



1 John 1.¹⁻⁵

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ²(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) ³that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

⁴And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. ⁵This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

“God is love.”¹ This is good news, indeed. But, we might be forgiven for feeling that this says too little. Someone might love us from a distance, while not being an active lively presence in our lives. Though we may fear that we sound ungrateful or insatiable, when it comes to God’s love, we admit that we want more than a distant love. We wish to have an active and engaged relationship with our God. This, our desire is not, in fact, indicative of ingratitude or insatiability. Thankfully, God feels the same. He does not wish or intend to love from a distance. He does seek a relationship with us and active participation in our lives.

This is precisely, John testifies, one of the truths that is at the heart of his, or the gospel’s message. God is willing to enter into “fellowship” with us. He desires to share with us what he has. He desires to share with us the life he lives. He desires to share in the life we live. He wishes to take part in our lives. He wishes to be present and active in our lives. This “fellowship,” this sharing, this presence goes beyond, it seems, “love.” It is a fellowship of love, a fellowship of love with God.

Now, this is, truly, good news. Gospel. Like the star that led the Magi to the babe, Jesus, this good news brings a guiding light into our lives. This light chases darkness away. How very appropriate it is, then, and how very pleasing to God that during the Christmas season we plead, in hymn,

“Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask thee to stay close by me forever,
and love me, I pray” (*Away in a Manger*).

This plea is ours every minute of every day, Christmas Season or not, now and forever.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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¹ 1 John 4.⁸