



LOVE MADE KNOWN – Part 1
First John 1:1-4
Eternal Life & Everlasting Love

If you have a Bible—and I hope you do—let me invite you to open with me to the first letter of John. Not the Gospel account of Jesus' life, but 1 John. It's good to be back together around God's Word. It's been good for me over the previous weeks to be at different campuses, but now it's good to come back together.

Today we begin a journey through the book of 1 John. Lord willing, over the next ten weeks we're going to journey together through this Bible book. As the pastors from different congregations, we got together to pray and discuss what to study next and this book came to the forefront. I want to show you why a journey through the book of 1 John is critical for your life.

I don't want this to be a passive journey. I want to challenge you today, from the very start of this journey. I want to challenge every follower of Christ to memorize a chapter in this book of the Bible—specifically, 1 John 1. Now, that may sound daunting to you. Maybe you were expecting me to give you a verse to learn—but that's not what I mean. I mean a whole chapter.

Here's the deal. There are ten verses in 1 John 1. We have ten weeks we're going to be walking through this Bible book. So that's how many verses per week? One. One verse per week. I haven't counted how many words are in the verses, but it's only a word or two a day. You can do this. You can do this, if you're a follower of Christ. Obviously, if you're not yet a follower of Christ, if you're exploring Christianity—maybe this is your first time in church today—you are welcome to take the challenge too.

Specifically for followers of Christ, I'm guessing there are many who have never memorized an entire chapter of the Bible, and this is your opportunity. I can't overstate the effect memorizing Scripture has on your life and your walk with God. Scripture memorization will transform your life, your family, your work—everything about you.

God doesn't really tell us to read His Word. He tells us to meditate on it day and night. In a sense, that's what memorization helps us do. When you memorize something, you internalize. You say it to yourself over and over and over, until it becomes a part of you, until you can just rattle it off. Like,

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union...” It just rolls off your tongue. When you memorize something, it just flows from your mind, out of your mouth, like it’s second nature.

Don’t we want God’s Word to be like that for us? Just flowing from us? Now don’t presume that means it’s easy. I’ll go ahead and let you know that 1 John 1 is not going to be an easy chapter to memorize. These first few verses we’re looking at today are grammatically complex. Old John hasn’t helped us out a lot here. We’ll cut him some slack, though. He wasn’t writing this in English.

So I don’t want to just challenge you—I want to help you. Every week over the course of the next ten weeks, I’ll lead us through some kind of review. Week by week, we’ll just take things one verse at a time. Feel free to jump ahead, but we’re going to go one verse at a time together and I trust that God will show the power of His Word, not just in your life, but in our life together as a church as we do this.

My original plan was just to read 1 John 1, then to camp out on the first few verses today. But I heard about a group of Christian brothers in Montgomery County who decided earlier this summer to memorize some Scriptures together. They just so happened to start in 1 John. So instead of me reading through the first chapter, I want you to hear it from them. Watch this video.

Video: Hi guys. My name is Philippe and I’m a long-time McLean Bible Church congregant. I work full time as a local missionary doing evangelism and discipleship to men in the marketplace. My deepest desire and longing is to see people fall fully in love with Christ and live this all-in supernatural call in their walks that God’s called us to live in. One of the things I love and long for is to see biblical knowledge going from people’s minds to really being imprinted on their hearts.

So in this season of discipling men, I started praying, “God, what can I do to maximize things going from people’s minds to their hearts. I know Your Holy Spirit does a transformation, but what can I do?” Of course God’s Word came to mind. Jeremiah 15:16 came to mind, which says, “*Your words were found, and I ate them [I ingested them] and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart.*” So I started seeking out men in Montgomery County, a group of men that I could lead who would commit to memorizing entire books of God’s Word together, trusting that God would use His living and active Word to transform our lives radically and help us live even more courageous, bold, unhindered supernatural walks with Him.

