

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship
June 13, 2021
“The Light”

Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Vacation Bible Study this week - Sunday school 9:30 next Sunday
 The New Building is progressing

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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I JOHN 1:4 ~ These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

KJV ~ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

What is Biblical joy?

Joy is χαρά (xä-rä). It derives from the verb χαίρω (xī-rō), Zechariah 9:9

“Pursuit of happiness.”

It was “Pursuit,” in the sense of...

It was “Happiness,” in the sense of...

“Fruit of the Holy Spirit” ~ a progression.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

You can easily see that “The Joy,” is not an emotion, or choice, but an...
(John 15:10&11).

I JOHN 1:5&6 ~ ⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

What is sin? Ultimately, sin is _____ to the Lord that _____ fellowship.

This particular “Message,” is...
(John 15:12-17).

“God is Light,” in this context means...

“Light” here means holiness. Holy is ἅγιος (hä-gē-ös), meaning “Other.”

What is the Truth? It is ἀλήθεια (ä-lā-thā-ä). (Romans 10:14)

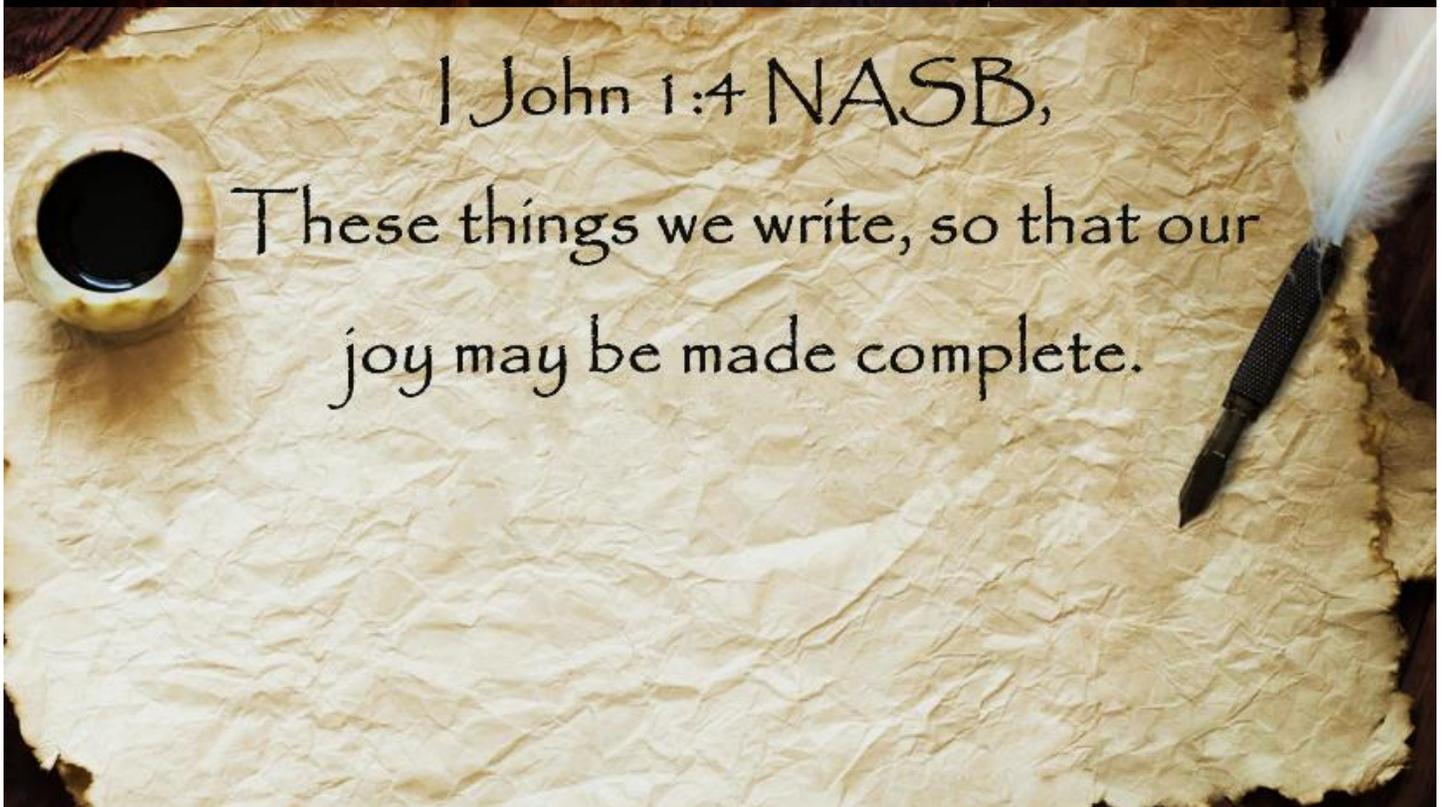
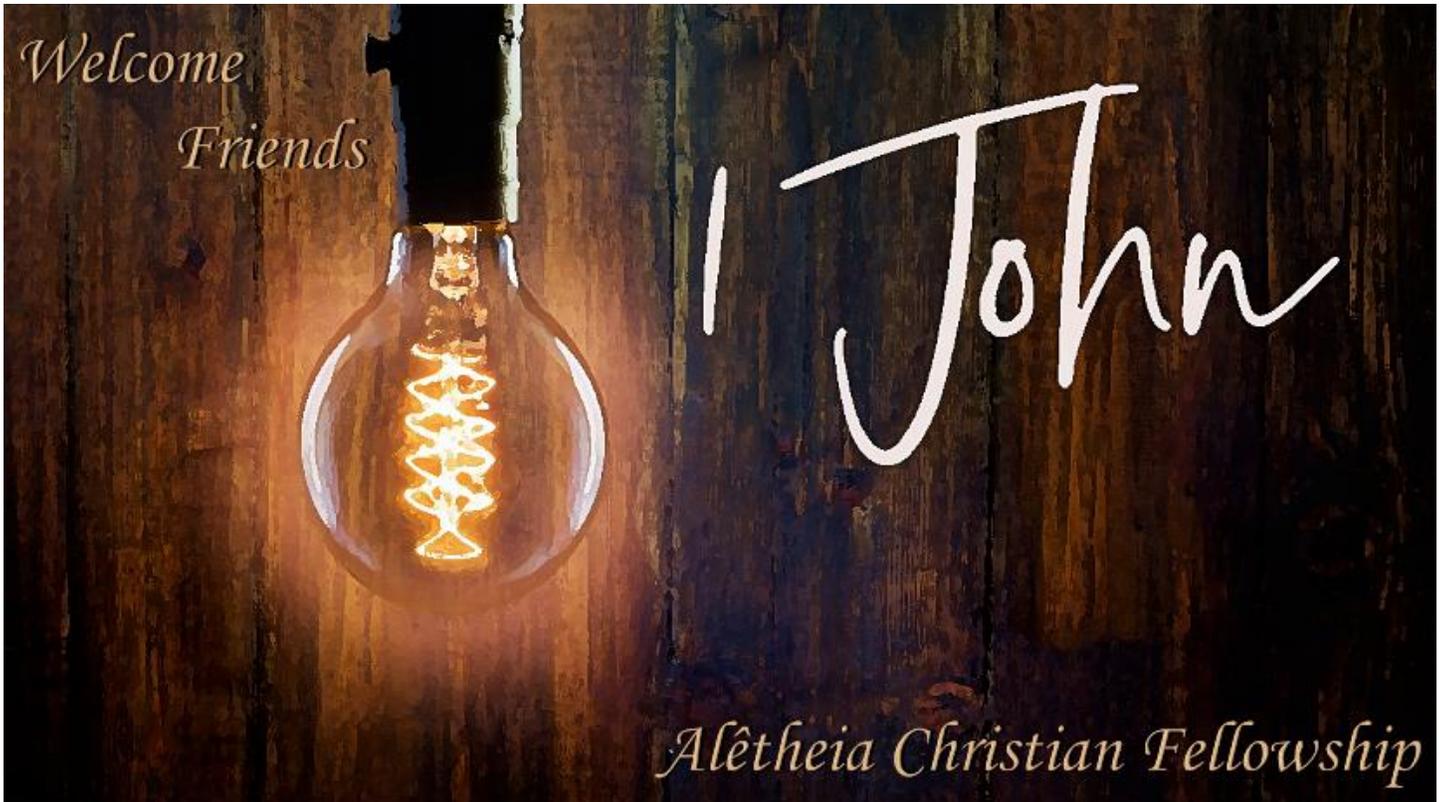
John then extrapolates that salvific work of Truth with the human response to its work... That saved people would “Walk in,” or “Practice,” “The Truth.”

