

Colleyville Presbyterian Church

1 John - Introduction

April 2, 2023

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

-Thomas Cranmer, 1549

WLC, Q. 155. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

WLC, Q. 157. How is the Word of God to be read?

A. The holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God; and that he only can enable us to understand them; with desire to know, believe, and obey, the will of God revealed in them; with diligence, and attention to the matter and scope of them; with meditation, application, self-denial, and prayer.

Note: *The benefit of reading the epistles in their entirety in one sitting*

1 John background: Author, setting, purpose

1 John Key Themes:

-The character of God: God is Life, God is Light, God is Truth, God is Love; God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit; God has overcome sin, the world and the evil one

-The character of the children of God: Little children, beloved, recipients of eternal life, called to walk in the light, called to live in truth, called to love one another (our brother), called to overcome

How does 1 John work rhetorically?

Very different from Paul's epistles—John is not interested only in the flow of thought or propositional argument, but in the repetition and layering of words, symbols and themes.

Key words in 1 John: God, Jesus, Son, love, light, life, truth, abide, world, little children

Don't be deceived by the apparent simplicity of 1 John! This is a complex, rich epistle that needs to be heard again and again so it can sink down into our hearts and souls.

-Parallels between John 13-16 & 1 John (1 John is clearly John's interpretation and restatement of the direct teaching of Jesus in the upper room on the night before his death)

John 13:33-35: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

John 14:13-14: "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."

John 14:15-17: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

John 14:20-21, 23-24: "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me."

John 15:4, 9-11: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me... As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

John 15:12-13: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:18-19: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

John 16:33: "But take heart; I have overcome the world."