Without knowing McLean Bible Church was going to do 1 John 1, we sought to memorize 1 John 1-5. It’s been an amazing experience. I want you to check this out. Every Sunday we send each other what we’ve memorized, on top of meeting together. And mind you, these guys have full-time jobs. We’re all married. We all have young kids. One just had a baby. But God has given us the grace to prioritize hiding His Word in our hearts, trusting Him to transform us. So check this out. I pray this will encourage you as we set out to do this as a church body. God bless you.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

David: Now, just for clarification, we're not necessarily all doing chapters one through five like they have, and we're doing this in English together. Feel free to do it in French as well, or any of the other multiplicity of languages that are spoken across McLean Bible Church. So go for it. I just want to lower expectations for what's going to happen right here. It's going to be English, one chapter, as we walk through this together over ten weeks.

Here's what I want to do. If you're taking notes today, I want to share with you two sets of two. First, I want to share with you two prayers that I am praying for you over the next ten weeks as we walk through this book. These are two things I'm praying God will do in your lives. These two prayers are based on the book as a whole. Then I want us to hone in on the first four verses here in 1 John 1, showing you two truths that hold the key to seeing these two prayers answered in your lives. So two prayers and two truths. We'll start with the two prayers—two hopes, two desires that I have as your pastor.

By the way, that's the perspective from which John is writing this book. This the Apostle John, one of Jesus' disciples, who spent three years with Jesus, who wrote the Gospel of John—an account of Jesus' life—and then he became a pastor in Ephesus. He wrote this letter to the churches around Ephesus in Asia Minor—think modern-day Turkey—near the end of his life. In this letter, along with the two letters that come after it, he's expressing his heart as a pastor for these churches. That's one of the reasons why I and other pastors here at McLean want to study this book with you, because it expresses in many ways our heart for this church. Here's the first prayer/hope/desire I have for you as we study this book.

First prayer: I want you to know that you have eternal life.

I want you to know—I pray that you will know—that you have eternal life. That’s the purpose of the book of 1 John. Turn to 1 John 5 and look at verse 13. John gives this purpose outright. He’s coming to the end of the book and this is verbatim what he says in verse 13, *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”* That’s why he’s writing this.

You know what’s interesting? Near the end of the Gospel of John, his account of Jesus’ life, John tells us why he wrote that book. Listen to what he says in John 20:31: *“These are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”* Does that sound familiar? This is a theme for John. Here in John’s first letter, he uses the phrase “eternal life” over and over again—ten different times, an average of twice in each chapter. He also uses the words “knowing” and “perceiving” almost 50 times. John wanted the men and women in the churches around him to know they had eternal life. And I want you to know that.

This week I’ve tried to think of something I would want you to know more than that and I can’t come up with anything. I can come up with different ways of saying this, but it’s basically the same thing. I want you to know that you have eternal life. Don’t you want to know that? This is so huge, because you can be deceived about eternal life. That’s part of why John is writing this letter. Some of the people he’s writing to were deceived, then they were deceiving others about eternal life.

People were saying, “Yeah, I’m a Christian,” but they weren’t truly believing in Christ. They were saying, “Yeah, I’m a Christian,” but they weren’t obeying or following Christ. People were saying, “Yeah, I’m a Christian,” but there was no evidence of the love of Christ in their lives. John says in this book they’re not Christians. They’re deceived. And this kind of deception is a reality in the church today. There are all kinds of people who think and say they’re Christians, but they’re not. Let me say that again. There are all kinds of people, many people, in the church who think and say they’re Christians, but they’re not. There are many people who think and say they have eternal life—but they don’t. They’re deceived.

The last thing I want is for you to be deceived. The last thing I want is for anybody to sit in this church today, and week after week after week, thinking you’re a Christian when you’re not, thinking you have eternal life when you don’t. I want you to know that you have eternal life. I say this because, on the one hand, you can be deceived about eternal life. But on the other hand, you can be sure about eternal life. That’s the point here in 1 John 5:13. It’s saying you can be sure. So over the coming weeks I want to show you how you can be sure.

I don’t think it’s a coincidence that this past week I was in a storage area, getting something out of a box when I came across some stuff from when I was in high school—a variety of interesting

things—including what’s in this bag. I hesitate to pull it out, because I think it’s kind of gross. Let me give you a little set up and leave you anticipating, waiting to see what gross thing is in this bag.

