



Letters of Love

**#16 The Gospel According to 1 John
Courage Church, Detroit, MI**

July 22, 2018

scriptures: 1 John 5:13-21, John 20:30-31, John 21:25, Proverbs 14:12, Hebrews 12:15-17, Deuteronomy 29:18-20, Ephesians 4:17-20, Hebrews

10:26-29, Matthew 10:16.

Next week, I am so excited that we will have Pastor J.P. Dorsey with us speaking. I talked to J.P. some this week about what he is going to do, and basically I am going to close out 1 John today by reading the remaining scriptures that we have yet to read, and then next week when he is here, he is going to give us some overview/concluding thoughts on the entire Epistle, and wrap that up for us.

Please bring your friends next week. J.P. is an INCREDIBLE TEACHER... we are going to serving a hot meal after service (I think tamales?) and we are going to be giving away boxes of groceries, and if the weather is nice I think we will even bring out the bounce house.

So that is next week. Today, I am giving my final teaching on the 1 letter of John.

I am calling this message "The Gospel According the 1 John."

We know that the Apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, and really, this entire letter is an echo of the Gospel... but there are a couple of specific things that John gives us that are absolutely crucial in this letter... and it is clear that he had a different intention with the writing of this letter, than he had when he wrote his Gospel, though they are very similar.

So lets look at the final words of 1 John, by opening our Bibles together to 1 John 5:13-21-

"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. And this is the confidence that we

have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and **God will give him life**—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

-

What we just read was John's closing remarks that he made to his church.

and they are *intense*.

John is pretty good closing remarks. Toward the end of his Gospel, John 20:30-31 says -

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

That was sort of the beginning of the close of the Gospel of John...

His ultimate goal is that WE MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST. In fact, here in John 20, he said that Jesus did MANY OTHER THINGS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE DISCIPLES... meaning... John witnessed Jesus do a whole lot of things that John didn't write down... but those things were not written.. in fact, John even goes so far as to say one chapter later: that

IF WE DID WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING THAT JESUS HAD DONE, THE WORLD WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO CONTAIN THE BOOKS!"

I hear that and I am just like... wow... I would love to do an entire message on this passage... I can't today, I need to stay in 1 John... but I want you to understand this about the LAST thing that John says in his entire gospel (John 21:25)... how it relates to THIS PASSAGE in Johns Gospel (John 20:30-31) and then we will get back into how John concludes his letter (1 John 5:13-21).

John ends his incredible Gospel by saying that Jesus did SO MANY amazing things, that if every one of those things would have been recorded, the world itself would not be able to contain the books.

I am not in the business of just making up things that Jesus may or may not have done... thats not me at all... but we have got to read the Bible understanding that, as long and detailed as this book is, this doesn't even scratch the surface of everything that Jesus accomplished... the world isn't big enough to contain what Jesus has already done.

So whenever you see Jesus working in an amazing way in someone's life... and its good, and they are being built up, and better for it... don't go questioning if it is God saying "well Jesus never did THAT specific thing in the Bible..." the fact is, Jesus did more than you and I could ever even imagine, and a lot of it is NOT recorded. Now, that does not mean that we just make things up either... but the fact is, that Jesus himself IS BIGGER than the Bible can contain. That IS HOW JOHN ENDS HIS GOSPEL.

Jesus is bigger than even the Bible can contain.

But look at what John says here... he says "lots of things were not written down..."

but what is written down IS ALL THAT YOU NEED to find Salvation in Jesus Christ.

John says that He and the other writers focused specifically on the accounts that would show us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and by

believing in Him, you will have LIFE in His name. Everything else is secondary to this... that in Jesus, and Jesus alone, is life found... and its found here and now, and it will last forever.

And the only difference between this, and the closing remarks he makes in his letter that we have been studying... is the Gospel of John was written TO SHOW PEOPLE THAT:

ONLY IN JESUS IS LIFE.