An altered perception will ultimately result in a change of behavior...

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

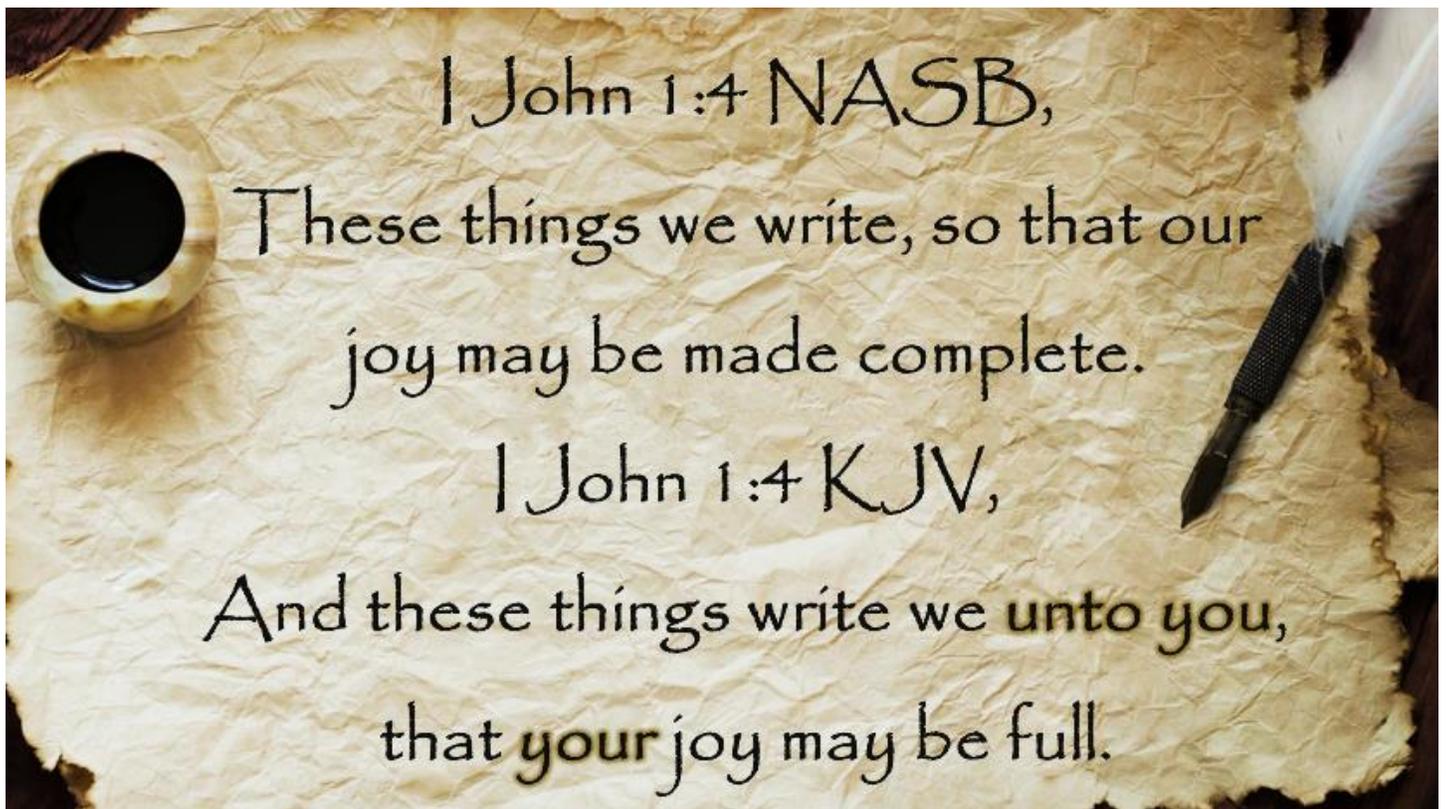
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Phone _____ Email _____



