

SERMON NOTES Sunday 21st June 2026

sunnysidechurch

Theme: **Witnesses to Jesus, the first in a five sermon series on 1 John under the overall heading of 'Children of God'**

Passages: **1 John 1.1 -2.2, John 3.19-21**

Some of the main themes from the sermon

An overview of the John's first letter

Biblical scholars can't be sure exactly when this letter was written but most date it between 95 and 110 AD. It is widely agreed that the three letters of John were written by the same person. Many people think the author is the same person who wrote John's Gospel. The beginning of this letter has very strong echoes of the prologue to John's Gospel. The letter was probably written in Ephesus. It contains advice from a wise older Christian to encourage and support believers in their faith and help them steer clear of false teachers. Unlike many letters in the Bible, It is not addressed to a defined audience.

Being a witness to who Jesus is (1v1-4)

The letter begins with a powerful statement about being a witness to Jesus, the word made flesh as he is understood in John's Gospel. It seems that John is speaking on behalf of all the apostles when he talks about his experience of knowing Jesus and through him being in fellowship with God the Father. He wants to share this fellowship with his readers. He has come across something amazing and his joy is completed by the opportunity to share it. Though we don't have the first hand experience of the Apostles, we are in a similar position to the readers of this letter. We, like them, have heard and been convinced by the accounts of Jesus' life, his teaching, his miracles, his suffering and death and his resurrection. We have tasted the eternal life that Jesus offers. We too are witnesses to who Jesus is.

Being a witness to the need for Jesus (1v5-9)

We are witnesses to what we see and hear but we are also witnesses to our own inner life. When we look inwards, we see a complex picture, if we're honest. We know we are loved by God and invited into fellowship with Jesus but.... all too often we are not the people we would like to be.

Being a witness to the difference Jesus makes (2v1-2)

The difference that Jesus makes is the most profound we can imagine. His self-giving love was for us. We can live lives that are set free from guilt. We don't need to live in the shadow of our mistakes. Paul said in Romans 7.21-25 that he

had a tendency to do wrong despite his best intentions. He felt a prisoner. But God, in his love has delivered him.

Ourselves as witnesses

We all have a story. A story perhaps of how God has met us in Jesus. A story perhaps of discovering that God was strangely close to us in a time of suffering, a story of how we were changed from despair to hope or from cynicism to faith. These are our stories and they matter because of that. We probably keep them pretty private out of embarrassment or out of a fear of ridicule and rejection. And yet they are possibly the truest thing about us. If we want to grow and deepen as a fellowship, perhaps we need to begin the faltering steps to let people see how God has worked and is working in our lives.

Catching faith and spreading faith

If we share who we are at this deeper level we will build each other up and grow as a living, worshipping community. Remember our vision:

To be recognised as a Christ-centred community of living faith which seeks to make Jesus known to others.

Some questions for thought and discussion this week:

- 1. Why do you think we are shy of sharing our faith stories?*
- 2. What are the witness stories of your life? There may well be several. Think about them and think about the people you may want to share them with and the people who may benefit from knowing you in this deeper way.*
- 3. Were there any other issues that the sermon raised for you?*

Quote of the week

'So I find this law at work: although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!'
Romans 7.21-25