When I was in high school, I played baseball. I hurt myself one year. I broke my wrist in the middle of a baseball game which ruined the season for me. I had a cast on my wrist that went up my arm and I was really bummed. But I kept the cast. Don’t you think that’s kind of gross? I don’t think anybody else in here wants to touch this thing. I don’t really want to touch it. But I kept it and here’s why. It a reminder of God’s grace during that time. So let me pull it out here. Isn’t that kind of gross?

Seriously, here’s why I want to show it to you. Even though I was really bummed to miss the season, I was asking God why. As I was praying, He said, “Why don’t you use this for good?” I wanted to see my friends and other people in the school come to know Christ. So I had an idea. I had my older brother write this on the side of the cast “Are you sure? John 3:16.”

I was stuck in that cast for however many weeks it was, but as I walked down the halls or sat in class, people would notice me. For that matter, it didn’t just happen at school, but other places as well. People would stop and ask, “What does that mean?” I’d reply, “Are you sure you have eternal life, that you’ll go to heaven when you die?” They’d say, “Ah, I don’t know.” “Well, let’s talk about that. I’m glad you brought this up.” So I could share the gospel just by walking. It was an entry into all kinds of conversations.

Knowing we’re studying 1 John, when I came across this cast I thought, “That’s what I want to do in this series. I want to ask this question of every single person: Are you sure? Do you know that you have eternal life?” It’s a really important question. I can’t think of any more important question than that. I want you to know that you have eternal life—because you can be sure. I don’t want you to have any question about having eternal life.

Second prayer: I want you to experience God’s everlasting love.

Then, my second prayer, my second hope and desire, is that you would experience God’s everlasting love. So, “eternal life” and “know”—those are common themes in 1 John. We also see the word “love” almost 50 times in a hundred or so verses. That means that on average, almost every other verse in 1 John talks about love. First John 4:8 and 4:16 highlight this by stating, “*God is love.*”

I want you to experience God as love. Not just to know it or hear it. “God loves you” may be one of the first phrases we hear in the church. It’s one of the most common phrases we use in the church. But what does it mean, not just to hear that or to know it in your head, but to experience that in your heart and feel that in your life. There’s a big difference there. It’s like hearing about—or maybe seeing pictures of—the Grand Canyon and all of its majesty. But then you go there and stand on the precipice of

it. It stretches as far as your eyes can see and you're just in awe, overwhelmed, speechless. You're thinking, "None of the pictures I've seen do it justice."

That's what I want to do in 1 John. I want to take you to the Grand Canyon of God's love in a way that you don't just hear about it but that you feel it. You don't just know that—you're overwhelmed by the love of God. You're speechless and in awe of it. I want you to experience God's everlasting love like that. I want you to see in this letter that you, right where you're sitting, may know you have been created to enjoy God's love for you. Not just to know His love, but to enjoy His love.

Think about someone you enjoy and what you enjoy doing with them. I think about my wife and kids. I just started a new season coaching my kids in sports yesterday. I love my kids, but I have no clue what I'm doing in flag football. We got demolished and I had no idea what to do. Throw the ball better? Run faster? I don't know. "Guys, have fun." I love watching my two boys playing football and my daughter playing soccer. I love coaching my five-year-old in T-ball. I love and enjoy life with them.

This is what I long for you in your relationship with God, that you would enjoy life with Him, that you would have this kind of relationship with Him. Not just a matter of mere religious exercise and duty and monotonous motion, but that you would enjoy a love relationship with God. I fear far too many professing Christians are not walking in enjoyment of the love of God. I'm zealous for you to experience that. And not just you. First John will also make clear that you and I have been created to express God's love for others. God's love for us is intended to be a fountain flowing from us to others in our homes, in our marriages, to our kids, in our workplaces.

I was reading 1 Corinthians 13 this morning and praying, "God, make this kind of love flow from my heart to people I work with, the people I interact with in this city and the world around us, specifically those in urgent spiritual and physical need." Our lives, our families, our church—we are created to be an expression of God's love for others.

So these are my two prayers over the next ten or so weeks, as we walk through the book of 1 John. First, that you would know that you have eternal life, and second, that you would experience and enjoy God's everlasting love.