1 John 1:4, These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

There's an apparent problem with this verse - in fact two of them. This time it has nothing to do with John's unique Greek, but with our ancient manuscripts. It could be translated as the King James Version...



1 John 1:4, And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

There is a whole branch of study devoted to ancient papyri of the Bible and it gets extremely technical and tedious - fear not, we won't go there, except to quickly point out some things to show how amazing the Bible is and how well we can know what it originally meant to

the first and second generations of Christians nearly 2,000 years ago.

First, no one in that whole stretch of history has had as much access to God's Holy Word as we have today. Never, not in the first century, not in the second century, not in any century before ours, have Christians been able to know with such certainty what the entire New Testament said and what it meant and then to be able to personally access any part of it they wished - never.

Through archeological discoveries long after the KJV was first published we now have a far better grasp of the Greek language and of the original Bible text.

Remarkably, even though the KJV is over 400 years old, was produced with far less rigor, far fewer ancient manuscripts and far less knowledge of Greek, it is still a version so accurate that I have no issue with it at all, except for its now archaic English that makes it more difficult for modern people to understand. If you like the KJV, by all means enjoy it, it will not lead you wrong.

That speaks to the Holy Spirit protection of the Word through time. What demonstrates that even more, is

that today, our access to the original Bible is greater, not lesser as with most other things that deteriorate and are lost over time.

We have uncovered well over 20,000 ancient Greek manuscripts giving us a far better understanding of the original language and nearly 6,000 of those manuscripts are of the New Testament itself giving us tremendous certainty about what the Bible authors originally wrote. The problem isn't knowing what the Bible says, it's obeying it.

Having such a wealth of manuscripts has also led to the discovery of a wide variety of variant, or different, readings. These two translations differ at the highlighted spots because each is based upon a different underlying Greek manuscript.

That seems like a huge problem. It's actually a blessing. If you have two manuscripts and they differ, how can you know which is correct? If you have 6,000 manuscripts and there are differences noted in a few, but the overwhelming majority agree, you can easily determine the original. Now, as I said to start, it's far more complicated than that. My point is the scholars who work tirelessly at this task are to be commended.

More than that though, the Holy Spirit is to be praised for keeping the Word through time. Even liberal scholars who are always looking for a way to disparage the veracity of the Bible grant that over 90% of the text is unquestionably original. Then in the cases where we can't be certain about a word, or phrase, it never once makes any doctrinal difference.

Not one single area of uncertainty in the entire New Testament changes a single thing about Theology or doctrine. It is miraculous and just one of the many reasons that I know the Bible is the very Word of Almighty God and the only proper basis for faith.

Our example today has two words in question. The manuscripts the KJV is based on have an extra word translated as "To you." As well as the word "Your," as in "Your joy," instead of the word "Our," as in "Our joy."

Scholars rate the difficulty with an "A" through "D." "A," means they are certain and "D," means it could go either way with "B," almost certain, and "C," less certain, between those extremes.

The first issue "These things we write," could also be "These things we write unto you." The second one

makes clear that the recipients are the intended audience - that John was writing to them. It simply makes explicit what anyone would recognize is implied. The difference is the focus is on the audience where the other way around the focus is on the letter or sermon itself. This is rated as a "B." They are almost certain that the "Unto you," was added to clarify, but unwittingly altered the emphasis slightly to the audience rather than to the message itself.

It makes no difference because anyone understanding Christianity even a little, especially as it is laid out in I John, will know that both are true. The Word written is of supreme importance, but there is no reason for the Word to be written if there's no audience.

Second bit could be "So that our joy may be made complete," or as with the KJV, "That your joy may be full." Most scholars agree with the way the NASB and nearly all modern translations go - it has an "A" rating. They are certain it was "Our joy."

It's not so much a question of, what if they're wrong, it's a question of someone using the KJV. I just said it would be okay. Why? Because this also makes no difference at all... Again, if you understand Christianity,

especially as John shares it here. The reason it makes no difference is the very thing discussed, “Joy,” Biblical “Joy.” To understand why it doesn’t matter you must understand what Biblical “Joy,” actually means, and most people don’t.

