

Walking in the Light  
1<sup>st</sup> John 1:5-2:6

Responsive Reading 1 Chronicles 29:10-15

Leviticus 19:1-18

John 15:1-19

So last week we started out in the first few verses of 1<sup>st</sup> John. We see right off the bat that John talks about the humanity of Christ, which is one of his 5 doctrinal themes in this book. Also we looked at Christian fellowship and how that is bound up in Christ, and the apostles.

In verse 5, John says that God is light, and in him there is no darkness. The bible often uses the figure of light to reference that which is good, that which is holy, and that which is right. The opposite of that is of course, is darkness. This becomes important when we talk about our fellowship with Christ, because as we see here John puts forth a test of faith in verse 6.

Because God is light, good, holy, and righteous and if we claim to have fellowship with him yet our lives, our actions are evil, unrighteous, and sinful then John says are are lying. If you remember from last week, the definition of fellowship is to have something in common, If God is light, and we are not in the light then we are not in common, or in fellowship with God. If we walk in darkness, that puts us at total opposites of the God of light.

This walking in darkness, but claiming the light does 2 things...it makes our words false, and our actions false. This goes back to our study in James. Do your actions line up with your words? Or are your words empty, and false. I know I have said this many times over the course of the months, but it is so important and I think something that is not preached enough...if we claim Christ, then our lives need to show it. Then if we were go to back and review our study in Galatians we would find Paul saying that those who are Christs can not help but live for Christ for we are children of God and we have inherited these traits from our Father.

We see Paul using this same terminology of light, and dark in Ephesians 4:8-14.

Paul here in Ephesians is warning his readers just as John is doing to avoid fellowship with darkness, We are not to have things in common with those who walk in darkness. Fellowship that John and Paul is talking about I don't think is having to do with necessarily who you are around because if that was the case we couldn't leave our houses. But rather it is warning us not to have in common those things that are darkness.

IF we walk in the light, we will have fellowship with God, and if we have fellowship with God, we will have fellowship with each other. The fellowship of the Christian community is bound up in Christ, and it is because of this that we should not find any partiality in the body. We have a commonality in God which transcends anything in this world that we see as something that would divide us.

This fellowship, this commonality that is shared among believers is covered by, paid by, and bound by the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses us from all our sin. Now just in case John's reader was going to misinterpret what he means, remember there were those in the church he was writing to who believed that they transcended fleshly sins by spiritual knowledge. he says in verse 8 that if we have no

sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

John is not talking about a sinless perfection, we will never reach a state in this life were we are without sin. He says that if we claim we have no sin, then we are liars and the truth is not in us. Just as he said those who walk in darkness but claim light are liars. The life of a christian is not a life marked with sinless perfection, but rather it is a life marked with confession, and a striving to live in the light.

John doesn't say that those who walk in the light have no sin, in verse 9 he says If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This would be another argument against those in the church who held to the Gnostic idea that they could reach a point in spiritual knowledge and growth that sin in the flesh did not matter. These people I am sure would have considered themselves as being sinless.

This form of self deception has dire consequences. As we see in verse 10 John says that if we say we have not sinned we make God a liar, and his word is not in us. This just goes to show that this individual who is claiming to not have sin, is in fact not truly in fellowship with the God that he is claiming to follow. The entire bible shows that mankind is fallen, mankind is lost in sin, and even those who are Christs still live in the flesh and struggle against the flesh. IF someone claims to not have sin, then they are claiming that God's word is false.

John isn't excusing away sin though, he isn't telling us that we shouldn't worry about it because it is something we all struggle with and in the end it will be ok. Chapter 2 he says, “ My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sines, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. On the contrary, sin is very serious, so serious that God sent his Son to reconcile his creation back to him because of Adam's sin separated mankind from God.

We see here the 2<sup>nd</sup> mention of John as to why he writes this letter. He says that he writes it so that we may not sin. But he says, that if we do sin we have an advocate with the father. We have someone who will plead our case, and this advocate is none other then the Son of God Jesus Christ the righteous. As sinners, we need an advocate for we are separated from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, Behold the Lords hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy that it can not hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear. Sin is to be taken seriously for it is what separates us from God.

But, God sent an advocate, Jesus Christ, who is righteous, and sinless, who took on flesh to pay the penalty for our sins making us his adopted children. Verse 2, of chapter 2 John goes on to say, that Christ himself is the propitiation for our sins. God's just and righteous anger toward sin was taken out on his Son on the cross. Sin is serious, God does not just forgive sin willy nilly, there is a price. It is either paid by Christ, or by us. That is why it is important to be in fellowship with Christ, to be covered by his blood.

