

Sunday Morning Message

March 21, 2021

1 John 1:5 - 10 "Walking in Light"

Series – 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John

Text – 1 John 1:5 - 10

Congregational Reading – 1 John 1:5 - 7

Introduction to the Series

We discussed last week in our introduction to the letter that John had three overriding themes when writing this letter:

1. He was defending sound, Biblical teaching from an attack from Gnosticism, which taught that the body was evil, and the spirit was good; and therefore denied that Christ could have a physical body. (Note – **Docetism** is the false idea that Jesus physical body only appeared physical). The very first verse of the letter boldly refutes any such nonsense. John states that he not only had seen the Lord with his eyes, but he also *"handled"* him. He also states in 1 John 4:3 that *"every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ **is come in the flesh** is not of God"*. The Gnostics also held that knowledge was superior to virtue, and they accepted only a non-literal interpretation of the Scriptures, which they claimed could only be understood by a select, enlightened few. They also denied the possibility of a bodily resurrection.
2. He was thoroughly teaching the doctrine of Eternal Security.
3. He also taught the Trinity through one great verse:

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7)

Transition Into the Text

Read vs. 1 - 4

Last week, as we introduced this first letter of John, we saw in verse four, one of John's purposes for writing the letter:

*"And these things write we unto you, **that your joy may be full.**"* (1 John 1:4)
of God. (1 John 5:13)

The Psalmist, David, stated:

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm 16:11)

In the remainder of this chapter, John will teach us what it means to be “walk in light”
Paul said:

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" (Ephesians 5:8)

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

I. Our Fellowship Revolves Around the Light (vs. 5 – 7)

A. God is Absolute Light

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no (οὐκ) darkness at all (οὐδεμία). (1 John 1:5)

The first thing that God created was light:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness" (Note – Light is always completely separated from darkness – light and darkness cannot coexist). "
(Genesis 1:1-4)

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Notice the phrase in our text, in v. 5, “in him is no darkness at all” (Note - οὐκ and οὐδεμία – two negatives which strengthen each other. “There is no darkness in him” as opposed to “there is absolutely no darkness in him” Notice also the contrast with absolute light. God does not just possess light; He is light. He is complete light without any darkness.

The word, “light” (φῶς), is both literal and symbolic.

1. God is physically light. Remember in the Old Testament when God was giving the Ten Commandments to Moses (Exodus 34:29 - 35)? When Moses came down from God’s presence his face was shining because he had been in the presence of that bright light for 40 days and nights. They had to actually put a veil over Moses’ face. Jesus is also described as being a physically bright light. Revelation 1 tells us that John saw the Lord Jesus, “and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Revelation 1:16). Later in Revelation, John prophetically describes the New Jerusalem:

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Revelation 21:23)

2. God is light also in a symbolic sense: Thayer's uses these adjectives to describe God as light: as by nature incorporeal, spotless, holy¹

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ... "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:4-5; 9)

McArthur stated this about the contrast of light and darkness:

In Scripture, light and darkness are very familiar symbols. Intellectually, "light" refers to biblical truth while "darkness" refers to error or falsehood (cf. Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23; John 1:4; 8:12). Morally, "light" refers to holiness or purity while "darkness" refers to sin or wrongdoing (Rom. 13:11–14; 1 Thess. 5:4–7). The heretics claimed to be the truly enlightened, walking in the real light, but John denied that because they do not recognize their sin. About that basic reality, they were unenlightened. **no darkness at all.** With this phrase, John forcefully affirms that God is absolutely perfect and nothing exists in God's character that impinges upon His truth and holiness (cf. James 1:17).²

B. True Believers Walk in the Light (vs. 6 – 7)

"If we say that we have fellowship (κοινωνίαν) with him, and walk (περιπατῶμεν = Pres Act. Ind. 1st Per. Pl.) in darkness, we lie (ψευδόμεθα = 1st Per. Sin. Pres. Mid. Ind.), and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:6-7)

Ryrie – "To walk in the light is to live in obedience to God's commandments."³

The word, "fellowship" (κοινωνία), is defined as *intercourse, fellowship, intimacy*; the right hand as the sign and pledge of fellowship; used of the intimate bond of fellowship which unites Christians⁴ It has a secondary meaning of giving or distribution. If we have fellowship, we will distribute to one another. There is a giving and receiving among believers.