Let’s fix that right now. “Joy” is χαρά (xä-rä). Unless you’ve been taught the meaning of this word, it’s not at all what you think it is Biblically. So, let’s start by rejecting any notion of it being related to general happiness, or a giddy feeling, or a choice to be agreeable. Joy is not exuberance because something went your way, nor is it pretending that you’re delighted it didn’t go your way.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles and organizing its Powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles and organizing its Powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Joy got tied up with happiness in English because Joy leads to a type of happiness. In America we have a fundamental right, according to the Declaration of Independence, to the “Pursuit of happiness.” The problem for us 250 years later is we don’t know what they meant by that any more than we know what the Bible writers meant by “Joy.”

The “Pursuit of happiness” had nothing to do with chasing after a feeling; it had everything to do with practicing Biblical joy. It was “Pursuit,” not in the sense of running after, or hunting for, an elusive quarry, but working at, developing, and exercising a better

existence. It was “Happiness,” not in the sense of a glad and happy feeling, but in a sense of well-being.

What is that based upon? The better future... A hope for “A more perfect union.” All Americans working diligently, enthusiastically, and optimistically to build a brighter tomorrow, not nearly so much for themselves, as for their descendants.

In Greek philosophy “Joy” is the good mood of the soul that is based upon the conviction that things will improve... It is an attitude due to a positive expectation - a sure and certain hope. You can see how such an outlook is seen as what we term happiness?



“Joy” derives from the verb χαίρω (xī-rō), usually translated, to rejoice. The famous Messianic prophecy from Zechariah 9:9, opens with that word, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” The joyous shout is because the future at that point is so bright - it all going to be okay now. Sure, we might have to endure a lot of pain and suffering in the meantime, but in the end it’s all good - therefore my attitude is good.

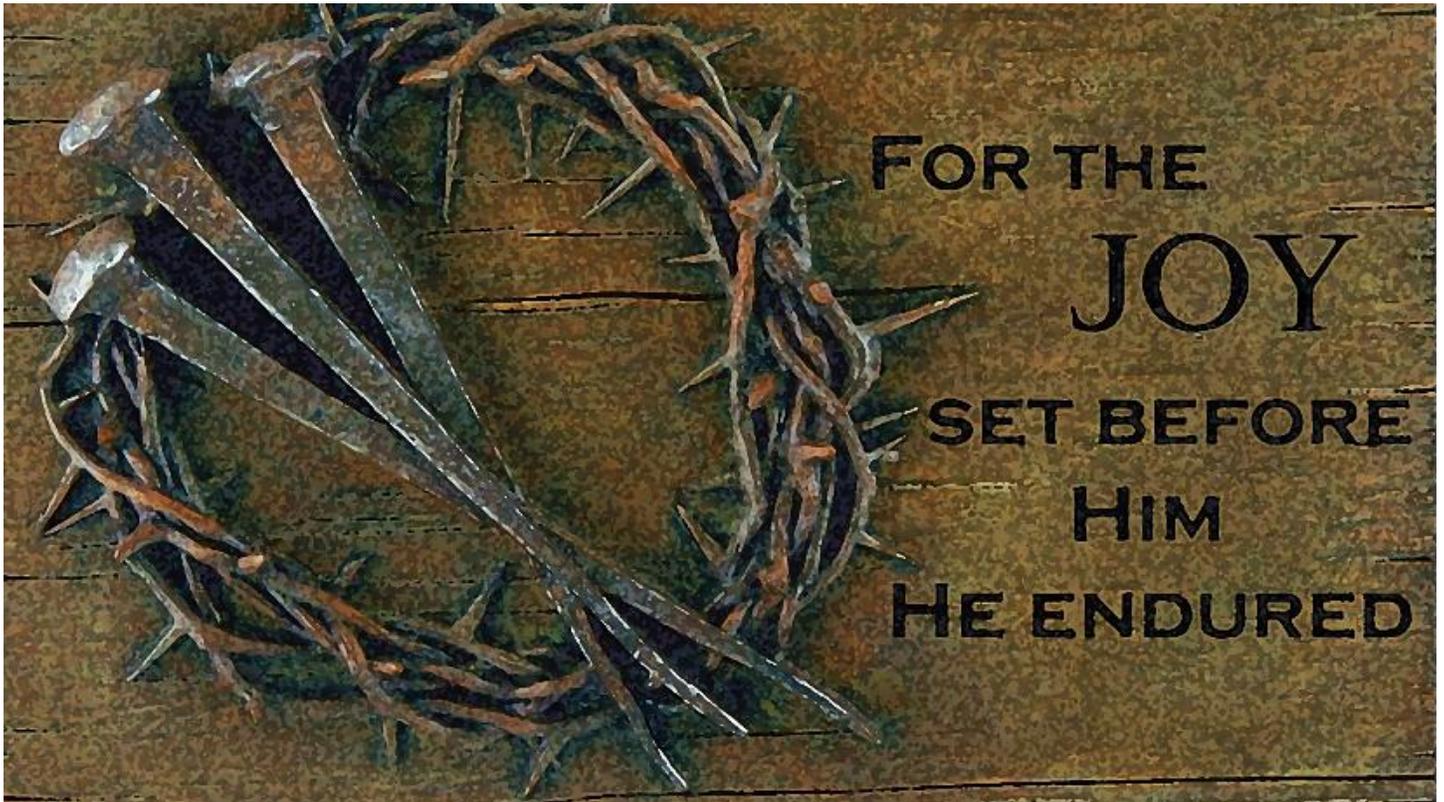
It is like the great song by Horatio Spafford. He lost nearly all of his earthly possessions during the Great Chicago fire of 1871 and then all four of his daughters, aged 18 months to 12 years old, were killed in a shipwreck. He wrote "When sorrows like sea billows roll Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul." How could it be well? Spafford tells us exactly how later in the song when he says, "My sin, not in part, but the whole, Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more." He goes on to confirm what that means... Hope, with the line, "Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight." It is a sure and certain hope that it's all going to be okay one day. That is Biblical "Joy," and it is based in trusting Him Who is able.



