

True Love Tells: The Story of God's Joyful Community
1 John 1:1-4

What distinguishes the Church from any other human organization?

God's story of redemptive, community building joy distinguishes the church from the world in at least three ways...

- I. Our origin: God's true and ultimate identity-defining story 1 John 1:1-2.**
 - a. Our origin: in the beginning (Gen 1-3, John 1).
 - b. The metanarrative: Creation (Gen 1,2), fall (Gen 3), redemption (Gen 3-Revelation 20), new creation (Revelation 21-22).

- II. Our purpose: God's life-giving, rich and satisfying community 1 John 1:3**
 - a. Life-giving: eternal life John 17:1-3, 10:10, 1 John 5:20.
 - b. Fellowship "κοινωνία" (19 times in NT), full rights and participation, intimate, rich nourishing and satisfying community, fellowship (John 6:56-58, 1 Cor 10: 16-29).

- III. Our character: God's all inviting, joy-fulfilling maturity 1 John 1:3-4.**

Against impossible odds, the story of the church
Is the story of the joy of God's salvation
In his presence there is fullness of joy
Share Christ's joy today!

1. Joy is God's supernatural anxiety neutralizer. Joy assures us that, because of God's grace in granting us salvation, we are now free from fear and all condemnation to enjoy the life of God. As you follow Christ, are we becoming more or less joyful?
2. Sin keeps us from fellowship with God and also keeps us from living in the joy of God's salvation (see Psalm 51 and Psalm 32). Is there anything that the enemy is using to keep you from full fellowship with the Lord or his family? Read these psalms and confess to the Lord if there is anything that needs to be confessed. Receive the joy of his forgiveness and do not look back!
3. Living in community, not isolation is an essential element of a joyful life- are you growing in loving intimacy with God and others or are you trapped in the isolating clutches of self-centeredness?