With that stage set, I want to show you two truths in the first four verses of 1 John. These are verses we're going to memorize together, eventually. They're grammatically complex, which is going to make them harder to memorize. There are easier parts of the Bible to memorize than 1 John 1. But part of the reason they're hard is because the language John uses here is intense. It's like he's repeating himself in different ways. It's flowing out of him in passion and we need to read it that way. He says in verse one, *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes..."* Imagine someone who has seen something amazing and they come to you saying, "You're never going to guess what I saw."

...Which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that which we have seen....

*“That which we have seen.” Do you hear it? He’s repeating himself. “We saw it, we heard it...”
...and we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.*

What does that mean? There are two truths I want you to see.

First truth: Jesus is eternal life.

The first truth John is saying—and the Bible is teaching here—is that Jesus is eternal life. This is the key. If you want to know that you have eternal life, you have to know Jesus. Not just know about Him but know Him.

What’s interesting about these verses is on one hand, it doesn’t seem like John is talking about a person. He doesn’t start by saying, “He Who is from the beginning,” but rather, “That which was from the beginning.” “That which we have heard,” not, “He Whom we have heard.” It’s almost like John is talking about some thing, not someone. He says, “That.” It’s like he’s talking about a concept: eternal life. The Word of Life, not a person.

But then he keeps going. He says, “We’ve seen it with our eyes and we’ve physically touched it with our hands.” So how in the world do you see a concept with your eyes? How do you physically touch a concept with your hands? That’s something you do with an object or a person. When we get to the end of verse two, he says, “We proclaim to you the eternal life.” It sounds like a concept: eternal life. But then he says, “That which was with the Father...”—clearly a reference to a person.

That’s the point of these verses. Follow this. The concept of eternal life cannot be separated from the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is eternal life. Without Jesus, you don’t have eternal life. This is exactly what the Gospel of John teaches us about Jesus. If you remember in John 1:4, when John is introducing that book of the Bible, he says about Jesus, “*In him was life...*” What does Jesus say in John 14:6? “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life...*” In John 17:3, Jesus prayed, “*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*” This is eternal life: that they may know God and that they may know Jesus. If you want to know you have eternal life, you must have Jesus.

Now it is a bold claim to say to seven billion plus people in the world—and countless more throughout history before now—that Jesus is the only hope for anyone and everyone to have eternal life. How is that possible? In a world of religions and ideas and thoughts, Jesus says He’s the only way to eternal life. How is that possible? Well, John tells us this is true because Jesus is the revelation of God. That’s the language in 1 John 1:2: “*The life was made manifest...*” It was revealed by God, the Author of all life from the beginning.

Notice how this echoes Genesis 1:1: “*In the beginning, God...*” Jesus is the revelation of the God Who was in the beginning. The Bible is saying here, “See Who Jesus is. He’s the One Who was with the Father from the beginning, before anything else ever was.” This is key because there were people who were assumed to be Christians but who were denying that Jesus is God. John is warning the church not to believe that heresy, that false teaching.

That teaching wasn’t just in the first century. That continued in subsequent centuries. There was a leader in the church named Arius in the third century who was a very prominent proponent of this position. He was trying to persuade people in the church that Jesus was created by God the Father, therefore Jesus was not equal with God. He was persuasive and many people believed him.

Then God raised up a man named Athanasius, who was 40 years younger than Arius, to refute that teaching. Athanasius was threatened multiple times. He stared down murderous intruders who would storm into the church where he was pastoring. He stood before emperors who had the power to cut off his head. Those emperors ended up sending him into exile five different times. Do you know how you get sent into exile five different times? You keep coming back. You keep fighting for truth. Athanasius knew this truth was the key to eternal life. Jesus is the revelation of God. He is God in human flesh. See Who Jesus is and what He has done. He has come to us. That’s the point here in 1 John 1. God has come to us. We’ve seen Him. We’ve heard Him. We’ve touched Him with our hands. This is the breathtaking reality of the Bible. Feel this.

I remember sitting across the table at camp from a struggling teenager who was walking through all kinds of challenges in her life and family. She didn’t believe in God, but when I asked her, “What would it take for you to believe in Him?” she said, “If God would just come down and show Himself to me, then I would believe.” This is exactly what God has done. I said to her, “I have good news for you. God has come to us.” The life, the eternal life, the Author of life before the world ever began—He has come. His name is Jesus, and this changes everything.”

