lived in a real body just like we have. Their eyes could see Him, their hands could touch Him. Anyone who said that Jesus did not live in a fleshly body was not telling the truth (I Jn. 4:2-3).
 - That He was the Christ. He was the one the Old Testament said was coming to earth to save people from their sins. He was the One that God would give all authority to. Anyone who said Jesus was not the Christ could not please God.
 - That Jesus was the Son of God. This must be believed and confessed for God to be with us (I Jn. 2:23; 4:15).
- John reminds Christians that these are the truths taught since the very beginning when Christ had first come. To please God, people had to keep believing these truths.

Walking in the Light

- Have you ever tried to walk in the darkness? It's easy to fall over things and get hurt. It's nice to live in a time when electricity can light up our homes even when it's night. John talks about the light and darkness, but he isn't talking about day or night or electric lights. John is talking about how God gives us light through His Word. Like light, His Word helps us see where we are going and what we need to be careful about.
- But what if we start doing sinful things? Sinning is like walking in the darkness, but God is all light and no darkness. So if a person is doing things that are sinful, then they are walking in darkness. If we are living a sinful life, but claim to know God and be in fellowship with Him, we are lying. But if we will walk in the light of God and His Word, we can keep having His fellowship.
- We've been seeing how John uses the word "fellowship". What does that word mean? It means that we have something in common, something we share together in. If you were on the same baseball team as someone else, you would have several things in common. You would practice together, you would have the same coach, you would wear the same uniform, and you would work together to win against another team. John is talking about our fellowship in God. When we are baptized and become Christians, we can have fellowship with God.
- When we become Christians we have fellowship with God and that means we also have fellowship with other Christians. We go to church together, we study the Bible together, we worship together – that gives a very special connection with each other. One day, we will be in heaven together, and that makes it extra special.

If We Sin

- John tells us we should keep walking in the light, keeping following God's commands. We should do our best to keep our lives from sin. But even the best Christian, at times, might sin.
- John says that if a Christian sins, they should confess their sins. We are to confess our sins to God, but we can also confess our sins to other Christians and ask them to pray to God for us. Even though these sins broke God's law and hurt Him, Jesus will ask God to forgive them. Because Jesus died for us, His blood can once again cleanse us from sins just as it does when we are baptized.

Do We Really Know God?

- Most people know that there is a God, but do they really know Him very well. You could meet someone and know who they are, but not really know anything about them. But if you spent time with them and learned what they like and don't like, you could say that you really know them.
- We might say that we really know God, but if we don't know what God likes or dislikes, it means we really don't know God at all. If we don't know what God says, or don't follow what He says, we show that we don't really know Him. The best way to know God is to obey God.
- Our **memory verse** in I John 2:3 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments." *Hold up the large memory verse card*

and review it with the class. Try to get each student to where they can say this verse from memory.

Bible Quiz: The class should have already completed the Bible quiz questions at home. Review the correct answers with them and then drill to where they can answer the questions properly.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Follow What the Apostles Told Us

1:1-2 That which was from the beginning, what we heard, what our eyes saw, what we looked carefully at, and what our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life (the Life that was shown to us, and that we saw) we give our witness and testimony and tell you about that Eternal Life that with the Father (which was shown to us).

3 And we have told you about what we saw and heard so that you can have fellowship with us – a fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

4 And we are writing these things to you so that your joy will remain full.

Walk in the Light

5 So this is the message we heard from Him and are telling 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 yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing 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 will make us clean from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are lying to ourselves and will cause our own hearts to go astray. There will be no truth in us.

Confess Your Sins

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to make us clean from all unrighteousness.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we can't be telling the truth because it would suggest that God has lied.

2:1 My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you don't sin. And if anyone does sin, they have One who will plead with the Father for them, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 And Jesus' sacrifice is the way God can be satisfied about our sins, but His sacrifice was not just for our sins only, but it was offered for the whole world.

To Know God, You Must Keep His Commandments

3 And if we keep His commandments, then because of our obedience we know that we truly know Him.

4 Anyone who says, "I know Him", but doesn't keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

5 But those who keep His word, it is in them that a love for God has really been accomplished. This is how we know that we are in Him.

6 Anyone that claims to abide in Him has an obligation to walk just as Jesus walked.