

Assured // Message #2 // “Certainty Through Experience” // 1 John 1:1–3; 2:20–27; 5:14–15

Announcement

- Coming out of video: Tie Edward’s story to vision behind why we reach out to HOPUD/ **People are the mission**
- Come this Tuesday night to our local outreach forum.
 - The forum is designed to **help you connect and get started with** one of the Summit's local outreach initiatives
 - These outreach initiatives are **ways for you to build relationships** with people in our city so you can put the Gospel on display
 - We'll have **breakout sessions on each of our 5 focus areas**, plus refugees and anti-human trafficking – get your questions answered
 - **If your small group** isn't serving, get a couple of your group members and come to the forum to find out how you can start!
 - Think of this as a **one-stop shop** for local outreach at the Summit.

Introduction

The book of 1 John is all about assurance. John is concerned in this letter to help you identify the signs that the gospel is true and that your experience with God is genuine.

The Epistle of 1 John was written by the Apostle John—one of the disciples closest to Jesus personally.

- BTW: people who are new to the Bible see “The Epistles of 1, 2, 3 John” and they are like, “What’s with the 3 John’s? Was there a race or something—and this was ‘1 John?’” And **what’s an “epistle”**? Is that like the wife of an Apostle?
- No. Epistle means “letter.” John wrote a Gospel and then some letters to the church, one of which is about the assurance of salvation.

Interestingly: Most of the letters in the New Testament have an intended audience, but not 1 John. John wrote it to everybody because everybody has that question.

I told you last week that I have my own book coming out called *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved* dealing with these same questions, because I know how many people in our church have these questions.

- It actually hasn’t been released yet, but we have advance copies available for you.
- I also want to explain that to you again that I don’t make any money off of books that are sold here; all money goes right back into All-In.
- I don’t write books to make money off of you.

Here is the question: *How do you know that your experience with God is genuine?*

John has about 5 points in 1 John he makes in answer to this question, and makes them over and over in no particular order.

- If the Apostle Paul had written this letter it would very orderly and logical—Point 1, point 2, point 3... But John is all over the map. He makes all 5 points every few verses.

- He's like, "Point 1; point 2; part of point 4; back to point 2; now the first part of point 3; more about point 1." It's just a jumble of points. Which makes 1 John a little challenging to teach.
- So what we'll be doing over the next few weeks is working through the highlights.

Today we're going to talk about gaining certainty about Jesus through an experience with him.

1 John 1:1–3

1 John 1:1 *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—*

John says that the reason he was sure about what he is teaching is that he and the other Apostles saw Jesus. They heard and touched him. They saw his miracles. They felt his resurrected body.

- John is saying, "We didn't believe this because we thought Christianity a superior way to live, or it made the most sense to us; we practiced it because we had seen Jesus rise from the dead."

The Apostles never attempt to draw their authority from the fact that it is a superior explanation of the world. *It may be* a superior explanation of the world, but they draw their authority from the fact that Jesus was God come down from heaven and verified to them through his miraculous works. The proof for them was not in how wise Jesus' teachings struck them, but by his miraculous power.

- **Great example of this:** In John's Gospel he tells the story of a certain Jewish man who had been **blind from his birth**, which to the Jews was a sign of God's judgment, and Jesus healed him. **Well, when the Jewish religious leaders** hear about it later, they confront this man, and they say, "Hey, there's no way this guy could have healed you. He is a sinful man who teaches wrong things." And the formerly blind guy's response is awesome, "*Whether he is a sinner or not I'll have to let you philosophers decide. One thing I know: once I was blind; now I see.*" (John 9:25)

I've told you before that **faith = the unexplainable meeting the undeniable**. There are a lot of things about Christianity that are hard to believe.

- That's not how **a few of you fringe people** feel; that's how anyone who gets into Christianity and takes it seriously will feel.
- **Christian claims will undoubtedly** offend you and leave you with unanswered questions.

The question is whether you are willing to have those opinions and prejudices challenged, or if you hold onto those ideas so strongly that you refuse to even consider the evidence?