In pagan religions mankind offers a sacrifice to appease their god, but here we see it is God who offered up a sacrifice so that God can be both just and merciful. This gracious sacrifice, this advocate, this propitiation for sin is not offered to just the Jews, or just the gentiles but as John says here it is for the whole world. This does not mean that ever single person who ever lived is covered by the blood of Christ, but rather it is for all races, for male and for female, for rich and for poor, For anyone in the world who has faith. We see this in Romans 3:21 and 22 But now the righteousness of God apart from

the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe for there is no difference,

And again in verse 26 of Romans 3. it is to demonstrate at the present time his righteousness, that he might be the just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. As we see Christ is the propitiation of sin, and an advocate to those in the world who have faith.

In these verse here in Roman's we see a dual purpose of the cross. As Blake White says, it is here we see the love of God and the justice of God come together. God loves his children, but he also takes his glory and holiness very seriously. So he sent his son, to die, for us to pay the cost of his righteous judgment upon mankind so that he may be merciful to some, and righteous in his judgment of sinners.

Because of this, we have an advocate and it is through him that our sin's are forgiven. In verse 3 here, John puts forth another test to his reader. He says that we can know that we know Christ, because we keep his commandments. Just as he said he who walks in darkness but claims Christ is a liar, here he says that if you keep his commandments, or, as he put before if you are walking in the light then you can know that you know him.

Let's go over to Matthew 7:21-23

These people who claimed Christ but did not do the will of the father, they did not keep his commandments. I will Quote Blake Whites commentary here because he sets forth very good examples of this very thing. He says “ One who claims to know the Lord but is not obeying his commandments is a liar. I can think of various friends who have so deceived themselves.

Consider the woman who “feels led” to leave her husband because her “needs” are not being met. She is being led alright, by the prince of the power of the air. Or Consider the man who thinks that it is God's will to abandon his wife for a woman he is temporarily more sexually attracted to. That is God's will....the will of the god of this age. Such people cannot claim to know the Lord. Or consider the teenage believer who enters a dating relationship with an unbeliever, Consider the so called christian couple involved in sexual immorality before they are married but think that it is ok because one they are married they will be “Legal.” Consider the couple who hoards all they have and refuse to live a generous life. Such people do not truly know the Lord.

Our Christian belief guides our ethics. John says here in verse 3, now by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. So that brings up the question, what are the commandments that John is talking about? There can be a tenancy to instantly understand the word commandment as to referring back to the mosaic law, but I do not think that is the case here. There is no where in this letter really even hints back to the mosaic law, so John must be talking about something else, some other commandments.

IF we jump a head a just a bit over to chapter 3 vs 23 I think we see exactly what John is talking about here in chapter 2. In Chapter 3 he says, “ And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. In John's record of the ministry of Christ in the gospel of John he records Christ telling what his command is, John 15 that we read this morning, This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Or as we saw when we went through James, me mentions the royal law according to scripture is to Love your neighbor as yourself. Or as we saw when we went through Galatians Paul says that all of the law is fulfilled in one word, that you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Or in Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus says when asked which is the great commandment in the law. He answers and says, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Or we see in Leviticus 19 that we also read this morning, You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. These commands of God, are the ethical standard of the New covenant in Christ's blood. John does not really explain this to his readers here, he simply says that we know we know him if we keep his commandments.

In verse 5-6 he says, that Whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in him and by this we know that we are in him. He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as he walked. So I think it is safe to say that John is assuming that his reader understands already what he means by following the commandments of Christ, The commandments of Christ, or commonly known as the Law of Christ, Blake White sums it up in this way The law of Christ is identified as,

1. The Law of Love,
2. The examples of Jesus Christ,
3. the teaching of Jesus.
4. the teaching of the apostles,
5. the teaching of the whole bible interpreted in the light of the coming of Christ.

We see in Verse 5 here that John says that whoever keeps God's word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. If our love is perfected, it is a true, mature love. It is not just a feeling, it is not a self seeking love, but rather it is a self giving love, looking for the benefit of others and not of ourselves.

Jesus is our example, we must live as he lived, we must walk in the light as he is in the light, and how do we do that? How do we know how to live like Christ, and how to walk in the light. We must be in his word.

So to sum it all up here, John is not saying anything that we haven't already seen written by Paul or James. A Christian will live a life in Christ, will be a caring, patient, person, or as John puts it, will be characterized be a person who walks in the light because it is the Holy Spirit in him working to do so. John is encouraging his Brothers and Sisters in Christ to do just that, walk in the light, have fellowship with others. Keep God's word, read you bible for in it is the power to overcome sin and temptation, and when we do sin, which we will because we are still in this body of flesh, confess your sin, turn from them and that is how we have fellowship with God, and walk in the light.