John is stating here in vs. 6 – 7 that if we are truly "walking in the light," then we will not only have fellowship with Him, but we will also have fellowship with other believers who

¹ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 662.

² John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1964.

³ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: King James Version*, Expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 1898.

⁴ Thayer, 352.

are also walking in the light. Amos said: "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3:3). When we are in agreement (or in fellowship) with the Lord, we will be in agreement with each other, and we will have no trouble walking together.

Other verses from John regarding "walking in light."

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:19-21)

"Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." (1 John 2:8-10)

Notice the last phrase in v. 7 – "*and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" – If we are saved, our sins are cleansed eternally by the blood of Christ. This is what we commonly refer to as positional righteousness. In other words, God has forever, eternally forgiven and cleansed all of our sins – past, present, and future. But there is another aspect of righteousness that has to do with our fellowship with the Lord while we are still living here on this earth. When we are living in obedience to the Lord's will, we are living with a recognition that it is only the blood of Jesus Christ that allows us to have fellowship with Him. This is what we sometimes refer to as practical righteousness. We sometimes, in this flesh, wander out of the Lord's will and commit sin, but we know that because of what the Lord did for us on the Cross of Calvary, there is forgiveness of sin. So, even though we know that our forgiveness and cleansing is eternal, we also realize that while still on earth, we can claim a fresh application of that blood to our situation, knowing that our God has already forgiven us. This process heals the broken fellowship and restores the relationship between us and the Lord. Sin separates us from the Lord; not that He pulls away from us, but that we wander from Him. But confessing and forsaken restore us, and bring us back to Him.

II. Our Forgiveness Requires That We Not Lie (vs. 8 – 10)

Note – this is not a separate section here. This is a continuation of the topic of light and darkness, and walking in the light.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive (ἀφῆ = Aor. Sub. Act. (Rogers) 3rd. Per. Sing.) us our sins, and to cleanse (καθαρίσῃ = Aor. Act. Sub. 3rd Per. Sing.) us from all unrighteousness. If

we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10 – notice that “the truth” in v. 8 is parallel to “the word” in v. 10)

Notice that John clarifies here that all believers will have their temporary struggles with sin. As long as you are living in this flesh, sin will, unfortunately, be part of your life. But, as Paul said: *"... sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* (Romans 6:14) In other words, sin does not have to be your master. As a believer, you now have the Holy Spirit in you, and you now have the choice to yield to Him. Before you were saved, you had no choice.

John states this fact of sin emphatically by mentioning it twice (in vs. 8 and 10).

Notice that the forgiveness and cleansing is contingent upon our confession of sin. The words confess and forgive are both in the subjunctive mood, which is the mood of condition. The forgiveness and cleansing are conditioned upon our confession. What does that mean?

1. In order to be saved you have to agree with God about your sin. Confession has to do with your coming clean with God. Your acknowledging to Him that you are a sinner in need of His forgiveness.
2. In order to have fellowship with God, you must be willing to come clean with God often about specific sins.

Illustrate – David – He was saved. His sins were forgiven eternally; but when he committed adultery with Bathsheba, his fellowship with God was broken. He had to come clean with God in order to restore that relationship. (See Psalm 51)

Conclusion

1. If you are saved – you are “Children of the Light.”
2. As Children of the Light you should “walk in the light.”
3. Walking in the light means that we are living in submission to His Word, and that we are in submission to His will.
4. If we are walking in the light, we will be in fellowship (or communion) with Him, and also with other believers who are also in communion with Him.
5. Sin, unfortunately, is part of all of our lives, and hinders our fellowship with Him. Our relationship with God is adversely affected by our sin.

Illustrate – A child who disobeys his parents will still be a child, but his communion with his parents (his relationship) is hindered by being disobedient.

6. Confession is the means that God gives us in order to restore that relationship.
7. It is also the means by which we restore relationships with each other.