But in the letter to the church... that was written to people who already should know that... So he writes to REMIND THEM of what the Gospel means for their lives... and how important it is that they have CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL.

so at the end of his letter, in his closing remarks he begins by saying the same thing... “there are a lot of important things that I have packed into this letter... things that will help you navigate our broken world in a way in which you can actually make a difference in it... not only surviving... but helping change it...”

John tells us a lot... but He ends by saying “the reason I am writing is that you WHO believe in the name of Jesus Christ MAY KNOW, without a shadow of a doubt, that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13)

I love the way that J.D. Greear puts it, he says “Real love only grows in the soil of security. When you make someone behave by threatening them you might coerce their behavior but you’ll never captivate their heart.”

Jesus wants to captivate our hearts... He doesn’t want to scare us into serving Him... that is why the Gospel is that Jesus won us with His love... by laying down his life for us. And it is absolutely CRUCIAL TO THE APOSTLE JOHN, that Christians understand that IF THEY ACCEPT JESUS... if they accept the cross of Jesus Christ as the saving work that is necessary for them to have life... THEN THEY WILL HAVE LIFE.

You need not live every day questioning.

But its actually rather odd, the way John begins his close with this concept of ASSURANCE... and then he gets into how we should and shouldn't pray for each other and for others... and he actually talks about something called "sin leading to death."

He says "some sin does NOT lead to death... and we should pray for one another if we are doing that... if we are making mistakes, if we are walking a path that could lead to destruction... we need to be interceding AND, quite frankly, INTERVENING in the lives of people we are in community with, when they are doing that.

The entire letter John keeps telling us THAT WE WILL SIN... but that when we sin, we always must remember that we have an advocate... someone who pleads our cause... someone who stands by our side...

Here he says "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and **God will give him life**"

but then suddenly John says something scary.

He says "there is also sin that DOES lead to death." and if someone does that... John says "**I do not say that one should pray *for that***. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death."

So the big question then becomes:

What is this "sin leading to death?"

what does this mean? and is John telling us to NOT pray for people who are doing it? and if so, why?

There is A LOT of debate about this. Its actually one of the most debated passages in the Bible. One thing that I often think is funny, but in this case found valuable... is most commentaries will list every single possibility that has ever been presented about a passage, and THEN say they are all wrong, before eventually giving us what the author considers to be the RIGHT answer.

I will share a couple of those with you as I am giving my view, because I think its important to show what it is NOT, because its NOT what most of us usually think of.

and will say that I share my thoughts on this in order to help you in your life and in our community today... Not because I believe that I know everything or am right about everything. If there are other ways to read this... I want to learn them.

First of all, There are people who think that it may just be talking about "THE REALLY BAD SINS..."

like... oh, you did that? you committed what?

But earlier in this same letter, John tells us that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

So whatever John is talking about here HAS TO BE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THAT WHICH WE CAN CONFESS... because anything that we can confess of... anything that we can REPENT OF... He is faithful to forgive us!

Which is why I believe that this view, the idea that John is talking about "the really bad sins" is one that we can safely rule out.

Because ultimately, for most people, "the really bad sins" end up just being the sins that other people are committing, but we are not... and there really is no gage on that, so obviously you see how there are all sorts of problems with that reading of it.

-

Some people believe that this phrase is in reference to the Old Testament and the way that there are INTENTIONAL sins and UNINTENTIONAL sins... and the different punishments for EACH.

now, a lot of people are quick to rule that one out, but when I studied it and really thought on it, I actually do see a connection.

I DON'T think that the connection is enough to stand on its own, or to say "that John is directly referring to that Old Testament comparison"

but I do think it can contribute some to helping us understand what John is getting at. But in the Old Testament, the punishment was much more severe when the sin was INTENTIONAL.

others talk about blaspheme... which again... when understanding blaspheme, there definitely could be a tie in here...

but lets look at the Greek. "sin that leads to death" is the Greek phrase: *hamartia pros thanaton* (ha-mar-tee-a, praus, thone-eh-toss)

and what it means is "sin going toward death" or "sin that ends in death."

It is a DESTRUCTIVE PATH... NOT THE DESTRUCTIVE RESULT OF ONE PARTICULAR SIN.

