

# What We Have Seen and Heard

1<sup>st</sup> John 1:1-2:2

**Focus:** In Christ, there is life, light, fellowship, truth and joy. In sin, there is death, darkness, solitude, deception and no peace.

**Function:** Demonstrate the difference between life in the light (Christ) versus life in the dark (sin).

## Prayer for Illumination

1<sup>st</sup> John 1:1-2:2

*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.*

*This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:  
God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness,  
we lie and do not live by the truth.*

*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, purifies us from all sin.*

*If we claim to be without sin,  
we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

*If we confess our sins,  
he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

*If we claim we have not sinned,  
we make him out to be a liar  
and his word has no place in our lives.*

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.*

*But if anybody does sin,  
we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense  
--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins,  
and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

## Sermon

**I don't understand why no one will believe me!**

Don't they trust me?

No matter **how hard I try to sell it**; No matter how I **spin it**.

I just can't seem to **convince people that "Battlestar Galactica" is the best television show that has ever been written.**

**I'm serious!**

This show demonstrates the **very best in modern storytelling**.

They **wrestle with real life issues** in very believable ways.

One reviewer said that **this show was the first to television series to take a post-9/11 world seriously**,  
with all the questions about safety and security  
the kinds of fear that comes with an unseen enemy  
about our own sense of identity and human survival.

The **drama is intense**. The episodes **rarely end predictably** or neatly.

Just when you think they won't **push the envelope of the plot** any further, they twist yet again,  
but in immensely creative ways.

The **relationships** between the main characters are not cheesy but gritty, believable and uncomfortably close to real life.  
even the **heroes are flawed**, real people, who struggle with their own baggage.

The **music** for the show is stirring, creatively pulling from just about every genre of music from around the world to create a score that augments the show's intensity perfectly.

The **cinematography and special effects** rival that of any movie.

I've seen the entire series, and often watched many episodes more than once!

*And yet when I try to tell folks they need to watch it, I usually get a polite smile and a nod and that half-hearted, "Oh, yeah...uh... maybe I'll borrow it from you sometime ... "*

There are **certain hurdles/preconceived notions** that you yourself might be experiencing,  
protecting you from giving the show a chance.

First, you might think **back to the show from the late 70's** and remember the cheesy **outfits**, the **cardboard** box-like ships blasting colorful **lasers** and the overly-simplified storyline.

But I would tell you that **the new show is nothing like it!**

Then you might say to yourself,  
"Well, I've **never really been into science fiction**" .

But I would tell you that the new show is not your typical "star trek"-esque Sci-fi; no weird aliens or far-fetched technology more like a true human drama that happens to be set in space!

**But the stigma of the title of the show and the label of "sci-fi" keep most people away.**

But it **doesn't stop me!**

I'm determined to advocate to anyone willing to listen (or unwillingly, as you have just had to endure!)

to convinced folks of this amazing show that I've seen and heard.

Maybe you've experienced something similar trying to sell your favorite TV show, or music album, or book you've just read.

You want to share the joy but it takes some convincing.  
Don't our friends trust us??

***Can we say it is really any different than what our passage is talking about this morning?***

We've seen encountered the living Christ that has moved and changed us;

Brought us joy and enriched our lives in a significant way.

So we want to share that with others!

But naturally we get the lukewarm response (if they're being polite);

The more direct, "Yeah, I'm not really in to that."

**Hurdles; preconceived** notions about what you're talking about that keep people from taking your urging seriously

***It is no different than with Jesus.***

In **Jesus** we have **experienced** something **remarkable** and life-changing.

And **not just some-THING** either, but **the living God!**

**This is more than just an entertaining show:**

We're on an entirely different level of meaning and purpose.

The Easter God, Jesus Christ, risen from the dead

(how much more unexpected can you get!)

Alive in our hearts and in our church.

Like our favorite show, we've seen and heard the real thing.

In the Lord's Supper, we actually touch the story too!

*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.*

***And just like with the show, we want to tell folks about it...***

*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.*

But we don't want to just tell people, we want them to participate too.

*Once I've cajoled a friend into watching the show,  
I love to sit there with them, watching their reactions,  
reveling in the shock and the enjoyment they've found  
(I've yet to have a Battlestar disciple be disappointed).*

*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.***

**John has seen, heard and touched something remarkable**

Unlike anything the world has ever seen.