There is a reason the Apostle Paul listed the “Fruit of the Holy Spirit” the way he did. There is a progression. The “Fruit” in a person’s life must start with “Agapê” and the perfect culmination to Christian maturity is “Self-control.” But it must start with that unilateral, unconditional, altruistic, God-love called Agapê that only God can bestow upon and enable within.

When we accept the simple fact that God loves us now and forevermore. That because of His love we are eternally His own possession. That because of that real and right relationship our future could not possibly be brighter. That because we are His children, we possess a bit of His love for Him, and for others... Then we can

have such a certain hope that it changes our perspective and enables us to go through any trial and tribulation with Biblical “Joy.”



We see that as an example for us in Hebrews chapter 12, where God tells us to “Run with perseverance the race marked out for us...” How? By “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...” Yes, focus on Jesus, of course, but what about Jesus specifically will help us persevere? Because “For the joy set before him he endured the cross...” “The Joy set before Him”?

You can easily see that “The Joy,” is not an emotion, or choice, but an understanding. “The Joy,” comes from knowing Who God is... From having such an unshakable hope based upon a sure certainty that God is good and that He will orchestrate it all for ultimate good... A “Joy” based upon embracing His perfect love, that by definition, can be counted upon to act in accordance with itself. A conviction and assurance that God is aware, that He cares and that He is able. It is a trust in His love.

When we know that it’s all part of the plan and that the plan is perfect - we can persevere.

The point is to keep moving forward focused on Jesus as you encounter difficulties and when you do you are following His example. Jesus endured a savage and brutal death by torture because of “Joy.” No matter what He had to endure, His attention was on the finish line, on the beautiful future ahead and so He endured.

So, Biblical “Joy” is not an emotion, nor is it a choice, it is a mindset, perspective, worldview enabled by God’s Love grounding our trust in Him. and the future He has set.

When we get that, then we can see that whether John wrote, “So that our joy may be made complete,” or “So that your joy may be made complete,” they both have the exact same result. John’s joy in this matter of pastoral ministry would not be complete unless their joy was made complete. The two are inextricably interrelated. While people can draw attention to the issue and debate it and make a big deal about it, you can see that either way, it means the same thing... Biblical joy comes from trusting God, which in turn comes from experiencing His love, which is most tangibly perceived in this life through the relational interaction in Christian fellowship.

Can you see that? Christian love for one another - this membership in the spiritual family - this fellowship with John and the other eyewitnesses, with all Christians throughout time, with the people in this room right now... That is how we experience His love because it is all based upon a joint fellowship “With the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,” in the power of the Holy Spirit.

“Joy,” is a perspective born out of experiencing God’s love. How can we experience His love? It is as Jesus taught in John 15:10&11, 10“If you keep My

commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." "Keep My commandments," means to obey, follow, perform, observe, fulfill, do, what I have commanded you to obey, follow, perform, observe, fulfill, do. Is this a new wrinkle? We just said it is the fellowship that enables "Joy." Yes, and it is obedience to the Lord that enables fellowship.

Is that right? Let's find out...



I John 1:5&6, 5This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

What is sin? Ultimately, sin is disobedience to the Lord that destroys fellowship.

Probably the biggest hinderance to Christian fellowship and the experiencing of God's love within such fellowship and the enhancement of Biblical Joy that would follow... Is personal, individual sin. It's an intensely unpopular topic nowadays.

Rare indeed that a preacher will get up and address sin in the church, and of course that is very telling, isn't it? I mean folks will decry sin outside the church and in someone else's church, but who deals with sin in their own life and their own church?

The reason most churches are merely a loose association of individuals who get together for a couple of hours, a few times a month, instead of a vibrant family is because of sin - and sin continues to hold

sway because we are too polite, too scared, too ashamed to talk about it.

Verse 5 is emphatically stating that the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom John and his associates knew extremely well, personally gave him a message to pass on to those who believed the Gospel. They heard the message loud and clear and they announced it to others the exact same way.

To understand these two verses and the verses that follow and the verses about sin that we'll come to in chapter 3, we must get the scope and context right here. This particular "Message," is not the Gospel. It is not the how and why to be Saved. The "Message" John is referring to in this place is more like the "Great Commission Message." It's about discipling and teaching - it is a Christian mentor's care for those who have already accepted the Gospel. John was writing to Christians! In these few verses here, John was not trying to get non-Believers to believe, He was trying to teach Christians to behave, just as I'm trying to do right now.

It is a pastoral concern for those already saved. There is, of course, always some overlap. Any discipleship

teaching has an element of the Gospel, and any Gospel proclamation has an element of discipleship teaching, but the focus here is to teach and encourage those who were already saved.

To get a quick handle on it we can jump ahead a couple of chapters to a less metaphorical, more explicit restatement... 1 John 3:11, For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

That's going to be the crux of it... Jesus gave one final command before He went to the Cross, recorded in John 15:12-17, 12“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14“You are My friends if you do what I command you. Jumping down to the summary in verse 17, 17“This I command you, that you love one another.

