

Theme: Living in the Light...or Dwelling in the Darkness?

Text: 1 John 1:5-2:2

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. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 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. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation [“atoning sacrifice”] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

There are certain fears that people have which are so prevalent they are nearly universal. One of those fears is the fear of the **dark**. Sure, most of us probably outgrow our fear of the dark, at least for the most part, as we grow into adulthood. But which one of us isn't at least quite a bit more apprehensive, careful, and cautious when the lights go out, or when it's dark outside? Why is this the case? For the most part it's our inherent “fear of the unknown.” We tend to be fearful when we can't see for certain where we're going or what it is that could be lurking around that dark corner up ahead. If it's not because our “fear of the unknown” then it's simply for *safety's sake* we are usually quite a bit more careful when we venture into the dark. This makes perfect sense to us, doesn't it?

What is so unusual (and tragic) about us human beings is the fact that the one type of **darkness** that we really should fear the most and run away from as quickly as possible is the very type of **darkness** that we, by nature, are not only NOT afraid of, but actually attracted to! I am speaking, of course, about *spiritual* “**darkness**.”

You see, there is, for each and every one of us a “**darkness**” inside of us. We were born into it *spiritually* when we came into this world and even after we were rescued from it and brought into the “**Light of life**” in Christ we still carry around this “**darkness**” of our sinful flesh inside of us (cf. **Romans 7**). That's the part of us that not only “heads toward the darkness,” it actually *likes* the darkness! Our sinful natures find sin and “**darkness**” to be exciting, “liberating,” and even *fun*! Jesus Himself said that this was the way of our sinful human nature. In **John 3** He refers to Himself and His Gospel message as “**the light**” and says, “**the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil**” (John 3:19).

No matter how “liberating” or “fun” sin feels, the fact is it is still “**darkness**” and in that very same passage Jesus says, “**This is...condemnation**” (John 3:19). Therefore God has nothing to do with it and neither should we!

Our text tells us about three amazing blessings that are ours when we “**Live in the Light**” (cf. **1 John 1:7**) instead of “**Dwelling in the Darkness**” (cf. **1 John 1:6**). First of all when we “**Live in the Light**” and “**walk in the light**,” (v. 7) as our text puts it, we are **1) walking with God Himself!** As our text tells us, “**God is light and in Him is no darkness at all**” (v. 5). God is the complete opposite of darkness. Where light is there can be no darkness (think of the bright, sunny days we've been having recently—all light and no darkness). And as our text tells us, God is the *definition* of “**light**” itself. What does that mean? Obviously John isn't really talking about *physical* “**light**” and *physical* “**darkness**,” but rather he is using these expressions as pictures of *spiritual* things. “**Light**” is *righteousness, truth, true wisdom, and true life—eternal life!*

- ✠ We heard John call God “**light**” in our text; in his Gospel John also calls Jesus “**the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world**” (John 1:9).
- ✠ Jesus Himself also says, “**I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life**” (John 8:12).
- ✠ The Bible also speaks of God’s Word, especially the Gospel (the “Good News”), as being “**light**” (cf. Psalm 119:105). The Apostle Paul writes of “**the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ... For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**” (2 Corinthians 4:4, 6).

“**Darkness**” on the other hand is the complete opposite: it represents *wickedness (evil), deceit, ignorance—ignorance of Christ, unbelief, and eventually eternal death!* “**Darkness**” is the realm of Satan; it is the realm of the unbelieving world around us. As the Apostle Paul says the devil and his minions are “**the rulers of the darkness of this age...[the] spiritual hosts of wickedness**” (Ephesians 6:12).

As you well know, we live in a world that can be so complicated—so confusing and so “messy”—that we can be lead to believe that our lives are mostly filled with “morally gray” areas: half-good/half-bad choices and options; lifestyles and decisions that really aren’t right or wrong, they’re just in the middle somewhere. However, when we look at what Scripture says, things become a lot less complicated. Things really become much more “black and white”—the difference between “**light**” and “**darkness.**” God is not a “morally neutral” God, nor is He up in heaven “flipping a coin” in certain situations to determine whether what we are doing is really a sin or really “not that bad.” No! “**God,**” as our text tells us “**is light and in Him is no darkness at all**” (v. 5). He is all righteousness, all holiness, all truth, and all life! He wants—and even commands us to be the same (“**Be holy, for I am holy**” - 1 Peter 1:16)! The Apostle Paul wrote, “**For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial [the Devil]? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?...Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord”** (2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 17).