This changes everything, because the implications of this truth have ramifications for every single life in this room. Not just for your life now, but ramifications for your life forever. And not just for your life in general, but for every single detail of your life, every single decision in your life. Please listen closely to what I’m about to say.

There were many people in the first century, even professing Christians, who had a small, distorted, deceived view of Jesus, and as a result, they had a small, distorted, deceived view of what it meant to follow Him. Today, in the 21st century, there are many people, even professing Christians, who have a small, distorted, deceived view of Jesus. As a result, they have a small, distorted, deceived view of what it means to follow Him. There are many people in the world today who are content to see Jesus as a good religious Teacher who did good things. But they're not about to follow Him as God, as the only Lord over their lives, their family, their money and their future.

My fear is there are many people in the church who are exactly the same, who are content to come to church and keep Jesus at arm's distance, glad to give Him a tip of our hats, but unwilling to follow Him as Lord over every detail of their lives, family, money and future.

John Piper wrote about the Incarnation—the doctrine and teaching and truth that Jesus is God in the flesh. He said this well:

Many are willing to believe in Christ if He remains a merely spiritual reality. But when we preach that Christ has become a particular man in a particular place, issuing particular commands and dying on a particular cross, exposing the particular sins of our particular lives, then that preaching ceases to be acceptable for many. I don't think it's so much the mystery of a divine and human nature in one person that causes most people to stumble over the doctrine of the Incarnation.

The stumbling block is that if this doctrine is true, every single person in the world must obey this one particular Jewish man. Everything He says is law. Everything He did is perfect. And the particularity of His work and word flow out in history in the form of a particular inspired Book that claims a universal authority over every other book that has ever been written. This is the stumbling block—when God becomes a man, He strips away every pretense of man to be God. We can no longer do our own thing. We must do what this one Jewish man wants us to do. We can no longer pose as self-sufficient, because this one Jewish man says we are all sick with sin and must come to Him for healing.

We can no longer depend on our wisdom to find life, because this one Jewish man, who lived for 30 obscure years in a little country in the Middle East, says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." When God becomes a man, man ceases to be the measure of all things, and this Man becomes the measure of all things. This is simply intolerable to the rebellious heart of men and women. The Incarnation is a violation of the bill of human rights written by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It's totalitarian; It's authoritarian, imperialism, despotism, usurpation, absolutism. Who does He think He is? He is God.

Jesus is the Lord over all the universe and He's Lord over you. Eternal life hinges for you on bowing the knee to His Lordship in your life. Jesus is eternal life. Do you want eternal life? You must make Jesus your life. Not part of your life, not just your Sundays, but your entire life. That's the first truth.

Second truth: Jesus offers everlasting love.

The second truth flows from the first and goes with the prayers, remember? I'm praying that you'll know you have eternal life and that Jesus is eternal life. I'm praying that you will enjoy God's everlasting love and Jesus, the One Who gives it to you. I mentioned that the word "love" is all over 1 John. But you'll notice that it's not found in the verses we just read. In fact, it's not anywhere in chapter one. You don't see love mentioned at all.

That doesn't mean the love of God is not here. It's all over what we just talked about. Think about it.

How do you know someone loves you? It shows, right? They reveal, manifest, make known their love for you by their actions. Someone might frequently say they love you, but if their actions show the exact opposite, then you might begin to wonder if it's true. In this sense, in order for love to be love, it must be made known.

That phrase, "*made known*," is used over and over again in this passage. Eternal life was made manifest. We've seen it. We've heard it. We've touched it. Listen to verse three: "*That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*"

Did you hear that? That word "fellowship" is repeated four times here in chapter one, twice in what we just read and then once in verse six and once in verse seven. We've talked about this word before—*koinonia*. It's a Greek word that means a close bond, an intimate relationship. It's used to describe the marriage relationship. John just said, "We have a bond, an intimate relationship, with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ like that." Talk about love. Jesus has made the way for everlasting fellowship with God for you and me.