Keep His commands and have fellowship. Have fellowship and experience the love of God. Experience the love of God and have Biblical Joy. Have Biblical Joy and you can preserve to the end.

There's much more to say... We'll get there over the next several weeks. For now, the message heard from Jesus and proclaimed by John is that "God is Light." That's amazing... What does it mean though?

How many people read that phrase, hear that phrase, think, that's cool and just keep on trucking to the next verse? What does it mean to say that "God is Light"? If we ponder it for a bit, we quickly realize that it means a lot of things including the idea that God is literally light - as in this picture - light at least when He manifests Himself in the physical reality that He Himself created. We know that He spoke light into existence, so He must have had that light in Himself.

Light is revelation - as in revealing and illuminating... No one has an epiphany and says I just had a lightbulb burn out. John 1:4&5 speaking of the Word says, 4In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

"God is Light," can have a variety of meanings and getting the correct meaning in this context is essential to understanding what the "Message" from Jesus means. We need to get extremely meticulous and

comb through the entire Bible and especially the other four Books written by John. We've got to pick apart the context and painstakingly examine the intent... It will take a lot of time and it will be intensely tedious... Or you can trust me to have done that for you. It's your choice. I would never presume to take that from you. What I can assure you, is that if you take my word for it, you're really taking the word of many great scholars to whom I am indebted.

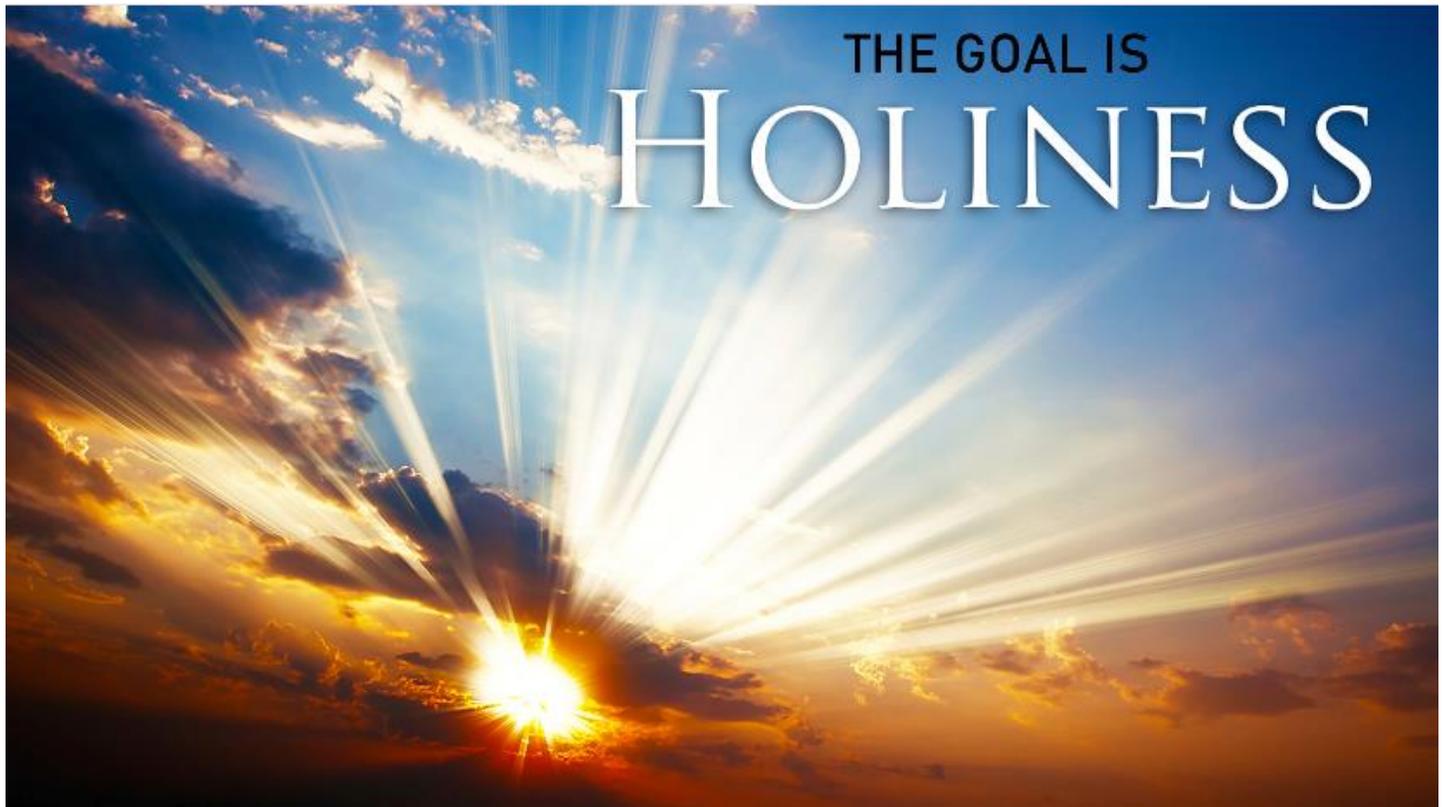


All learning is a gift given by those who have gone before. The vast majority of what I know, is what others learned and I simply accepted. If you are a highly intelligent and deeply thoughtful person who doesn't

mind the pain of learning you might actually put some ideas together and add to the knowledge base of humanity. You might actually come up with a tiny bit of information that is yours. Of course, even if you do, it is nothing new to God and so what have you really accomplished?

