



2. That you do not sin

1Joh 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

John's first letter is a letter of assurance based on testimony. We saw, we heard, we touched and now we proclaim it to you. And what is the testimony? What's the message?

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

Simple message - God is light.

The figure of light is often used in the Scriptures to describe that which is good, righteous, and true:

Eph 5: 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

God is good, righteous, and true! And the opposite is darkness sin/evil, unrighteousness, falsehood.

Darkness and light don't mix. You either have darkness or light,. So as John gets to talk to us about sin we see that sin and God are incompatible.

 Fellowship with God means no fellowship with sin!

Sin should not be a part of our Christian walk - it's incompatible. You can't have darkness where light is. So what do we learn about sin and the Christian here?

We are liars if we tolerate sin in our lives

1 John 1:6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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, his Son, purifies us from all sin

Strong language here. So if we claim to be the people of God but do acts of darkness - we are liars. Liars to whom? This seems to be less to ourselves. We already know we are in Christ. You normally have to lie to somebody else. So who are we lying to? We say we are one thing and then act as if we are not. The rest of the world. Our brothers and sisters in Christ and those in the wider world. When we hear people claim that the Christian faith is boring, untrue or irrelevant, where did they get that from. They didn't get it from God. And worse, they probably didn't just get it from Satan. They got it from us. By what we have said and the way that we have lived. We have lived in darkness and people drew their conclusions about God that He is boring untrue and irrelevant. And of Jesus - would they recognise Him in us?

Sin breaks fellowship

But look at verse 7. If we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another. By implication if we walk in the darkness we don't have fellowship. The quality of our fellowship reflects our walk together as God's people. It's a challenging point. The quality of our life together of a Church shows are walk together as much as it does individually. A product of our moving closer to God is our moving closer to one another. Sin destroys fellowship. Sin is at the heart of all church disunity.

But the meaning here is ambiguous - because it could also refer to our fellowship with God. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin*. With one another could hark back to verse 3 where we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. When we walk in darkness, we are not walking in fellowship with God. Our relationship with the Father is broken.

The story is told of a village that installed a water system. It worked well for a while until the pipe broke. No one noticed the leak except a frog who crept into the pipe and was carried along until he got stuck. The water stopped flowing which allowed other frogs to get in. The villagers dug up the pipe and found the mess inside! They had to clear the pipe and repair it.

It only takes one sin to break our fellowship with God. We'll see later that He doesn't desire that. But let's learn - sin destroys our fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. It's darkness and we're supposed to be people of the light - let's not walk in it but find forgiveness.

We are all sinners and are prone to walking in darkness

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives

And the challenge continues. There were probably people who claimed that Christ had made them perfect. They were like the Pharisees - claiming perfect self-righteous lives. We still get them - usually they are legalists. Religious people. But it's all self-deception. And it is strongly worded - look at verse 10

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives

This is a strongly worded letter. We have to realise we are sinners. We are supposed to walk in the light as He is in the light but inevitably we sin and we have to accept that.

We need to face up to the fact that we should walk in the light, but we're not perfect. I don't think we should have any problem with this. Apart from it being obvious, we have just finished a series on Spiritual Freedom and we discovered that we still have our sinful nature as long as we live and it will always try to drag us back.

As Paul would say, just as sin increased, grace increased all the more. John goes on to tell us how sin is dealt with. If you look through Paul's letter to the Romans, there is much about what is past. How Jesus has dealt with our sins and how we have been justified and come into a relationship with the living God. John takes that on and shows us how our sin is dealt with now. In fact John's gospel is a letter about relationship. Darkness is incompatible with light, but God has done what is necessary to maintain our fellowship with the Father and with the Son. We are told here what God does to maintain that relationship.

 **God is always ready to forgive the sin of the repentant**

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. It's one of those great promises of the Bible. God's not in the business of judging the poor and damning the weak. We saw this morning that He is a God of redemption. As we accept our sinfulness we find Him able to deal with it.

Not that it should be fatalism - I can't stop sinning, so I won't. John intends to encourage us not to but accepts the inevitability that we will. It's back to an old theme for us really. We are all sinners, but our sin is incompatible with God - but in Jesus we find grace and forgiveness so John can write this:

 **We have one who speaks in our defence**

2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

We aren't supposed to sin - but if we do Jesus is our advocate. An advocate here means the same as in law. Someone who speaks for us. When we are conscious of having sinned we need to realise that the Lord Jesus Christ already is there in heaven, at the right hand of the Father - and He is interceding for us. We should have no fear of coming before God when we have sinned. We find forgiveness we find acceptance. Why is God so ready to forgive? Why is Jesus so ready to help us?

 **Our sin has been dealt with**

Our sin has been dealt with. Let's read on

2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

He is the propitiation for our sins. He has been the sacrifice that has turned away God's wrath and justice. Some have questioned the use of propitiation by older translations and use expiation - a covering or dealing with sin. The NIV kops out and uses atoning sacrifice so it does not have to suggest what atonement is! But the use of advocate and propitiation suggest a law court. We have an advocate because the

wrath of the law and justice of God has been dealt with and Jesus can speak for us on the basis of His blood. This is a theme we will get back to at some point in this series.



What's the upshot here. First of all it's not a letter just about what has been past - it's one about how our lives are purified day by day. And that's important. We are called to walk in the light and not in darkness. That's living and that's now.

And we have to accept that we are likely to fall. We have no choice. But our sin has been dealt with. It's Jesus Himself that has dealt with the righteous requirement of a Holy God. And therefore we have one who speaks in our defence and we have a God who rushes to forgive us our sins.

Let's find forgiveness afresh this evening.



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