This much is pretty CLEAR. and what I mean by that is this... this is not: "I did something wrong, and because of it I got sick..."

This is NOT: "I have to suffer in THIS WAY or in THAT WAY BECAUSE of the earthly RESULT of the sin that I committed earlier in my life..." Now, of course we know that THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR ACTIONS...and there are scriptures about things like that... I do NOT believe that this is one of them.

Lets think this through IN CONTEXT OF THIS ENTIRE LETTER...

in context of everything that John has been teaching us, about antichrists... about Jesus coming in the flesh... about good Spirits and evil spirits. About people coming into the church, then teaching things that were so off, that the entire church WAS AT RISK, and became MORE HEALTHY when they got rid of all of the people who were teaching these things that ultimately sought the place of Christ.

To me, trying to think logically... there is only one possible conclusion that makes sense, and ultimately it is describing the path that a person goes down which ends by denying that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.

Which was the big issue John was writing about. This is the issue. This is the result. But the PATH is what John is referring to.

One: it is true that there was a law about intentional sins and unintentional sins... and for me, the more I thought about the idea of INTENTIONAL SINS... I started thinking less about "decisions" and more about INTENTION.

because when most of us think of UNINTENTIONAL... we probably think of the word: accident.

People find themselves in bad situations all of the time... and they make bad decisions... all of the time... and quite frankly... those decisions RARELY can be categorized as ACCIDENTS... though it is what we often call it when we screw up.

To call it an accident would be saying "I legitimately did not mean to do the thing that I did" - an accident indicates that you were going about your day as if everything were fine and all of the sudden something happened and you could not prevent from doing what you did.

That does happen, but not often.

Most of the time, the sins we commit that we did not necessary plan out or intend to have happen would be filed under a category more like "mistakes" - things that we do, and then we feel bad about them because we know that they are wrong.

To call something an "accident" says that you are not responsible for it happening.

In all reality, in categorizing our sinful behavior, our mistakes could fill entire rooms of filing cabinets... and this is the truth whether you own up to them

or not... whether you are convicted by them, or not... we all have A LOT of moments in our lives where we DID NOT MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION.

But watch this... and this is why I am lead to believe what I do about what John is saying here...

John ends that little section about “sins leading to death” by saying:

“We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning”

see... if you sin, you feel guilty. You feel guilty, because God lives inside of you, and because God is living inside of you, you know right from wrong, even in the moments where you choose wrong. That is why we don't blame shift... we take ownership of the things we have done wrong.

But the more you pattern your life after doing WRONG... the less you feel that it is wrong. Our hearts and our minds... they learn things... in the same way that you can teach a child that $2+2=4$... and at first it may be difficult for them to understand it... after they have done it enough, it becomes second nature. For most of us, if I were to say: what is $3+4$... the answer would pretty quickly be 7. $1+2$... the answer would quickly be 3.

If I were to ask you: what does John 3:16 say? most of you would likely be able to answer pretty quickly “for God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son...”

But if I were to ask you: what does John 20, verse 30 say? even though we read it just a few minutes ago, you likely won't be able to quote it.

Why? it is not because John 20:30 is NOT important... but you just haven't heard it as much. You haven't read it as many times...

I can't quote it. It is the verse about how Jesus did many other signs that are not written... but what is written was written so that you would believe in Jesus.

Its an important verse, but I don't have it memorized.

Most people know John 3:16 so well, that they can pick up a Bible, and read John 3 forgetting that it is in there, and when they get to it, be like “oh yeah! I know that verse!”

Because it is always before us.

But flip that now... and think about sin. The more you are around it, the more natural it becomes.

and IF you get comfortable just DECIDING that sin is the way that you want to live... before long: your heart, and your mind... they will get so used to you doing it, that they will stop convicting you anymore.

it is like Proverbs 14:12... “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” - we can convince ourselves that what we are doing is okay... that is very easy to do... but when we do it, we are placing ourselves on an incredibly destructive path... that can't lead anywhere good.