The vast majority of people will never come up with even a tiny bit of information that is truly original and what that means is that our ideas are borrowed. We are not our ideas at all. In other words, as I said before, your opinions are not who you are. You can change your mind - you are not conjoined to your beliefs. Be open my friends, listen carefully to others with the mindset that God might expand your understanding of the Truth through the unlikeliest of people.

Don't get defensive when the ideas you currently hold are challenged - thank God for the challenge. Through it you can abandon wrong ideas and strengthen right ideas. That's learning and it comes about painfully. You must be willing to pay that price.

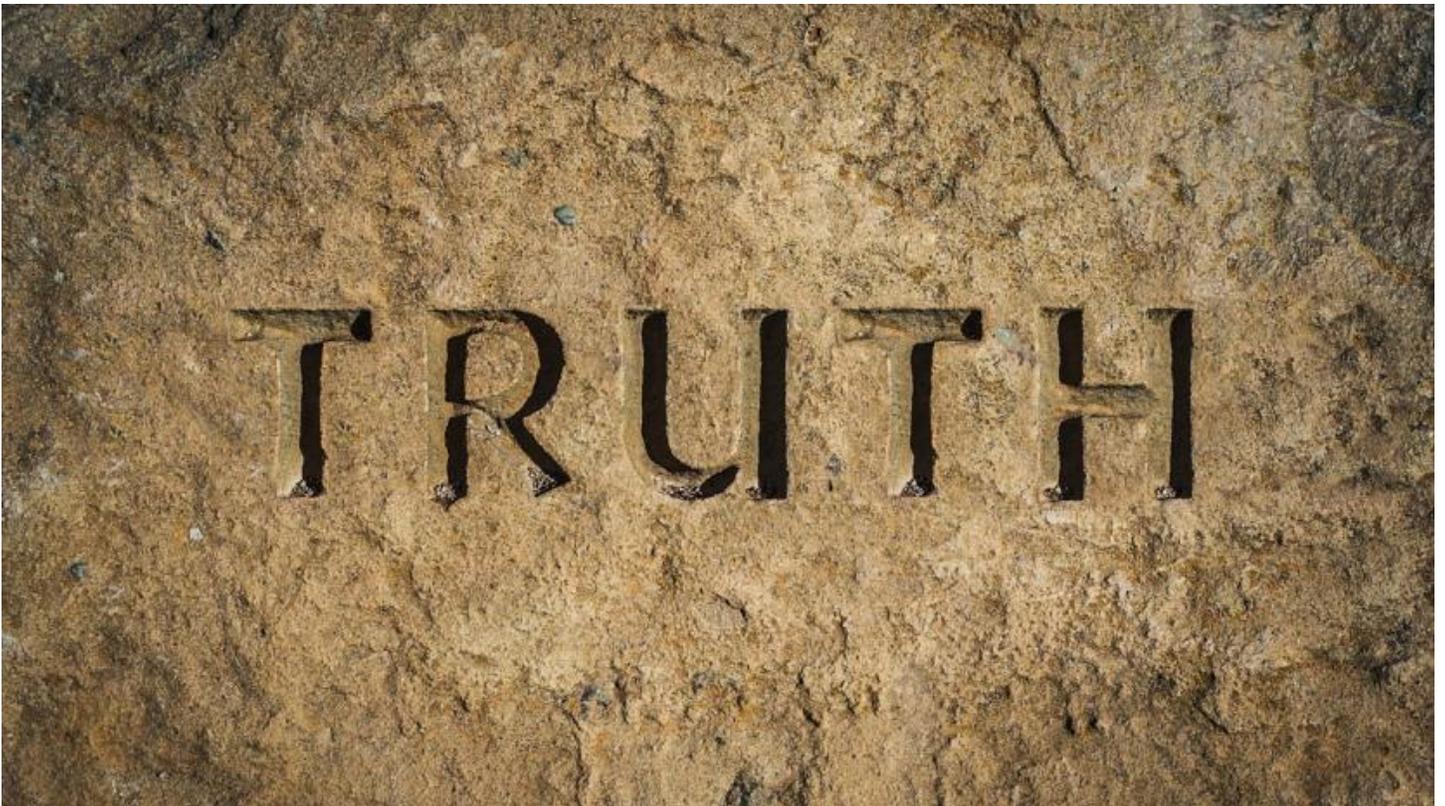


Well, cutting to the chase, “Light” here means holiness. You might remember that holy is ἅγιος (hä-gē-ōs), a word occurring more than 1,000 times in the Bible, which literally means “Other,” as in otherworldly, as in set apart and so consecrated as pure. God is other than His creation - He is perfect. He is Light.

That concept is further intensified by the negative statement that there is no darkness in Him whatsoever. The implication is that God cannot relationally interact with that which has any darkness. He cannot have fellowship - again, read membership - with darkness.

One of the many ways that we know that we're on the right track here, is that we are explicitly told that in order to have fellowship we must walk in the light, by not walking in the darkness. This is not merely about a forensic ontological state of being that is spiritually granted to us... This is about activity.

We all walk, either in light or in darkness and that is equated with either practicing the Truth or falsely pretending to practice the Truth. We're talking about people in the church - they either practice Truth and actively walk in the light, or they pretend.

