

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 49
1-3 John and Jude

I know that some of you might believe it is strange that these podcasts are now sponsored. That for so long we just dove right into the doctrine. I know many of you have expressed how you liked that about this platform. And though I agree with you that annoying ads are not fun to listen to, I want to point out that the companies I have mentioned and will continue to mention are not paying us for advertising. They are not forking over money for air time. These organizations are actively helping to make this world a better place, by donating to good causes that affect the communities around them. They are doing good with the prosperity that God has blessed them with. And I have met a few of these executives at the top levels and I can assure you that they are just like you and me. They are normal, kind, generous folks that are trying everyday to give back some of the good that has been a blessing in their lives. And isn't that what we have been talking about for the last 5 years? Using the gospel to make the necessary changes in our own lives in order to become as our Father in heaven wants us to be. Isn't that why you listen each week? What I find fantastic is that you are not alone in this endeavor. There are literally thousands of saints just like you that are working for the same goal. So, please take some comfort in the fact that there are many wonderful people in this world just like you and me seeking to do good.

And it just so happens that the epistles of John teach us a great deal about this very topic. John is the last author of the new testament Next week we start into the book of revelations and John also authored that wonderful prophetic book. So, who is this guy, and why should we listen to him? John was actually the youngest apostle called by Jesus in His earthly ministry. Most scholars believe he was in his late teen years when Jesus called him. He was also the last of the 12 chosen by the hand of the Savior to die. John lived 66 years after the crucifixion of Jesus. But what is truly amazing about John was that he was one of the 3 special witnesses that saw and bore witness to some things that the other disciples didn't get to see. Such as the mount of transfiguration, a few special healings, and even the garden of Gethsemane. Peter we have discussed before. But James and John were actually brothers. And though this is not doctrinal or important to know: Many scholars believe that James and John were Jesus' cousins. There are a few verses if pieced together show us that Jesus' mother Mary and James and John's mother could have been sisters. But that is not important to our salvation but can be a fun journey to take if you want to do some studying about it.

What I would like to focus on today was the fact that John the apostle was nicknamed "the apostle of Love". It is kind of a strange title and one that bears looking at. There are some records of John in his very old age being trolled around to the saints by other church leaders. There would be massive gatherings of believers that would come to hear the great apostle speak. Thousands would gather as this powerful witness of Jesus, now stricken with age, would with assistants make his way to the pulpit and say "little children, Love one another!" then he would sit down. It is told that after a few times the leaders that were promoting these events

asked John, "why don't you say more to these people, who have come to hear your great testimony of the Lord?" To which John would rely, "If that is all they do, that is enough".

Wise words from a man that used to be part of the duo Jesus called "the sons of Thunder". The word Jesus uses in Hebrew is Boanerges which derives from an aramaic word referring to rage. This was evident in the record of Luke when Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem. He sent some messengers ahead of Him but they were rejected by the people of Samaria. Luke says: "And when his disciples **James** and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command **fire** to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54) That seems rather harsh, doesn't it? They face a little rejection and James and John want to destroy the whole city with fire from heaven. This was their nature, but it didn't stay that way. John was later nicknamed the apostle of Love. That seems like the exact opposite of the description of him when he was younger. So what changed him? The answer is simple, it was Jesus. John author's 5 books in the new testament, and in those books mentions love over 81 times. But love of God and fellow men took some time for John to learn. And that is great news for us. If an apostle of Jesus who walked and talked with Him that witnessed unspeakable things can make those changes from mortal to eternal then so can we. We can take those lessons that God is trying to teach us and make the necessary changes to become more loving and less condemning just as John did.

"**1** **That** which was from the **beginning**, [John says] which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the **Word of life**;" (1 John 1:1)

Isn't it interesting how he starts this epistle? It is very similar to how Genesis 1 starts. "In the beginning was God" and God is the word, and God spoke and the world was created.

John uses almost the same principle of God as the beginning and end of all things. But his purpose is writing this epistle is clear, right at the onset he says:

"That which we have **seen** and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our **fellowship** *is* with the **Father**, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things **write** we unto you, that your joy may be full." (1 John 1:3-4)

That is the hope that we all can have. That whoever we are right now can be changed to a joyful, happy, loving nature to be as Jesus is. That we might have a fellowship with Him and the Father. I find it interesting that some who claim to be disciples of Christ have this dark, gloomy, almost depressed nature. Like living the gospel is so hard and draining. Some even have the view that if they accept Jesus as their Savior that he is going to kill their life. That they won't be able to do all these things that they think are fun and enjoyable. Let me be very very clear on this... that you are being so robbed of true joy in your life. You think that drinking out of that

nasty, bitter well is so refreshing. You only think that because you have never tasted the Living Water. Until you taste from the well that never runs dry, you have no clue the joy you have been missing the satisfying peace and joy and love that flows from that well of living water. And once you taste it you realize; this is what I have been missing, what I have been looking for my whole life. You thought what you had was great, that muddy nasty bitter stuff, that is because you haven't tasted of this water. You have nothing to compare it to right now. But once you try the well of living water you will realize that you never want to go back to that old crusty swamp again. The light, the joy, the peace that come from a communion with the living Jesus Christ and His well of living water, there really is no comparison. As John says, He is life.

“But if we **walk** in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the **blood** of Jesus Christ his Son **cleanseth** us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

John also says:

“**10** He that **loveth** his **brother** abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and **walketh** in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” (1 John 2:10-11)

This is a great indicator of our personal relationship with Christ. If we hate everybody, if we are offended by anything that anyone says. If we find ourselves living in the condemnation and judgment of others, we can be certain that the adversary has a grip on our hearts. And that we are not walking in the light. Those feelings are not becoming of a son or daughter of Christ. Just as Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to destroy the samaritans with fire from heaven, He also says to us:

“For the **Son of man** is not come to **destroy** men’s **lives**, but to **save** *them*.” (Luke 9:56)

So if we find that we are not working for that same cause then we can be certain that we are working against Him who came to save the lives of all His children. And if you find that you are not on the same side as God in this cause, then you are on the losing team, that will never give joy or peace in this life or in the life to come.

Now, there is one other theme in the writings of John that are worth mentioning. But before I share them with you it's important to know that John had a lot of Greek influence in his life. It is clear that he was trained in the Greek language and many of his writings are influenced by Greek culture. Back in the 90s there was a Greek scholar by the name of Kenneth Wuest that expanded the translation of the Greek new testament. And as I read these verses from the books of John we gain a greater understanding when Kenneth tells us that when John says that we can know, he is implying that we can know with an absolute certainty.

1 John 2:3 -"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we **keep** his commandments."

1 John 2:5-”But whoso **keepeth** his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are **in him**.”

1 John 4:2- “Hereby **know** ye the **Spirit** of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the **flesh** is of God:”

1 John 4:11-14 - “**11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, **God dwelleth** in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we **dwell** in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do **testify** that the Father **sent** the Son *to be* the **Saviour** of the **world**.”

1 John 5:13-15 -”These things have I **written** unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal **life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his **will**, he **heareth** us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we **ask**, we know that we have the petitions that we **desired** of him.”

John knew Jesus, John became the man that he was meant to be. In these records he shares with us how we can know for certain for ourselves the love and joy of a living, gracious Father. May we seek him earnestly is my prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.