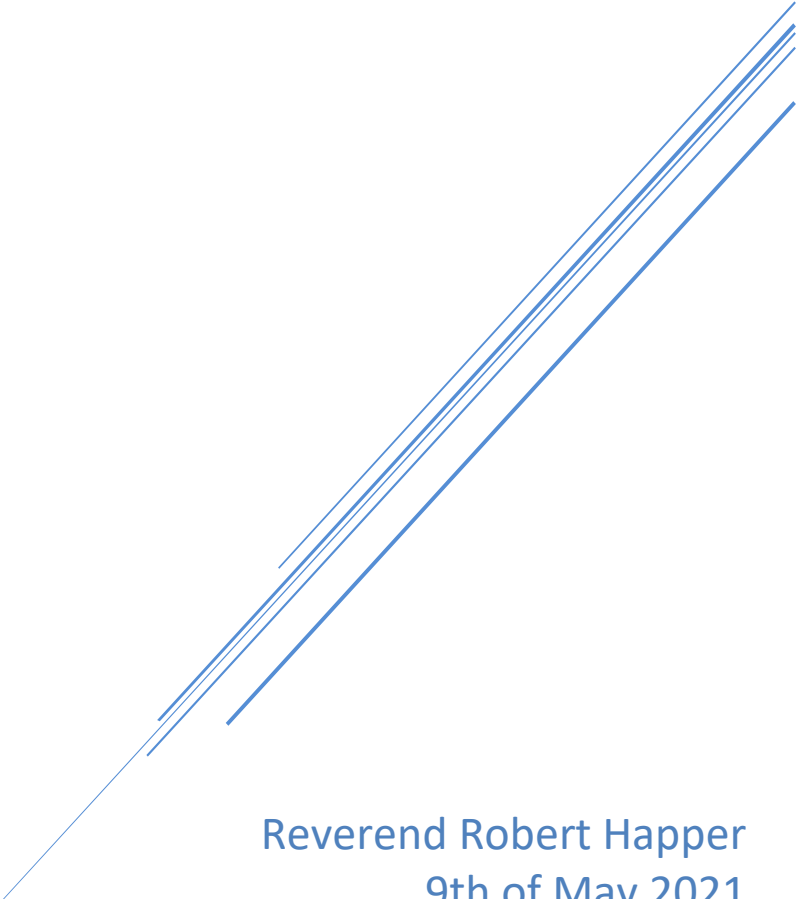


1st John 1:1-5



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What comes to mind when you hear the term Apostle? Likewise, comes to mind when you hear the term Evangelist? As Anglicans meeting here today, we acknowledge that our Patron Saint, in whom our Church is named, is: John the Evangelist.

Traditionally a Church was named after a Biblical figure. The Patronal Saint was chosen, generally by the Bishop, in consultation with the people planting the Church. The Patron Saint was to be an example to the people of that Parish.

The majority of scholars and Church Tradition suggests that St John the Apostle and St John the Evangelist is the same person who is one of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

We know that John is the one whom Jesus loved (John 13:23). He was also the one whom Jesus entrusted his mother to when Jesus was crucified. (John 19:26).

St John, the Apostle and Evangelist, gives us the examples:

- I. Being known as the beloved Disciple. He was known for His love.

- II. He was also an Apostle, and he contributed by writing the Gospel of John and the Epistles that bear his name.
- III. John is also the writer/scribe of the book of Revelation.

John the 'Evangelist and an Apostle' is correctly known for his loving nature. This character and work of John in whom our St John the Evangelist is named is an example to us all.

¹ We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life—

Today's Epistle reading is an example of John being an Apostle – one who has seen the Resurrected Christ. We believe through faith in the sound testimony given to us.

We cannot become Apostles, yet we can rightly follow what is known as Apostolic teaching. That is why we join countless other Anglican who recites – "we believe in one holy catholic and Apostolic Church", as we say the Nicene Creed.

Do you love the way John writes? As a man inspired by God, he has no hesitation to assert that what he has written is true. Although we do not often hear the expression, John testifies what he has heard, seen, touched.

As in his Gospel, he uses a descriptive illustration instead of using the term Messiah or Saviour. John engages his hearer, readers, by introducing the term Word of life.

The Word of Life:

The Word of Life – remember these words:

In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. *John 1:1-2*

John revealed in his Gospel that 'the Word' was a description of Jesus. In this his first Epistle, John is testifying to the WORD of Life.

Important to note that this WORD of Life was with the Heavenly Father – and made himself known to John, and we can also state the other disciples.

John unashamedly blends theology (the study of God) with this Revelation. He describes the Word of life, eternal life.

This whole text is about being reconciled with God. This reconciliation only made possible by the Word of God. The Word of God has the words of eternal life. John recorded the words between Jesus and Peter:

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Jesus, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God. John 6:28-69

John the Apostle and Evangelist!

An evangelist seeks to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus so that those hearing will come to accept the truth of the Good News.

³ we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Albeit not spelt out, some people would suggest clearly, the term fellowship gives these verses

their understanding. You cannot have fellowship unless you are in the right relationship. Logically, John, the Evangelist, calls his hearers to respond to the message that they are in fellowship with John and his team and, more importantly, in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Verse four indicates the motivation of John the Apostle and Evangelist:

We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

John has experienced the love of God. John counts the fellowship with God as an absolute joy. He delights with the prospect of people turning to Christ, not for his personal gain, but rather so they too can experience the joy of Salvation.

He advocates that Jesus has the words of eternal life. By accepting the Words of Jesus, we are grafted into fellowship with God the heavenly Father. Consequently, we, in turn, are in fellowship with all other people who have done the same. We have become brothers and sisters in Christ.

I began by asking what came to your mind when you hear the term Evangelist and Apostle.

Our patron Saint, St John the Apostle and Evangelist, was known as the beloved Disciple. His love for God was evident and credited to him. John's eagerness for others to enter into that love for God was genuine. This action defines him as an Evangelist. The teaching of the crucified and resurrected of Jesus as an eyewitness assign him as an Apostle.

The example we are given, is not just to walk in the way of love. He is calling us all to continue to enter into fellowship with God lovingly. We are also to hold to the teaching of God and again lovingly to apply them to ourselves.

At your and my Confirmation, the Bishop would have exalted all confirmees too:

- They are called to study and seek to understand the Bible and the Christian faith more fully, take their part in the Church's life, hear the Word of God and share in the holy communion, and pray faithfully and regularly both publicly and privately.

- They are called to share with others, by Word and example, the love of Christ and his Gospel of reconciliation and hope.
- And they are called to love their neighbour as themselves, to honour all men, and to pray and work for peace and justice.

I share the quote from the Confirmation Service on this our Patronal Festival to remind us all the working out of the text from the 1st John chapter one. We have been given the example of John the Apostle and Evangelist to encourage both you and I to express our love for God as we call others to have this fellowship with God.

To God be glory forever!

Resources:

- John's Gospel – *Don Carson*
- BST The Message of John's Letters - *David Jackman*
- 1 John – Rest Assured - *Bryson Smith*