What? We're sinners, each one of us in this room. We all deserve separation from God forever—everlasting judgment. We warrant: total separation from God and His love forever. But the beauty of this passage is that God has not left us alone over here, separated from Him. He has come to us in Jesus. We've seen Him. We've heard Him. We've touched Him—all the way to the point where we crucified Him. That's how we touched Him. We, as rebellious sinners against God, took God in the flesh and nailed Him to a cross in the most cruel form of death we could conceive in our minds.

Yet Jesus endured that cross. Do you know why? Because He loves you. First John 3:16: "*By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us...*" Jesus willingly, lovingly died for sin He did not commit. He endured the judgment of sin—death—that we deserved. He did this so that when we repent, when we turn from our sin and rebellion against God and His Lordship, we believe and put our faith in Jesus as our Lord and our life, then the way is now made for us to have fellowship and intimacy with God, like a marriage relationship closeness with God.

Heather and I and the kids spent some days away recently. Heather and I would wake up in the morning before the kids got up, and separately we would go outside to watch the sunrise and to spend time with God. That first morning, I was sitting there looking at the sun as it rose over the horizon. The beams started to radiate in all kinds of ways across the vastness of creation. It just hit me in a fresh way: I know this God. I know Him! I'm talking to Him right now. "Nice move. That was awesome. Do it again tomorrow." And God was talking to me. Isn't that amazing? I just sat there and realized, "I have communion and fellowship with God." I fell on my face because I was so overwhelmed to realize that I have fellowship with God.

The good news I have for you is that you can have it too. Every one of you, no matter who you are, no matter what you've done. You can have fellowship with God. I'm zealous for you not to miss this. In the busyness of this life, in all the details of your day, the pressures around you and the challenges you're walking through, I just want you to know Jesus has made the way for you to experience intimacy and joy in fellowship and union with God. Don't miss that. Don't walk through life missing that.

By all means, don't walk through life missing that, yet calling it Christianity. That's not Christianity. For those of you who are here and you're not Christians, please hear this. If you're exploring Christianity, please hear the good news. Jesus offers you everlasting love. He has come. He's died on a cross to cover over your sin. He's made a way for you to have fellowship with God. You can have that kind of fellowship with God today. There's no list of things you've got to go do. If you turn and say, "I want You to forgive me of my sin. I want to be reconciled to You," He answers that prayer. So put your trust in Him, then you're reconciled to God.

I say that even to those of you who might call yourselves Christians, but if you're honest, you don't know this kind of fellowship with God. You don't know intimacy with God or closeness to God. I want to plead with you today, that as we walk through this book together over the next ten weeks, do not settle for anything less than this.

I was praying with someone out in the lobby earlier and people came by saying, "I want that kind of intimacy with God." So yes, just begin crying out today for that kind of intimacy with Him. God wants to answer that prayer. He wants you to know and enjoy His everlasting love. It's not something He's trying to hide from you. He's ready to pour it out on you if you'll ask for it.

It's not just fellowship with God for us, but it gets even better. Jesus has also made the way for everlasting fellowship with others. That's where the whole deal starts here in 1 John 1:3: "*That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us.*" He's talking about fellowship in the church. Not with those who are doing these false teachings and undercutting the gospel. Don't fellowship with them. That's not true fellowship. True fellowship happens in Christ,

because when we're reconciled to God, then the way is paved for us to be reconciled in relationship with one another, with those who believe Jesus is God, the Lord of life.

Think about it. You have everlasting fellowship with God. I have everlasting fellowship with God. That means we have everlasting fellowship with one another before God. We experience a fellowship in the church that is designed to be totally different from every other type of fellowship in the world.

One of the things we're going to talk about in the coming months is being more intentional as a church about adoption and foster care. Just yesterday, Heather and the kids and I were with one of the adoption ministries we are partnering with—Lifeline Children's Services' (Un)adopted. I was running a 5K, lugging a five-year-old on my back. I had a lot of time to think and was thinking about what an amazing reality it is to be adopted into the family of God.

Adoption is something we're going to see all over 1 John. He calls the Christians who first read this letter children—children of God because that's what they are. I was thinking, "I'm a son. You're a son of God. You're a daughter of God. That means I'm your brother." I said that in the first gathering and somebody immediately said, "Yikes." I get it. That's how families work. I just looked back at him and said, "I'm going to be your brother forever—ha!" We're brothers and sisters. God has designed this to be a family relationship that will last forever. It will be a lot better when there's no more sin between us—a lot better.