- Or here's a way to think about it: Are you willing to **doubt your doubts?**
 - You have **all these reasons** as to why Jesus *could not* be true. His system of morality is offensive. The problem of evil in the world is too great and it doesn't make sense to you what God is up to.
 - But then you encounter the **evidence for Jesus** that challenges those assumptions—because if he's Lord then a lot of these things you find objectionable are true—and you have to decide **whether you let the evidence overrule your objections** or whether you **invalidate the evidence** based on your objections.
- Think of it like this:¹ **Yale physicist Robert Adair** studied the science behind hitting a major league fastball and published it in a book, *The Physics of Baseball* (2002). **Here's one of the things he found:**

¹ I owe this to Andy Stanley.

- A **90mph** fastball travels the **60' 6"** from the pitcher's hand to the catcher's glove in **400 milliseconds**—that's a little less than a half a second.
- He figured out it takes the batter's brain **200 milliseconds** to find the ball in the air, get the image in his brain, and decide whether or not to swing. So $\frac{1}{2}$ **the time** the ball is in the air, the batter is simply **trying to decide** what to do!
- Well, if the batter decides to swing, the brain spends another **100 milliseconds** deciding to **swing the bat high**, low, inside, or outside the strike zone.
- So you're **down 300 milliseconds** before you've ever even swung.
- The **swing itself** takes **150 milliseconds**. During the **first 50**, the batter can stop the swing. Beyond 50 milliseconds the bat is moving at **70% of its final speed** and can't be stopped.
- Adair says a **7 millisecond variation** will cause the hitter to either hit a foul ball or miss the ball altogether.
- So (200 locating the ball; 100 making a decision; 150 swinging the bat)—**450 milliseconds**. But the ball is in the catcher's glove after 400 seconds, so Adair concludes that according to the laws of physics, hitting a 90mph fastball is impossible.
- **How many of you agree** with that conclusion?
- You don't. Why? Is it because you can **prove him wrong** in this or that calculation?
- No, you say, "Well I don't know where he's wrong and I'm not sure about all the physics, but I have seen it happen. I've seen a guy hit a 90mph fastball. In fact, I've seen a guy hit a 95mph fastball... (If 90mph is impossible, what about 95mph?). I can't explain the facts, but I also can't deny what I've seen.
- You are smart enough not to opt for **the unexplainable** over **the undeniable**. The undeniable takes precedence over the unexplainable.
- John says, "This is not a theory we have accepted because we can explain it all; we believe this because Jesus rose from the dead. We saw him. We touched him. Felt the wounds in his body after his resurrection."

BTW, before I move on, **John's statement here also confronts** one of the most commonly held assumptions in our culture about religious truth.

- People treat religion as if it were subjective opinion. I think it was Immanuel Kant, the father of modern philosophy, who said (essentially), "*All religions are subjectively helpful; they are not objectively true.*"
 - Do you know the **difference in subjective/objective truth**?
 - "I'm warm"; vs. "Albany is the capital of NY."
 - Our world wants to put Christianity in the realm of the subjective. Ellen and Oprah want truth to be subjective... "It's good for you; your preference."
- But John said, "There **was nothing subjective about the resurrection of Jesus**. We *actually* touched him. And in light of his resurrection we had to doubt our doubts."
- **Are you willing to doubt your doubts?**

You say, 'Well, John got to see Jesus and touch him... what good does that do for me?' So glad you asked. Look at vs. 3:

He goes on: [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.

Fellowship = Koinonia. John wants us to have the same experiential knowledge with God he had. But how, you say? Obviously, we haven't seen and touched him.

- The answer is in vs. 2. The Jesus that John touched and the **miracles John observed** were a **manifestation of the life of God—a life that you can share in.**