Most of the morally “gray” areas in life clear up pretty quickly when we ask ourselves in each situation, “Am I ‘**Living in the Light**’—or am I at least “heading towards the light” by what I’m doing, saying, or thinking—or am I heading toward the darkness or, in fact, ‘**Dwelling in the Darkness?**’ Am I pursuing righteousness and truth by my thoughts, words, and actions, or am I pursuing the empty, destructive desires of my sinful heart?” Our text warns us against living this way, “**If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth**” (v. 6).

“**But,**” our text reminds us that another blessing is ours, “**if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another**” (v. 7). Is that a blessing we all-too-often take for granted? Do you ever take the time to stop and thank God for what a blessing “**fellowship**” with each other really is? **Fellowship** is more than just the hospitality and friendliness that so often is shown amongst us. It’s that “bond” that really can only truly be made by having a common faith in our Savior, Jesus. The common “bond” of faith that brings us together today for Bible Study and worship. It’s the common “bond” we share when we “**walk in the light as He is in the light**” (v. 7).

That “bond” of faith and that gift of “**fellowship with one another**” become more important and more valuable as each day passes and we move closer to the Day Christ returns again. The writer of Hebrews reminds us, “**And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching**” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV). It’s no secret that we are living in increasingly “**dark**” times. If you don’t believe me just watch some TV, watch the news, surf the internet, or read the paper. We live in a world that is filled with the “**darkness**” of sin and unbelief. A world that at times seems void of love and kindness, but filled with hate and pain and bad news. The “**light**” of our fellowship together in Christ in this day and age is *priceless!* It becomes more and more priceless and valuable the darker this world gets.

Have you ever been in a completely dark place before? I mean so dark that you can almost “feel” the darkness like a wall—like in a basement room or far below the earth in an underground cave? In those situations how valuable is even just a little bit of light? A lighted match or a small keychain light (visual aid) would be an incredibly welcome sight. In complete darkness it is amazing just how much even a little light can shine so brightly. However, if you had your choice between fumbling around in complete darkness with just a little lighted match or keychain light, or turning on the overhead lights the choice is obvious! In the same way *individually* our small, but bright “lights” of faith pierce the darkness of the sin and unbelief in this world, but how much more powerful is the “light” we reflect from Christ when we are all joined together in one faith, with one love and one purpose? Remember Jesus said of us—of believers, **“You are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14, 16).**

Well, how can I “Live in the Light” when it seems like I’m always “Dwelling in the Darkness?” How can I “head towards the light” when most of the time I really do just want to “dabble in the darkness”—nothing “too evil” or “too sinful,” mind you, but I really do enjoy some of my pet sins; some of my little indulgences that I know are wrong but they’re just too hard to say no to. Do you know the feeling?

There is an answer and one answer only: Jesus! Remember, He is the reason you have been called to “walk in the light” in the first place! It wasn’t you who decided that the “light” of Christ was the better place to be. By nature we love the “darkness;” we loved the ignorance of unbelief and sin. Jesus was the one who rescued us from sin and death, who turned us “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that [we] may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in [Jesus]” (Acts 26:18).

Jesus gave us His “light” and the brightness of His righteousness by taking upon Himself the “darkness” of the cross—the “darkness” of sin, death, and hell for us. Our text reminds us that when “we walk in the light” of faith not only do we 1) walk with God; not only do we 2) “have fellowship with one another,” but also 3) “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (v. 7)! That is the greatest blessing of all!

After all, aren’t we going to stumble at times? Yes! Are we going to wander back into the “darkness” of sin and possibly even weakness of faith or even full-on unbelief at times? Yes! But Christ has freed us from the guilt and stains of those sins by His shed blood. We have the precious promises in our text, “**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness... And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 1:9, 2:1-2).**

But let’s always remember: Christ has also freed us from sin’s power over us and our compulsion by nature to “Dwell in the Darkness” instead of “Living in the Light.” That is why John writes in our text, “**My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin” (2:1). The chains of “darkness” no longer hold us! God also tells us in His Word, “**You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness” (1 Thessalonians 5:5), and “**you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).******

So then, fellow children of the Light, let’s do just that! Through the power and “Light” of Christ and His Word let’s no longer Dwell in darkness; let’s “Live in the Light!” Amen.