

## Trinity Sunday: To have fellowship with the Blessed Trinity.

1 John 1:1-4 and 1 John 4:13

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.*

*(1 John 1:1-4)*

*We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. (1 John 4:13)*

### Introduction:

John seems to love to write about the “Beginning” He started his gospel with the same idea: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.* Here he starts out with *“That which was from the beginning we have encountered”*. He thinks of the first verse in his Bible: *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

To some the beginning is covered in foggy mist. What moved the beginning of everything? This is made even more visible by the fact that we live in an age of doubt. Scepticism and speculation characterize our age. We live in a time where it is hard to know what to believe, what is real and what is the truth.

Even in the days in which John wrote this letter, opinions concerning reality thrived. First John was written in a climate of uncertainty. Sceptics, then as now, had many theories about God. John wanted to share what he had experienced personally. He wanted to share what was real. The God who existed since before the beginning of time was real to him. He encountered him in Christ Jesus.

We need to be certain of the beginning and the end. Consider with me the experience of having fellowship with the one, true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that John puts forth in this opening section of his letter. Consider with me the mystery that we may have fellowship with the most blest Trinity!

### 1. The eternal God certainly exists and we may know him.

It is interesting that there is no introduction to this letter. John does not start the epistle with a greeting as was the custom. It seems as if he is more interested in getting right to the point. He does not want to waste any time with introductions. He has something to say and he wants to say it there and then. He has a message about the God who is there.

In the very first verse he speaks of **that which was from the beginning**. He invites us to look back to a beginning. But what beginning?

Something preceded the ultimate beginning! Indeed, Someone was there before the beginning! This is the Person to whom John points. This is the Eternal One. He is the one spoken of in Genesis 1:1 where it says *“In the beginning God...”* John picks up on this theme in his Gospel, where the first words are *“In the beginning was the Word.”* And now he speaks of **that which was from the beginning**. In other words, before anything else was, God was. He is the Eternal One. He is the First Mover of time and creation. He is the Cause of everything created. He is the ultimate reality behind all that exists.

*This is really the message of all Scripture. God is there. God is real. God is! He is the only “I am”. And God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, was there. Yes, Jesus was born many millennia later, but the Word, the communicating God, the second Person of the Trinity, was there, before the beginning of creation.*

## **2. The eternal God has been experienced!**

It is not enough to know that God is there. We must be able to know him and experience his life and Word. But can we? Is He simply the First Mover and Cause? Did He simply begin everything and left us to work out the rest of history? Or is He involved with His creation and in a personal way, involved with me too?

John answers these questions immediately. His answer tells us that God's life has been experienced. God has revealed Himself to us and people have actually personally met God. Listen to what John says:

**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the word of life.**

John is talking about something he and the other apostles had personally heard, seen, looked at, and touched. Yes, he is referring to the fact that they were the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message that John was proclaiming was the message he personally received from Jesus Christ and saw and experienced in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of his Saviour. The **Word of life** is the message of the living Word of God, Jesus Christ. And he had a personal experience of Jesus Christ.

When John says in verse two that **the life appeared**, we are reminded of what he wrote in his Gospel where he said: **"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14)** He goes on to say that **"We have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us."**

God has manifested / revealed / explained / showed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus appeared; they saw Him, touched him, heard him speak and now he can do nothing but proclaim who the God is who was since "before the beginning" and whom John encountered in Christ.

## **3. Those who became believers after the ascension of Jesus, can also, through him, know the eternal God.**

This brings us to the essence of this passage. John goes on to say, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." **1 John 4: 13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.**

God has not merely given this experience to a few. He intends that many experience the reality of the eternal God through fellowship with Jesus who gave us his Spirit for this purpose. Note that this fellowship is found in a relationship. Not in a doctrine well understood and explained. Our faith has been given to us as a means to institute a relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ, who gave us His Spirit.

Experiencing God brings us into a new fellowship, on two levels. We enter into fellowship with God and into a fellowship with other believers. John indicates that those who receive this message would **have fellowship with us, that is, have fellowship with God's people. And he indicates that their fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.** Our Christian faith is all about entering into a relationship with God and with God's people. Through the work of the Holy Spirit.

### **We write this to make our joy complete. (1 John 1:4)**

The challenge for us is to come to this place of true knowledge of God. A place of leaving all theories and philosophies behind, and rely on knowing God only!

When we do, we will experience joy in serving the Lord; a joy that too few Christians truly know. It really is a joyous leaving behind of philosophical arguments about who and what the Holy Trinity, the eternal God, is about and enter into a place where we personally experience the fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit with one another - and share in the joy of that fellowship as we encounter the eternal One. As we do so, we receive a joy that is worth more than anything the world can provide. It is a powerful joy that does not fade. It is a joy that does not depend upon circumstances. It is a joy born out of our relationship with Jesus Christ who gave of his Spirit in

order to make our joy complete as we through the Spirit also encounter Christ, like John and the other disciples did. This is a joy that will last forever.

We need to expect the presence of the living God when we pray, when we worship, when we share bread and wine! We need to recognise that God is real and with us, in us and in fellowship with us through the Spirit, making Jesus as real to us as if we have touched, heard and saw him with the same sense of reality that the first disciples did. **We need to expect to experience the presence of the living God.**

**Appeal:**

We need to commit our lives to knowing God. We must focus on the eternal, triune God and our fellowship with him, if we are going to have any experience of God. It must become our pursuit in life to know the One who was there before the beginning. It is not enough to simply say we were born again. We must live our lives for Jesus. We must be followers of Jesus. We must love Jesus, who will through his Spirit show us / reveal to us: the one and only eternal, triune God! We must commit ourselves to do the things that bring us into an intimate fellowship with Him.

We must remember that the Holy Trinity is not only about having a sound doctrine of who the one true God is, but all about confessing our faith in the blessed Trinity, because we know Jesus, and we therefore know the fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And we know that we have fellowship with Father God, in Christ, through the work of the Spirit.

This is the Word of God.

Amen.

*Forward any comments about this sermon outline to Andries Combrink at [info@cpk.co.za](mailto:info@cpk.co.za) .*