And from the outside we look on and we see someone who is sinning... and we think that the problem is THE SIN (which is bad)... but the bigger problem is that the person's HEART has convinced itself that IT IS NOT SIN. That it's way is right.

Hebrews (12:15-16) says something very interesting. It says “see to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God;” - and I have never seen this the way that I saw it this week when reading it.

what it goes on to say blew me away, and I will get there in a second... but just this one sentence is so crucial. SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE FAILS TO OBTAIN THE GRACE OF GOD.

How do you fail to obtain it? You fail to realize that you need it.

The grace of God is for those who know that they need it.

I've taken you back to Matthew 5:3 so many times this series, like a broken record: Blessed are the poor in Spirit... for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when you realize that if it were not for grace, you would not stand a chance.

and the reason that I believe that the writer of Hebrews can say something like "make sure that you don't fail to obtain the grace of God" - is because THE GRACE OF GOD IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU... ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TAKE IT.

it is kind of like this video... you probably remember seeing this several years ago (Oprah)

Its like if you are in the audience on Oprah and its the day that they surprise everyone and say "EVERYONE IN THE AUDIENCE TODAY GETS A FREE CAR!"

ITS THE BEST NEWS EVER!!!

its available to EVERYONE!!! but then, it would like someone coming out on the stage after the event and before dismissing everyone reminds them "hey, don't forget to pick up your new car"

you have the keys already... its parked outside... just make sure you don't leave it in our parking lot because we tow cars that get left overnight.

- EVERYBODY GETS IT... it would be absolutely insane to not claim it.

That is what the writer is saying... don't live your life like you don't need it... you were just given the greatest gift you could ever imagine... ACCEPT IT... TAKE IT AS YOUR OWN. JUMP FOR JOY AND HUG YOUR MOTHER BECAUSE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE JUST CHANGED.

okay... now follow this, because its huge...

"see to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God;"

THEN it says “that no root of bitterness springs up in you which will cause trouble and defile you.”

Which is significant and I will explain it in a minute..

but Then, and I NEVER NOTICED THIS BEFORE... I never put these two together before... but then it goes on to connect that thought to the story of Esau, who we know sold his birthright for a bowl of red stew...

Its an odd story... Esau comes home one day hungry, and his brother Jacob had just made some delicious stew... and when Esau asks for some of the stew JACOB MAKES HIM TRADE HIS BIRTH RIGHT, FOR THE BOWL OF STEW. And Esau is so hungry he can't think straight, and he does it.

He later realized what had taken place, and what Jacob had done to him... and from there, Esau had a root of bitterness that defiled him so badly... It says that he sought the blessing of his Father and didn't get that either... Jacob stole that from him too by tricking their Father into giving it to Jacob... so for Esau, who was the first born and was supposed to get everything but in the end got nothing, life was just disappointment after disappointment... frustration with his brother, who over and over TOOK what rightfully belonged to Esau... but then this is what Hebrews says about Esau:

He was so angry and so hurt, that his heart become SO HARD that it was impossible for him to repent.

He got SO USED TO BE BEING SO ANGRY and so full of hate, that nothing else was even possible.

and this happens with any sin that we grow custom to committing. It is not just anger. Sin is a deadly trap.

in fact... I hope you actually opened the Bible there for yourself... because we are used to hearing “root of bitterness” as it relates to anger... but wedged there right BEFORE what we read about Esau, the writer talks

about other sins that lead to it... he gives two examples... sexual immorality, and unholiness.

It is not just anger... ITS SIN. It is the stuff that we give ourselves over to.

But watch this... the book of Hebrews was written to SHOW THE HEBREW PEOPLE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH THAT THEY HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED FOR AND WERE WAITING FOR... okay? and what it constantly does is it shows people IN language that THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH... how Jesus is everything...

and the concept of a root of bitterness IS talked about in the Torah... and it explains CLEARLY what it is... and this really put a seal on it for me, as to exactly what the sin is that leads to death.

Turn to Deuteronomy 29:18-20.

“Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, **though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.**’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.”

This is what this is saying... It is possible for a person to become so numb... so used to sin... anger... sexual immorality... greed... violence... gossip... INDIFFERENCE... injustice... whatever it is... that even though sin has such a great cost... they THEY KNOW WHAT IT COST... and yet they treat it like the cost doesn't exist... by making INTENTIONAL, DELIBERATE, THOUGHT OUT LIFE DECISIONS that are wrong...

and its not just that they are making decisions that are wrong... but they have, through a process of willful repetition: actually convinced themselves IN THEIR HEART THAT THEY ARE RIGHT....

THAT THEY ARE NOT WRONG.

“I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, and I think I am okay... I think that its fine that I do that.”

in their stubborn hearts they have convinced themselves that it does not cost a thing... and look at what verse 20 says about those people:

“The Lord will **not** be willing to forgive him”

-

When John says to pray for people who sin, but then says: “there is sin that leads to death and I do not say to pray for that... He is not telling us to stop praying for people who have strayed in such a way that you or I deem them “too far gone” - that is simply not our call to make...

but what John is saying is that He knows that there are people who have hardened their hearts SO MUCH, that, just like Esau, its impossible to truly repent because the whole time they are still thinking about themselves... Esau sought repentance, Hebrews said HE SOUGHT IT WITH TEARS... he sought the favor of God and yet his heart COULD NOT LET GO OF WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO HIM... and it destroyed him.

and John says “when I tell you to pray for sinners... I am telling you that the world is broken... and our job is to be a part of reconciling it... and there are certain things that ONLY GOD CAN RECONCILE and so we pray...

he is not telling us NOT to pray for someone... he is just telling us THAT when he says to pray... ANYTHING THAT WE PRAY IN ACCORDANCE TO THE WILL OF GOD WILL BE ANSWERED (1 John 5:15)... But as you can see here... if it is someone who is that far gone that they can't even truly bring themselves to repent... God is NOT willing to forgive them.

So we can still ask... John is just letting us know... the only times God can't respond, even to our prayers... is this.

When people have hardened their hearts so much, and lost themselves IN THEMSELVES so much that they couldn't hear the voice of God if it spoke to them from a loud speaker in their bedroom.

-

In Ephesians 4, Paul talks about the New Self, and in it he talks about how some of the Gentiles have alienated themselves from the life of God, and their hearts have become hard... one of the words Paul uses is “calloused” he says that they are calloused by greed, impurity, sensuality... they got SO USED TO DO THE WRONG THING, that Ephesians says that they gave themselves up to doing the wrong thing.

But Paul says “thats not how you learned Christ!” Thats not what the Gospel is all about! Its not about staying the same...

-

if there is ONE THING IN THE ENTIRE WORLD that I want to make sure that you understand... it is this...

THE GOSPEL IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT THEY NEED IT.

And yet some of us live our entire lives doing everything that we can to convince ourselves that we do not need it...

which is what makes sin so dangerous... the first time you may “fall” into it... before long you are walking into it... and eventually you are jumping into it, like you jump off of a diving board into a pool on a hot day... it can become natural...

the more you feed it (sin), the less you feel it... you just have it. One of the most dangerous paths a person can walk down is the road toward justifying themselves.

We have seen this a lot in our world lately. We have talked about it a lot in this series... things that people used to think were bad, now our world will actually tell us WE ARE EVIL IF WE HOLD TO THAT STANDARD. Morality in many instances is considered IMMORAL AND UNJUST. The cultural

majority is that sin must be accepted and to even call it “sin” is bigotry, intolerance, and even injustice.

Jesus was NOT kidding when he said “I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” (Matthew 10:16)

we are going to need Jesus if we are going to navigate this culture in a way that leads people to him...

because people want to feel like they are okay... and they are NOT CONTENT having to rely on Jesus to make them okay... they want to feel like they are okay, all on their own.