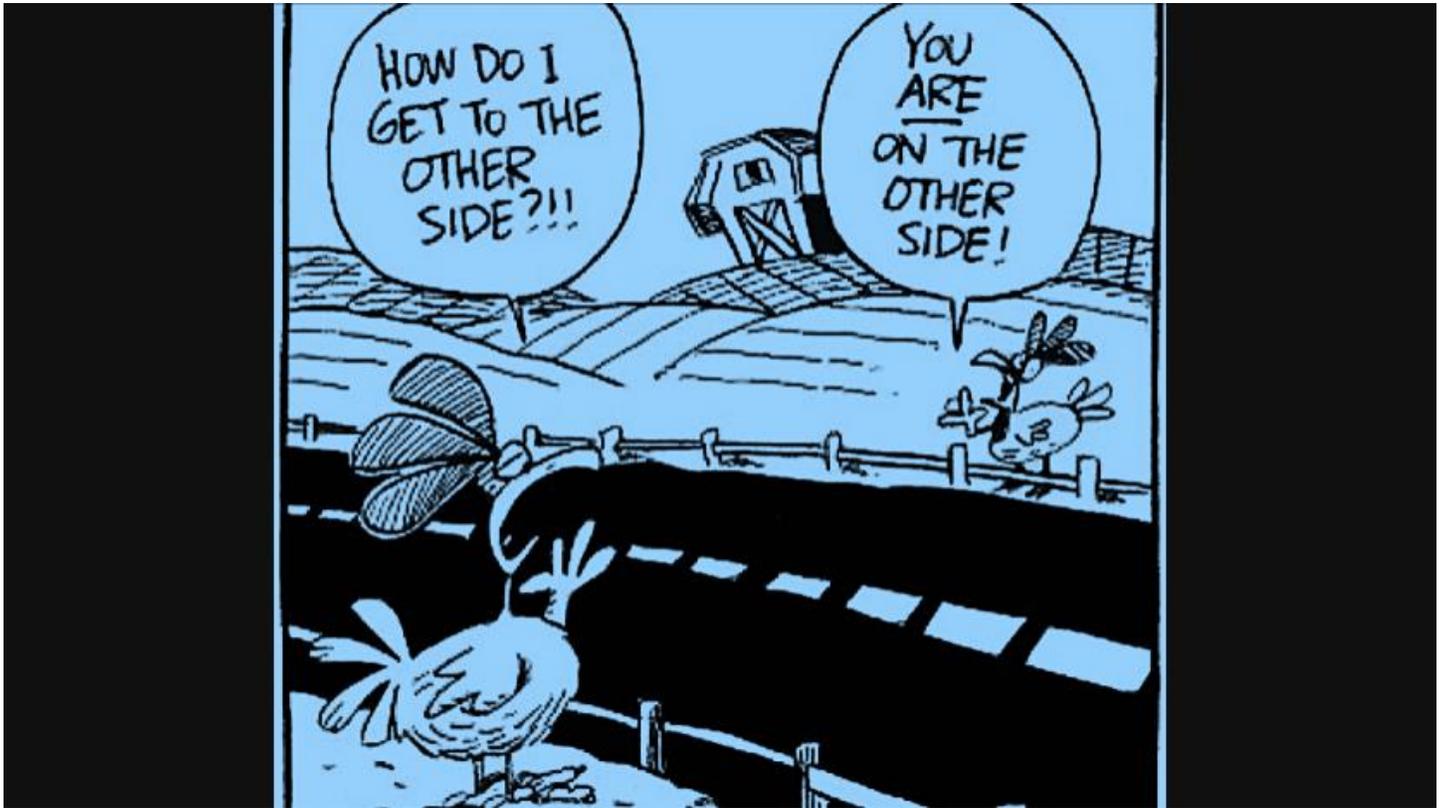


What is the Truth? Every one of you should know that it is ἀλήθεια (ä-lā-thā-ä). John uses the word 45 times. The gist is that Jesus is the Word of God and so is the Truth. God's Word is only ever perfectly true and correct without any possibility of error. So, Jesus is the personification of God's Truth which enabled salvation which must be understood by people as the Truth in order for them to participate. How will they call upon the Lord, if they haven't believed, how will they believe unless they hear, how will they hear unless someone proclaims the Truth (Romans 10:14)?

John then extrapolates that salvific work of Truth with the human response to its work... That saved people would "Walk in the Truth," or as here, that they would "Practice the Truth." It indicates behavior at the end of the day... It doesn't start with behavior, but it does end there.

Where does it start? Faith. We have faith that the Gospel Message is true and through a divine work of grace we somehow accept and embrace both it and the personification of it, Jesus. Then God deposits a bit of Himself in us and that must necessarily alter our perception of things.

An altered perception will ultimately result in a change of behavior... It cannot be otherwise.



What have we seen today? All these things are interrelated and seemingly complexly so, but the bottom line is that in order for there to be true Christian joy, the kind of joy the Lord demonstrated. The kind of joy that has us proclaiming "It is well with my soul," on our worst day. The kind of joy derived from love and leading to peace, patience, kindness and all the rest, that actually enables fellowship with one another. For there to be true Christian joy we must experience love, not just on the receiving end, but on the giving end.



To get love enough to have joy, you have to practice love. Well, you can see that our fellowship - this assembling together that we are not to forsake is quite important (Hebrews 10:25). As I often say, Christianity is a team sport.

But the only way we're going to be able to do that correctly is if our behavior is far different than the behavior of non-Christians. That's what this letter is all about - that's the message John got directly from Jesus and is proclaiming to us today. Behavior matters because it is birthed by character and despite the stance of our crazy post-modern, pre-Marxist, anti-God culture... Character matters.