- The miracles Jesus did were signs that pointed to a much greater reality. The miracles were real, and actual, but they pointed beyond themselves to things that were true about God—and these higher realities are things we can experience every bit as much as John did. **Write this down:** *The miracles Jesus did pointed to a much higher reality: life in God, a life you can share in.*
- **For example:**
 - In **John 6** he multiplied bread and fed 5000. But he explained that this was a sign of God’s power to satisfy—he was the bread of life—and that those who come to him, truly, will find a soul satisfaction in him. Knowing him feels like a starving man sitting down to a 7-course meal. Have you felt that? It’s a proof to you that God is real. **St. Augustine:** our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.
 - In **John 4** he tell a story about a woman who discovered that Jesus knew everything about her—all of her dirty, dark secrets, but he loved her anyway. Have you ever had that sense of the love of God pressing in on your soul? Fully known and loved.
 - In **Mark 4** Jesus is out on the sea with his disciples and a terrible storm is raging all around them and they are terrified and they wake him up and say, “Don’t you care that we are going to perish?” And Jesus stands up and says, “Peace be still!” Has that ever happened to you? Either Jesus has actually stilled the storm in your life, or, even better, given you peace in the storm by showing you that it was all under his control?
 - In **Matthew 9** (vs. 20), a woman came up to Jesus. This woman had had a menstrual flow of blood for 12 years, which made her unclean, which meant no one would touch her—she was unlovable. Jesus calls her the tenderest term, “daughter,” and her soul feels with an awareness of the love of God for her. It may not have happened that way for you, but have you heard that in your soul. You are my child!
 - In **Mark 8** (vs. 24), Jesus heals a blind guy in 2 stages. In the first stage, he says, “Well, it’s a little blurry. I see men walking around like they are trees.” Then Jesus touches him again. Why? Were his batteries low the first time? Did he shoot a brick? No, he was giving you a picture of how he clears up your spiritual vision. When he first comes into your life you see some basic spiritual truth, but the longer you walk with him, he explains more and more of the world to you. **Has that happened to you? It’s happening to me.**
- Are you getting the point? Have these things ever happened with you?
 - “*Koinonia*” is an *experiential* word. As you experience these things, you gain greater confirmation that this is all true.
 - *Christianity is very much a “taste and see” religion.*

Now, I want to clarify: **The proof of Christianity does not rest entirely your experience.** Some Christians talk this way... “Oh... Christianity is true, I just feel it; no one can argue with my experience.”

- Sure they can. Lots of people feel like that about their religion.
- Mormons—burning in their belly. Muslims—they all say that.
- So your experiences don’t prove Christianity, but they do validate what the Bible teaches.

Transition: Christianity is an experienced religion. This theme reappears in a different form in **1 John 2**, so let’s go there.

1 John 2:20–27

1 John 2:20 *But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge... [22] Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?*

[26] I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. [27] But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you.

This might be a little confusing, but here's what he's saying:

- As you are in the process of becoming a Christian, **the Holy Spirit of God gives you an innate sense of God** in which the truth about Jesus just makes sense to you.
- It's like he gives you ears to hear the voice of God. The voice has always been speaking, but you suddenly get ears to hear.

It's what John Calvin called a "*sensus divinitatis*": a sense of God. **And it works like your other senses.** When your other senses tell you something, why do you believe them? Because you can logically prove what they are telling you is true? No.

- **It's like you know I'm actually standing here.** *You see me and hear me. You don't require a logical, philosophical argument to conclude that you are actually physically here this morning and you're actually listening to me. Your senses tell you that it is happening and you believe them.*
- Now, here's the thing... if you were pressed to make a water-tight case proving philosophically, that your senses aren't just tricking you, it's hard to do, if not philosophically impossible. Philosophy demonstrated a long time ago that we can't prove the existence of things outside of our own minds—you've seen "**Matrix**," right? *How can you prove you're not plugged up in a pod somewhere having a dream?* Or if I said, "Prove to me what you think is your consciousness is not actually the result of being a character in the complex dream of a demon," you couldn't do it. But very few of you live plagued with the idea that that's really the case. You just know that you exist and I exist because your senses tell you.
- **It's what philosophers call a basic belief. Something you assume based on your senses that doesn't require logical verification. It doesn't mean there is not logical verification for it, just that you don't depend on it.**
 - In part, that is how you come to know God. You have an innate sense; a sense like every other sense; where you are simply aware there is a God and you are hearing his voice! The *sensus divinitatis*.
- Again, that doesn't mean you can't make a logical case for God. (You can, just like you could make a logical case for the existence of your other senses. **But the reason you believe it is not because of the logic** but because of the sense of it in your heart.)
- John records Jesus as saying, "**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**" (**John 10:27**).
 - People say to me, "Why do you believe in God?" And I want to say, "*Well, don't you hear his voice?*" Don't you see the evidence? It's right there." **The weakness is not in the evidence; it's in your heart to see the evidence.**
 - When **God appeared to Paul** it says that the other people on the road with Paul saw the blinding light but couldn't make out the voice speaking to Paul. That's what conversion is like; you gain new ears to hear a voice that has been speaking all along.
- You say, "**But what about people who say they can't sense God?**"
 - The Apostle Paul explains in the book of Romans that one of the results of the fall was that our ability to perceive God got all messed up. God created us with an innate ability to perceive him, but sin darkened and dulled that. So now we need the Spirit **to give us back our eyes**. It's a process called "regeneration." It's the restoration, the regeneration, of an old, lost sense.
 - Jesus: "*Let him who has eyes to see, see and ears to hear, hear.*" The Spirit gives you new eyes; new ears to hear; a new heart.
 - By the way, the restoration of that sense is grace. God doesn't owe it to anyone. People act like they are doing God a favor for believing in him. He's doing you a favor in letting you see him.