And John tells us exactly why it happens... in 1 John 5:19, its one of the last things John says:

“the whole world lies in the power **of the evil one.**”

and if you spend enough time in the world... learning what they are teaching... and you are barely spending ANY time at church... or ANY TIME reading your Bible, or ANY TIME praying, and fasting, and seeking God’s face... any time with other Christians in healthy communities... any time seeking God’s will for your life... and seeking God’s protection over you as you navigate this sinful world...

then what you run the risk of doing is coming in here... hearing the Gospel... but then going out there... and seeing people WHO SEEM TO BE DOING JUST FINE WITHOUT THE GOSPEL...

and if you don’t have a GRASP ON WHY THIS BOOK MATTERS... and ON WHY WHAT JESUS DID FOR YOU MATTERS... you easily could start to think that maybe you don’t need it.

see, we think that it is just this obvious thing...

but its subtle... its you and its me, slowly drifting away from the things that we know to be true... and because it happens so slowly, we don't even notice it...

but before long, we are looking to Jesus, and we are looking at our lives, and we are thinking: "maybe I don't need that guy" - my life is turning out okay... "I really enjoy doing the things that the Bible tells me not to do..." "why would God want me to suffer by depriving myself of such pleasures?"

"maybe the Gospel isn't what it says it is..."

AND THAT MESSAGE IS EVERYWHERE IN OUR WORLD, because the world lies in the POWER OF THE EVIL ONE.

and if you buy that lie... before long, you will be saying: "Jesus did not come in the flesh" - now... of course you probably won't be saying that with your WORDS... but you will be with your ACTIONS...

if you live your life in such a way that says "SIN DOES NOT MATTER" then what you are saying is that Jesus did NOT need to be torn apart for you.

That is why in another place in Hebrews, Hebrews 10:26, what it says is that if we go on sinning DELIBERATELY... we make a conscience decision that THIS IS JUST THE WAY THAT WE WANT TO LIVE.... that this is the best kind of life for us... it says when we do that, the sacrifice for sin NO LONGER REMAINS... because what we are doing, it says, is we are profaning the work of the cross. We are saying it doesn't matter. We are saying it wasn't necessary and has no affect on our lives or our being.

But look at what John reminds us in the end... yes:

the world lies in the power of the evil one... but:

"we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true;"

This is why John has written this letter. That we may know. That we may know that Jesus is stronger... and that He is living IN US... and that He

really did come in the flesh and DIE FOR US... and that He really is WORTHY OF WORSHIP... and that He really is WORTHY OF US GIVING OUR ENTIRE LIVES TO HIM.

That its worth the pain that comes with repenting... that its worth the work that it takes to forgive... that its worth the sacrifice of all of the earthly goods we may give up in order to remain on mission for His Kingdom and His cause... because WE KNOW THE TRUTH. AND WE HAVE THE TRUTH.

AND GOD IS ON OUR SIDE.

and John ends the entire letter by saying:

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

keep yourselves from the things that make you feel like you don't need God. Keep yourselves from filling voids you may be feeling, with things that will ultimately let you down... because those things WILL satisfy you for a season... but they ultimately will leave you empty, like we talked about last week...

BUT THEY WILL MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD FOR A MOMENT, which is what makes them so dangerous.... you do it, and you feel full for a little while. And the more moments you have like that, the less you will think about the things that actually matter. The less you will think about the things that will truly fill you...

and instead you are constantly thinking “how do I feel LIKE THAT again?”

Save yourself from the stress... from the burden of it all, by keeping yourself away from it entirely. Jesus is enough.

Understanding the difference between how John wrote his Gospel, and how John wrote his first letter, is absolutely pivotal for you and I to understand what this letter means for us.

John wrote the Gospel so people who did not know Jesus could be introduced to Jesus.

John wrote his letter to people whom that introduction had already been made, to show them all of the ways that the Gospel changes everything in their lives, and in their community, and in their families.

John wrote his letter to show us that the Gospel is the only thing that will stand the test of time... it is the only thing that has...

and it is the only thing that will.

There are a million counterfeits, but there is only one God.

His name is Jesus. and He came in the flesh. And He died for you. And He is enough.