Exegetical Notes

1 John 1:5

Καὶ αὕτη ἔστιν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ

And / this / he, she, it is / message / which / we have heard / of, from / him (Gen)

And this is the message that we have heard from him

καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστι,

and / we announce, proclaim / to you. / that, because / God is light

ἀναγγέλλομεν = 1st Per. Pl. Pres. Act. Ind

and we proclaim to you , that God is light

καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.

and / darkness / in / him (Dat) / no / is / nothing, none

and in him is absolutely no darkness; or and in him there is no darkness at all.

οὐκ and οὐδεμία – two negatives which strengthen each other. “There is no darkness in him” as opposed to “there is absolutely no darkness in him” Notice also the contrast with absolute light. God does not just possess light; He is light.

And this is the messaged that we have heard of him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is absolutely no darkness.

1 John 1:6

Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ’ αὐτοῦ,

If / we have spoken / that / fellowship / we have / with / him

Εἴπωμεν = 2nd Aor. 1st Per. Pl. Subj.; ἔχομεν = 1st Per. Pl. Pres. Act. Ind.

If we ~~have said~~ we say that we have fellowship with him,

Note – this represents the “Present General Condition” spoken of by Black (Lesson 23); also found in 1 John 1:8.

καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα,

and / in / darkness / we walk, we lie

περιπατῶμεν = Pres Act. Ind. 1st Per. Pl.; ψευδόμεθα = 1st Per. Sin. Pres. Mid. Ind.

And walk in darkness, we lie,

Walk = linear action, indicating a continuous walk in darkness, not merely a temporary or momentary lapse of judgment.

καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν:

and / not / we do / the truth

ποιοῦμεν = Pres. Act. Ind. 1st Per. Pl

and do not the truth

This is one of many conditional sentences within this chapter “if we say ... and.” (see also vs. 8 & 10).

And if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.

1 John 1:7

ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν,

If / but or now / in / the light (Dat) /we walk

περιπατῶμεν = Pres. Act. Ind. 3rd Per. Pl.

But if we walk in the light,

ὥς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί,

As / He (Nom) / is / in / the light

as he is in the light,

κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων,

fellowship / we have / with / one another,

we have fellowship with one another,

καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ

and / the blood (Nom) / of his son Jesus Christ

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ - all Genitive

And the blood of his son Jesus Christ

καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.

It cleanses/ us / from / all / sin

Καθαρίζει = Pres. Act. Ind. 3rd Per. Sing

cleanses us from all sin.

Everything is in the present tense. The cleansing is continual.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of his son Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:8

ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν,

If / we say (1 John 1:6) / that / sin (Acc) / not / we have

εἴπωμεν = 2nd Aor. 1st Per. Pl. Subj.

If we say that we have not sin,

ἐαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

Ourselves (Pl. Acc. Ref. Pro.) / we deceive,/ and / the truth / not / is / in / us

we deceive ourselves and the truth us not in us.

Note – “the truth” here is parallel and equal to (synonymous to) “the word” in verse 10.

If we say that we have not sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9

ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν,

If / we confess, acknowledge /sins (acc. pl.)/ our,

ὁμολογῶμεν = 1st Per Pl. Pres. Act. Ind.

If we acknowledge our sins,

πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας,

faithful / he is / and righteous, just / in order that / to forgive (Rogers) / us / sins

ἀφῇ = Aor. Sub. Act. (Rogers) 3rd. Per. Sing.

he is faithful and righteous in order to forgive us *our* sins

καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

καθαρίσῃ = Aor. Act. Sub. 3rd Per. Sing.

The cleansing is subjunctive as it is conditional upon the acknowledging of sin.

If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us of sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10

ἐὰν εἰπῶμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν,

If / we say (1 John 1:6) / that /not / we have sinned

ἡμαρτήκαμεν = Perf. Ind. Act. 1st. Per. Pl.

If we say that we have not sinned

ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτόν,

a liar (Thayers – 1st Dec. Acc) / we make (Rogers) / him

ποιοῦμεν = Pres. Act. Ind. 1st Per. Pl

we make him a liar,

καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

And / the word / his / not / is / in / us.

And his word is not in us.

“the word” here is parallel and equal to “the truth” from verse eight.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.