So, what John is saying here is that if you are a Christian, there is a first-hand, Spirit-given knowledge of God.

God begins to come alive to you. He speaks to you.

- Please note: I am **not talking here about** God speaking new information into your heart. Do you see in vs. 3, John says that the “word of life is made manifest?” Write this down: **A genuine experience with God (koinonia) is the word of the gospel coming alive in your heart.**
- **– Not “sensing the Spirit within,” but the Spirit magnifying the ‘word of life’ in your heart.**
 - In John’s day there was a movement called “*Gnosticism*” where people felt like they had this inward knowledge of God. Similar to the New Age movement. You know God by finding him within.
 - John is not talking about that. It’s not sensing the Spirit within, it’s the Spirit magnifying the word of life.
 - **Spirit like the Washington monument.**
- And it’s **–Not “new things” the Spirit says to you, but magnification of the old.**
 - If you’re new to church, have you had the experience of talking to a Christian who claims to hear from God? “God told me you are supposed to lend me \$500.”
 - “God told me we should get married.”
 - Woman to us: John Piper appeared to me in a dream.
 - Christians say that goofy stuff all the time.
 - *That’s not what we are talking about.*
 - It’s not new words the Spirit speaks, but a greater awareness of the old words.
- And it’s certainly **– Never things that contradict Scripture.**
 - I’m still blown away by people telling me things God told them that contradict the Bible: (“*God told me to leave my wife.*”) Want to make my job hard and depress me? Say stuff like that. “*Well, I had a peace about it.*” I always say: *Well, Satan’s goal in the Garden of Eden was to give them peace about disobeying God and damning the human race—so what does your peace prove?*

A genuine experience with God (fellowship, koinonia) is the manifestation (or magnification) of the word of life in your heart. You begin to feel the “word of life.”

- The cross becomes larger. Your sin gets more real. God’s grace gets sweeter.
- The **“old” words of life press in** on your heart and they become new to you.
 - Like one of those **magic eye** pictures... **if you’re standing with** someone who can’t see it; you’re **looking at the same thing**, but you’re seeing two entirely different pics! One of you is seeing an image; the other a morass of dots. **How many of you have ever faked it?** “Oh yeah, it’s the Statue of Liberty!” **When the Spirit of God makes the gospel** real to you, it comes alive; it takes on depth.
 - Or the Puritan Thomas Goodwin said it was like a **married couple** walking along, when suddenly the husband sweeps his girl up in his arms and kisses her and tells her he loves her. They were no less married before he did that, but her sense of his love is more real and felt at that moment.
- **This “manifestation” happens first at conversion...:**
 - **God’s grace becomes real.**
 - When **John Wesley** became a Christian, he describe going into a church on Aldersgate Street. He said, “At about a quarter past 9, the pastor was reading from *Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans*, as he described the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. (I saw that Christ) had taken away **my** sins, even **mine**, and saved **me** from the law of sin and death.”²

² “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a [Moravian] society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away **my** sins, even **mine**, and saved **me** from the law of sin and death.”