But you put all this together, then you realize why John says what he says in verse four. Because Jesus has made the way—not just for everlasting fellowship with God and others—He's made the way for everlasting joy. Verse four: "*We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.*" I love that. John says, "It's so good to be in fellowship with God—but my joy is not complete. My joy is made more complete by writing these things to you so that you experience eternal life and everlasting love in Jesus."

Isn't that true? When you have an opportunity to share eternal life in Jesus with somebody else and they put their faith in Jesus—they receive eternal life and have their eyes opened to everlasting love—you know what that does inside you? Joy. Amazing joy.

I was talking with somebody earlier this morning—a member here, but I won't mention his name since I didn't ask him for permission. He said, "I was in a conversation with a coworker recently who just got a really bad diagnosis. They're in a hospital bed. So I just went for it. I said, 'Since we don't have time to talk about this, just know the only way to eternal life is Jesus.'" Then he went to the gospel. And his coworker, there in that hospital bed, said, "I want to trust in Jesus. I want eternal life." He said to me, "David, I'm guessing you've experienced this before, but I've never experienced this. That was awesome."

Talk about joy—seeing somebody else come to life forever! Don't you want that kind of joy? Think about people—not just people in general but think about someone in your sphere of influence who doesn't know eternal life and everlasting love in Jesus right now. Someone in your family, a friend you'll see this week. A coworker. Somebody at school. Somebody you'll see this week, in your sphere of influence, who doesn't know eternal life and love in Jesus.

Let me encourage you today to pray for them: "God, open their eyes to see Your life and love that's found in Jesus." And then pray for boldness for you to share that life with them. Just know, if by God's grace that person comes to know eternal life and love in Jesus, you'll experience glorious joy. That's what we want, isn't it? Isn't that what we want in our families? Isn't that what we want in our friendships? Isn't that what we want across the city? Don't we want more and more and more people to know eternal life and everlasting love in Jesus?

God, please bless this church for the spread of that life and love in Washington, DC and beyond. We want this life and love to be known among all the peoples of the earth.

Put it all together. I pray that you will know you have eternal life, that you will experience God's everlasting love in your life. All of these things are found in Jesus. And then I pray that the life and love of Jesus will just flow through you and me and us together in a way that spreads for the joy of more and more and more people across Washington, DC, and around the world for His glory. May it be so.

In fact, let's pray for that now. Would you bow your heads with me? You've got a name or a face in your mind. Let's just pray very practically. Just picture them and pray right now for that person, that they would come to know eternal life in Jesus? Pray that God would open their eyes, that God would do what only He can do, that He would supernaturally open their eyes. Just ask God to save them from their sin and bring them to Himself.

Would you pray right now for yourself, that you would have boldness and courage and compassion to share Jesus with this person this week? Just pray for an opportunity. Pray for the courage to step through that door, to take that opportunity. Pray that God would help you do that.

Then even as we pray for others in our sphere of influence, I know that God has brought people here today who don't know eternal life and love in Jesus. If that's you, I just want to invite you right now to cry out to God in your heart. Just pray, "God, I need You to forgive me of my sin, my separation from you. Lord, bring me into fellowship with You. Jesus, You died on the cross for my sin. I trust in You as Lord of my life." If you pray that, you can be reconciled to God right now.

And for all of us to pray together, "Jesus, we want to know and enjoy and experience the depth of eternal life and everlasting love in You. Lord, we don't want a half-hearted experience of life and love. We want the whole thing. So Jesus, we're coming to You right now, based on Your Word, saying, "You're the key to it all. You are eternal life. You offer everlasting love. So we praise You for coming to us. We

praise You for revealing the love of the Father to us. God, we ask that You would help us to grow in our experience of this life and love.”

God, I pray that over these weeks especially, You would bring many people to know that they have eternal life. We pray that You would bring many people to enjoy and experience in greater ways than ever before Your everlasting love. May it be so, we pray, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

All Scriptures are quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By David Platt. © David Platt. Website: Radical.net