

We continue in our study in the Epistle of 1 John. So far, in just two weeks we have seen some very important truths, that are essential to our Christian faith.

John, who was eyewitness to the person and work of Jesus Christ – remember, he heard, he saw and touched him – tells us that the truths that he is writing about is not something new or unique. It is something that had been there from the beginning – these truths had been there since God created the world.

He tells us that it was Jesus himself, who revealed the Father to us. As we saw, it was Jesus, the pre-existent 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity, who was with the Father, and had, in time, come to earth in the person of Jesus Christ.

And John walked with him ... he heard him ... he saw what he did and, most importantly, he touched him. He knew that Jesus was truly human.

Remember, that one of the reasons that John writes this letter is to combat the heresy of Docetism, which said that Jesus only appeared human – that he was not really flesh and blood. Those who held this view said that he was some sort of apparition or ghost.

If Jesus was not flesh and blood – then he didn't die of the cross and shed his blood for us and our salvation – and the things that we confess each week are a lie. But John says that they are true – he heard, he saw and he touched.

The most important message that he heard from Jesus and that he is delivering to us, is what we looked at last week in 1 John 1:5: “*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*”

Again, John states, what he heard from Jesus that *God is light* – one of the primary characteristics of God.

As I said last week, we must understand that God is not a light among many lights ... He is not a light-bearer ... He does not have light as one of His many characteristics – but He *IS* light. Although He created light, He Himself is uncreated light.

And while God is light – we see one very important fact – *in Him is no darkness at all*. As we read our passage we see that there is a clear comparison between light and darkness – please turn with me to 1 John 1:5-10 (READ).

We know what light is – it is living in the light of God's revealed Word – in light of what He has revealed to us in the Scriptures and through the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, Jesus is the light of the world, in that he reveals God to us.

So we must ask, what does it mean to walk in darkness? It obviously does not mean walking about on a moonless night, or in a dark room with no lights on, or walking about with your eyes closed.

As we look at our passage we see that walking in darkness means NOT acknowledging the fact that we are sinners. John is very clear in making the clear comparison about those who are indeed walking in fellowship with God and those who are walking in darkness.

I will have to say first of all that it does not mean that Christians do not sin. This is absolutely clear from our passage. There are those out there that teach that Christians can reach sinless perfection – that is, they cease to sin. There are also, more importantly those who deny that sin even exists. Again, as we shall see more of in moment – but this is contrary to the clear teaching Scriptures.

I remember years ago asking my grandfather if he had ever asked God to forgive him from his sins – and his response was priceless – he said, that he had never killed anybody. This was his concept of sin.

Now, I don't really know what his relationship was to God through the Lord Jesus Christ – I was very young – but what I do know is that after he passed away, we found a paper in his wallet, in Italian, that said, when translated, something to the effect, that his faith was Christ alone. So, Lord willing, I will see him again.

As we consider our passage, we see the clear comparison — *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”* John is saying to his readers AND to us, that if we say that we have fellowship with God – that is, that we love God ... that we follow him ... that we are one with him – and yet deny that we are sinners then we are liars and we don't have the truth – that is the truth of God's Word and His revelation in us.

But what is also interesting is the fact that in the original Greek, the language is a lot stronger – literally, it should be translated – *“to continue to walk in darkness ...”* – in other words, after the truth of God's Word has been revealed to us, we reject it, and continue to walk in the sinful pleasures of our lives, denying that we are sinners – then we know that the truth of the Gospel has not really entered our hearts.

Again, this does not mean that we cease to sin – only that we deny that we are sinners and need God's forgiveness.

John goes on to present the alternative in the next verse – 1 John 5:7: *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*

If we walk in the light – that is, if we acknowledge the fact that we are sinners and we strive to walk in the light of God's revealed word – then two things happen. First, we have fellowship with one another.

This means that we have fellowship with all Christians throughout the ages and in the present age. We all have one thing in common – we are all sinners, and we all have been forgiven of our sins through the shed of blood of Jesus Christ.

This year is the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Dietrich Bonnhoffer, a Christian in Nazi Germany, who stood up against Hitler, was convicted of trying to kill him and was martyred just before the end of the war. His life is an example of one who lived his Christian life in spite of opposition and persecution – and he gave his life for he believed.

And what he believed is that which bonds us together – and that is, that we too have been saved by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> thing is that which is exactly what we see in the rest of this verse ... *and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.* What do we see from this? If, as those who held that the Docetism teaching was

true – that is, that Jesus only appeared human – then there was no shed blood. If Jesus was not human, then he was not flesh and blood – and he really did not die on the cross.

As we know from comparing scripture with scripture, that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. As we read in Hebrews 9:22: “*And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*”

Now again, this is not something new. We know that after the fall, that God instituted a series of sacrifices so that His people could have forgiveness of their sins. Just read your Old Testament. But we also know that these sacrifices looked forward to the one final and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

As we read earlier in that same 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews – Hebrews 9:11-15: “*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*”

This is basically something that we confess each week, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that he was buried and that he rose from dead.

But, as John goes on – he draws a clear comparison – again! 1 John 1:8-10: “*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 us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*”

Look at how he describes those who are walking in darkness in verses 8 & 10: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us .... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

The adjectives that he uses to describe those who say that they have no sin are pretty descriptive. First he says we deceive ourselves. Why does he say that? Because the Scriptures teach the universality of sin. Sin exists, and it has been there since the fall of man – when Adam sinned. As we read in Romans 5:12: “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned ...*”

The truth is that we are sinners ... we have crossed the line of God’s standard – and that is what sin is. God has set up his standard in His law, summarized for us in the 10 commandments, which none of us can keep – that is why we are all sinners and that is why our service begins with the 10 commandments or at least the summary of the law each week. Because all us fall and fall short of His standard and His glory!

What do we pray each week: “*forgive us our trespasses...*” Yes, we are sinners. We read in Ecclesiastes 7:20: “*For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.*”

And Romans 3:12, quoting Psalms 14:3 & 53:3 says: “*They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*”

So, if we say that we are without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. In addition, we are calling God a liar. That is a pretty strong statement. I don't know about you, but I really don't want to call God a liar. It is not a safe thing to say, to say the least.

Because the bottom line is *His word is not in us*. In other words, we don't know Him ... we don't belong to His family and we are at war with Him.

But there is hope and a promise: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Again, the original is stronger than the English – literally it is ... *if we KEEP confessing our sins*. In other words it is something that we need to continually do, because we keep sinning.

And we see that assurance that we have from God – *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Our God is a God who keeps His promises ... Our God is a God who is faithful and just.

He has promised that if we confess our sins, that He will cleanse us. When we confess our sin He forgives. It is that simple. But, as we have seen, we first have to acknowledge the fact that we are indeed sinners.

So the comparison is clear. There really are only two kinds of people in the world – those who walk in the light of God's Word and those who walk in darkness – denying that they are sinners. It is my prayer that everyone here today is walking in the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ – acknowledging the fact that we are sinners ... that we need to believe and confess that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. Amen!