- For you parents, this is what I am looking for in my kids. I want to see the gospel go 3-D for them; for it to be personal. That shows me the HS is at work in them.
- So, this manifestation happens first at conversion... **but it happens again and again for the rest of your life.**
- **There are times when God's love just presses in on you.**
- **Example: In Ephesians 3 Paul prays** that the Ephesians would **"grasp the height and width and depth of God's love"** for them... **(Eph 3:18)**
 - The word for grasp is **"katalambano."** That's a military word that means literally to "sieve," or "overtake," as in overtake a fortress and knock the walls down.³ He's praying that the knowledge of the love of God would attack their heart and penetrate it.
 - Does that ever happen to you? It just becomes so real you can touch it?
 - **Example:** *An old British professor of philosophy who became a Christian wrote this to a friend: "Every week and sometimes almost every day now a pressure of his great love comes down upon my heart in such measure as to make my whole being groan beneath the almost insupportable plethora of joy. He has unlocked every apartment of my being and filled and flooded them all with the light of his radiant presence. The inner (places in my soul have) been touched and its flintiness has been melted in the presence of love divine, all loves excelling. Jesus has become the one altogether lovely to me."*
 - **Now, one word of caution:** don't try to judge your experience by someone else's—some of you are not as emotional... "Oh, I haven't had that... am I not saved?" Sometimes it's not that dramatic for me; sometimes it has been—but the point is that a true Christian has *koinonia* with God, wherein God makes the words of life and the beauty of God tangible and real.

One last passage...

1 John 5:14–15

1 John 5:14 *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. [15] 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.*

- He says that when you know God, God **answers your prayers**. You can see the evidence of God in your life. **Does this ever happen to you?** Can you look around and see it?
- Of course, we all experience unanswered prayer, or at least prayers that are not answered in the way we would like, and when that happens the Holy Spirit gives you a confidence that God's love is greater than the request.
 - There have been times I've been frustrated or confused but the words to Psalm 23 come alive in my heart, *"The Lord is my shepherd."*

Listen, if these kinds of fellowship/koinonia isn't happening, you have to question whether you are a Christian!

Fellowship is the point of Christianity.

- God did not create you just to memorize doctrines and master spiritual disciplines. He created you to love, to walk with you.
- **Aren't you tired of boring Christianity?** Aren't you tired of tired doctrines and imitating righteous behavior? There is more life in glimpse of the glory of God than in all the glories of the world!
- **Yearn for it; seek it.** It's offered to you. It's what you were created for! To know God.

³ The same word is used in Mark 9:18 to refer to a demon overpowering a man and in Judges 18:22 (LXX) to refer to a military takeover.

Transition: So, this leads me to a very practical question. Where can you find experiences like this? Just sit around and wait on them?

How can I experience moments of 'fellowship' with God?

I. Put yourself in the presence of his Word

John ties the activity of God to the Word. **Fellowship with God (*koinonia*) is the manifestation (or felt sense) of the word of life in your heart.** So if you want God to manifest himself to you—don't get alone with yourself and listen to your heart. That's a pit of poison. You have to put yourself in a place where you are hearing the Word.

- If you're **not yet a believer**... my challenge to you is to put yourself under the preaching of the Word. Do you want to have an experience like John Wesley? Put yourself under the word like he did. Maybe it's just a curiosity at this point. Come back, and just listen. Taste and see!
 - If you're a Christian and you are trying to get a friend of yours to see the truth, get them in the presence of the word!
 - **Martin Luther** said: *"The Bible is like a caged lion; if someone doesn't believe the lion is real, don't stand there and defend the lion verbally; open the cage."*
 - **Bring them here;** do "taste and see."
 - Paul says in Romans: **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."** Only when you put the Word of life in someone's view can faith spring up.
 - **When I served overseas**... the strategy was to get the word of God into their hands. That should be our strategy.
- **If you are a believer, you need to put yourself in the presence of the Word.** God cannot manifest in your heart the Word of Life until you are in the presence of it.
 - A. **Do a 'quiet time.'** Every day you should spend time with God. 30 minutes.
 - B. **Memorize Scripture.** God presses into my mind the Scripture. Why AWANA. People criticize: they learn it for the wrong reasons. I don't care why they learn it. 15 years from now it will harvest.
 - When I became a Christian it was like grace came alive to me and all these things I had learned suddenly MANIFESTED themselves to me.
 - C. **Pray the Scriptures back to God.**
 - I do this as part of my quiet time.
 - I associate verses with people.
 - (Did you notice in **1 John 5:14-15**, "If we ask anything according to his will he hears us..." They key to answered prayer is praying prayers according to the will of God? Where do you know the will of God? The Word of God.)
 - D. **Get in a small group**
 - Small groups at this church are groups small enough where people can actually be the body of Christ to each other. When God wants to speak, he uses his body!
 - Body: analogy.
 - If the hand is off over there, then the brain can't get this hand to it. If you're not connected to the body, God can't work in your life or family!
 - The Holy Spirit appears 59 times in the book of Acts; 36 of those he is speaking to one another.
 - Get in one!
 - E. **Become an expert at applying the Scriptures to deep and broken parts of life.**
 - counseling seminars.

