

DEEP SIX STUDY

March 28th, 2021

Jesus in the Letters – “Say Hello to Freedom”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS (You can view the full message on Facebook or at live.capecodchurch.com/live)

Opening: (1 John 1:1-4) - After Paul, the Apostle John is the most prolific writer in the New Testament, penning his unique gospel account (the book of John), the book of Revelation, and three short letters that were circulated to churches in Asia Minor. His letters, like his gospel, point to one simple truth: Jesus, as the Son of God, is the only source of real, full Life – and true freedom is found only in him.

1. Set Free From Sin (1 John 1:5-2:1)

- Right from the start of his letters, John makes it clear that the goal for followers of Jesus is to not sin. BUT...he quickly makes clear that God knows we will sin – which is why Jesus came. Our freedom in Christ doesn't come from a place of guilt, it comes from “living in the light” in fellowship with Jesus and with other believers.
- Living in relationship (fellowship) with Jesus is meant to change us from the inside out. Instead of trying to “white-knuckle it” or guilt ourselves for our sins, John gives us another way to freedom: to look at who Jesus is and at what he wants for us.
- Getting close to Jesus changes us; the reason some of us may not want to get too close to Jesus is that we don't really want to change. A good question for all of us: Do you have a sin that you really don't want to let go of? Unless we see who Jesus really is we won't become who he really wants us to be.
- When we stop and focus (daily) on Jesus – who he is, and who he wants us to be – it changes our “appetite.” When that happens, we become “new creatures in Christ,” set free from sin.

2. Set Free From Being Right (1 John 4:6-12)

- After telling us how to be free from the grip of sin, John tells us something different: how to be free from *being right*. Real knowledge, wisdom and discernment come from “belonging to God,” and there's only one way to know if we do: by our love for one another.
- God showed the extent of his love for us by sending Jesus to die in our place and to free us from sin. Our greatest calling as followers of Jesus is to reflect that love in how we love others.
- Being right has a kind of power to it – it has so much power that sometimes we'll argue that we're right even when we know we're wrong! But John tells us that there's something that comes before “knowing, doing and telling” – and that's loving well.
- We can be easily impressed by those Christians who know, do and tell to show how right and smart they are. John's reply: “So what? None of that matters if you don't love your neighbor.”
- If we're driven by a desire to love our neighbor, we can endure offenses and allow ourselves to suffer loss. That's who we want to be as a church, and who we should want to be as individuals.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.

Psalm 118:5; Luke 4:14-21; John 1:1-4; John 8:31-36; Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:13-14

Videos of the Week: [1-3 John](#) and [Agape-Love](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. John was known as one of the “Sons of Thunder” as a disciple of Jesus – once wanting to “call down fire” on a whole city for not responding to Jesus’ teaching (Luke 9:54). Decades later he became known as the “Apostle of Love.” What do you think changed him so dramatically?
2. Why is our self-imposed guilt and our attempts to “try harder” so ineffective in preventing us from sinning? What’s the antidote for that?
3. Some throughout history (and today...) have confused the freedom *from* sin that Jesus gives us with a freedom *to* sin. What would your response be to someone who thinks that way – that it doesn’t matter how much we sin, since Jesus already paid for all sin?
4. Read 1 John 4:7-8 again. John writes that “Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.” Does that mean that an atheist who “loves” is a child of God and knows God? Explain your answer.
5. The second freedom the message highlighted from John’s letters was “freedom from being right.” How is “being right” enslaving?
6. Do you think someone can be “right” and be “loving” at the same time? Why or why not?