

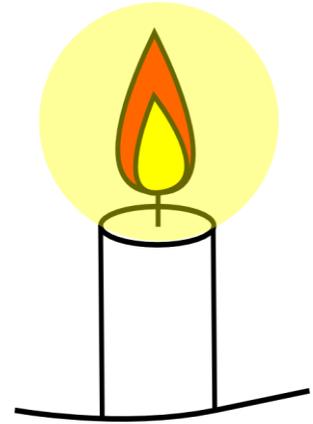
June 23, 2019

Walking in the Light

"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 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."

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

I John 1:5-10



As the last living Apostle, John wrote his gospel and three short letters, along with the Revelation, to the church at the end of the first century. There were undoubtedly a lot of things John could have focused on in these last Apostolic writings, but guided by the Spirit, he takes us back to the basics.

He begins this, the first of his short letters, with a reminder of the source of our faith. *"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."* (I John 1:1) John reminds us that Jesus is the Christ, the Light of the World, and that he, as an Apostle, was an eye witness to everything that Jesus did and said. And so, John begins this letter, as he does his gospel, with the fundamentals of our relationship with God. First, he tells us, *"God is light, in him there is no darkness at all."* God is completely good. There is no evil in him. None.

In stark contrast, you and I are sinners. So, how can we, as sinners, have any relationship with God who is totally good? If it depended on our own perfection, the answer would be simple. As sinners we can have no relationship with God. But, because of the Father's great love for us, we can be made sinless through the blood of his Son, sacrificed for us. John writes, *"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."*

Thus, if we are walking in the light, if we are confessing our sins and seeking his way, then the blood of Jesus cleanses or purifies us from all sin. This is not a one time event, but a constant function of our relationship with the Father. My sins are constantly being forgiven; wiped clean over and over again.

Does this mean I no longer sin? John will tell me that to claim this makes me a liar, and it makes him a liar. You and I are still sinners. We sin every day. We sin every time we fail to do what God has commanded us to do. Our relationship with God can never be based on our perfection, because we are never perfect.

But, the Apostle will tell us, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* The difference between the lost who sin, and the saved who also sin, is not found in the sin, but in our attitude toward our sin.

While we want to hide our sin, to justify our sin, and/or to deny our sin, for those of us who are *"...walking in the light..."* personal honesty is essential. I must own my sin; specifically

confessing my sins to the God of heaven. This attitude of personal honesty is who I am becoming never just what I do.

I am a sinner. Sometimes, in my anger and frustration, I let myself hate others. Sometimes, I covet what others have ignoring the blessings God showers on me daily. Sometimes, I do things that are bad for me and bad for others. I am a sinner and my willingness to acknowledge those sins keeps me in the light; keeps me purified.

As a believer, I have to be honest with my own failings and the reason this is so important is that in my personal honesty I can discover the capacity to love others even when they are sinners. My honest ownership of my sins and the my overwhelming need for the blood of Jesus, should make it more and more possible for me to extend the grace I have received to others; to love as Jesus loved.