II. Pray for it

What you need is a greater sense of the love of God. Pray, like Paul did for the Ephesians that God would open your eyes to see and feel the weight of his glory.

- Glory = *kabod*
- If you say, "I know Jesus loves me and died for me," but someone's offense against you is so large you can't forgive them; then that thing has *kabod* but Jesus is "light."
- If you're devastated at being single during this chapter in your life, it's because **marriage is heavy** and Jesus is "light." Marriage has the glory Jesus should have.
- If you're devastated by some tragedy and can't have joy, it's because the affliction is heavy and Jesus is light. Paul, who had experienced considerable pain and loss, called all his troubles this "light and momentary affliction" because of the surpassing "weight" of glory.

III. Just obey!

- John points out in this book that: **As you obey God, he abides in you (3:24), and the love of God is perfected in you (2:5).**
- Sometimes you just obey. When you don't feel it, you just obey, and the feelings come later. Feelings of intimacy are often facilitated by long stretches of obedience.

These are what you can do.

Invitation

Fellowship is the point of Christianity. Do you know him? You can start today.

It starts with the gospel—believe it, and God will come into you. And then commit to getting yourself under and around and before and in the Words of Life!

Bullpen:

The point all these passages are making is that Christianity is a real experience with God.

As I've explained before, the evidence is sufficient for all those who have the humility of mind and submission of heart to see it. The question is, "Do you have ears to hear; eyes to see?" The weakness is not the amount of evidence for the truth of Jesus; it's in our willingness to accept the truth.

- In fact, one of the convictions God has given me about writing goes back to something I read Martin Luther said to his students years ago: Never aspire to teach the church at large; teach your church; and if the church at large feels like you have something to say to it, they'll come to you.
- So this book, as every other book I've written, was written to help those of you who, like me, have struggled with the assurance of salvation for years.
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- **Something about the experience of walking in light?**
 - **1 John 1:5-7:** 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.
 - **Proverbs 4:18,** But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. [19] The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.
- uniqueness of the gospel (1 John 2)
- Jesus fulfills all of the fairy tale hopes

You also learn something important here about the nature of biblical faith. We all have what philosophers call "basic beliefs." A set of things we believe because we sense them, not because we can logically prove them. If you think about it hard enough, you can often build a logical case for them, but the logical case is not *why* you believe them.

There's a lot of things people look to for assurance that Jesus says are not legitimate. We went over a few of them last week:

- Praying a prayer
- Believing in God
- Being involved in ministry
- Feeling guilty about their sin.

John says, "We saw him. We touched him after his resurrection." This is not a theory we have accepted because it makes the most sense. We believe this because Jesus rose from the dead.

[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.

- **Beauty & the Beast.** Beauty kisses the beast and suddenly his ugliness falls away and he is transformed. Historically it is not true but it points to an awesome reality.
- **Peter Pan** is about never growing old, flying, a golden age. We don't believe that is real or there will ever be a time of perfection like that, but our soul *knows* that it is real.
- **Lion King:** When the true king is in charge, everything is in harmony; when the true king is not in charge, nothing is in harmony.
- **Cinderella**
- **Harry Potter**

[4] And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.