So definitely, he wants to share that with everyone,

Whatever the response he may get.

Because you cannot experience the joy of knowing Christ until you sit down with him and experience it for yourself.

And then we too find joy having increased and enriched our fellowship.

***Now I would argue that there is life with Battlestar Galactica and there is life without Battlestar Galactica.***

And I would argue that **your television experience is lacking something without it.**

You're missing out on the joy of this show which has no parallel!

(I'm joking here to make a spiritual point).

Because John goes on to talk about **the difference between life with Jesus and life without.**

Quite literally, it is the **difference between night and day.**

**There is life living in the light and living in the dark.**

John lays this out using a series of "if" statements.

**Life living with God in the light is characterized by:**

Well, light!

Honesty

Fellowship with God and with others

Joy

Freedom that comes from confessing

Truth.

When you spell it out like that, **who wouldn't prefer life in God's light?**

It's a no-brainer!

Just as we feel our friends would love our favorite TV show if they would but watch one episode,

If they would but take an honest look at Jesus, how could they say no?

**Life in the dark is characterized by direct opposites:**

Instead of light - darkness

Honesty – deception

Fellowship – isolation

Joy – no joy

Freedom – trapped in sin

Truth – lies

**An physiological example** of this might be seen in those who live **north of the Arctic circle** and have to deal with long periods of darkness during the winter:

Indeed, cases of **depression increase** dramatically during life in the dark.

The **body actually produces more melatonin** (the chemical that makes you sleepy at bedtime) and you feel tired, unmotivated and somber.

**The same thing happens in our spirits:**

The longer we are in the dark, it wears us down, takes the joy out of life, traps us within ourselves.

This is the **very straight-forward dynamic of life, either with God or without.**

The hard part, however, is having the courage to take an honest look at your own life to see in which light you're living.

*For all of us trying to live with Christ in the light, there's a pretty good chance we dance across the line quite a bit.*

Nevertheless, John's truth **demands that we take an honest look at where we live and how.**

It can **often take far more courage** to be honest with **who we see in the mirror** than it can be to confront a friend.

(of course, sometimes we **can get caught in the trap of overanalyzing ourselves** too! but that is **a darkness all its own.**)

**John is refreshingly straight-forward:**

*If we **claim** to have **fellowship** with him yet **walk in the darkness**, we **lie** and do not live by the truth.*

*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, purifies us from all sin.***

*If we **claim** to be **without sin**, we **deceive ourselves** and the **truth is not in us.***

*If we **confess** our sins, **he is faithful** and just and will **forgive us our sins** and **purify us from all unrighteousness.***

*If we **claim** we have **not sinned**, we **make him out to be a liar** and **his word has no place** in our lives.*

*For those who live in the dark, Jesus provides a new level of life that cannot be perceived until you sit down and take him in.*

Until then, however, **no matter how good a sales-pitch**, you cannot know how good life in the light of God really is.

The challenge is that there are **preconceived notions about who Jesus is and what he expects.**

Some people have **seen or heard other Christians** in the news and decided they do not want anything to do with it.

Some people **give a polite nod to Jesus** but don't really give him a chance to change their lives.

But **self-deception is much easier than honesty** and requires less work; less change.

But the change from a life in the dark to life in the light is worth whatever it takes. It's a night and day difference.

**And we know that Jesus is far greater than we know:**

He's not the vindictive or judgmental God some have made him out to be.

But the self-sacrificing Christ, who takes the bullet for us,

So as to free us from sin.

*... **if anybody does sin**, we **have one who speaks to the Father** in our defense --**Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.***

***He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins**, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

*Life in the light is a message we should want to share, more eagerly even than our favorite TV show.*

Like John,

We have seen, heard and touched the greatest story ever told:

The God who is light

Who died to purify us from the sin that we could not cure ourselves

**Lots of people seem to be dealing with death these days:**

Not only the **awful loss of loved ones**  
(as if that weren't bad enough)

But the **death of health**, in a hard diagnosis

The **death of financial security** in this economic clime

The **death of happiness** in the face of sorrow or addiction.

**But we are Easter people, dwelling in the light of God.**

We follow the risen Christ who is light, life, truth and peace.

And we have seen, heard and touched the very real hope of Jesus,

The one who has been God from the very beginning of time.

So friends, let us not hesitate to proclaim what we know  
concerning the Word of life!