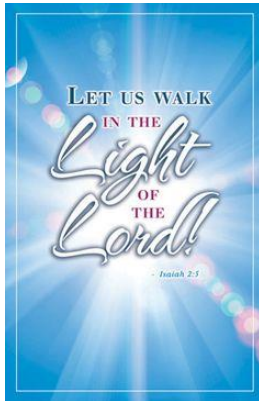


July 14, 2019

Walking in the Light



"...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."

I John 1:7

"Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us...Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son."

I John 2:18-27

"Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous."

I John 3:7-10

When I use the word 'antichrist' what image pops into your head? For most of us, I think, the picture that we have of the 'antichrist' is of some terrifying supernatural being on the prowl among us.

In reality the 'antichrist' is, as the Apostle describes him, anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ and/or that God exists; particularly those who once believed. John writes that many of these 'antichrists' have already come in his time and certainly our world is overwhelmed with those who deny Jesus as the Christ in our time as well.

Literally we are surrounded by those who would lead us to deny Jesus not just in what we say, but even worse, in how we live. And maybe that's the warning that all of us need to hear: you and I can be 'antichrists' if we live in such a way that our lives deny Jesus. When you and I fail to live before the world as Jesus did we are, in a very real way, living as 'antichrists'.

The test of any individual's true nature is not found in what they claim to believe. No, the Apostle wants us to understand that how we live, how anyone lives, is how we and they demonstrate their true character. Our day-to-day lives are our testimony to what and who we really are. Our true nature is always demonstrated in the way we live, not in what we claim. And, anyone who claims to be a believer, but denies the reality of Jesus through his life is an 'antichrist'.

John then, comes back around to the basic theme of his letter. Our faith is lived out in how we treat others. Remember that John personally heard the Master say, *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 7:12) The Apostle shared in the last supper with Jesus and witnessed him command, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:24-15)

There will always be those among us, sadly some who claim to be believers, that entice us to set aside this basic tenet of Jesus' teaching and so deny him. Denying Jesus is and always has been about more than the words we say. We can, and many do, claim to be followers of Jesus. But the truth in our claims is not found in our words, but in the way we live. The acid test for our faith is always found in the way we live; in the way we treat others.

Walking in the light demands that our day-to-day existence constantly reflects the love of Jesus in action. The promise that John began with is constant. *"...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." In chapter three of this letter John reminds us of the promise of eternity with our Lord and he also reminds us that, *"Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."* (I John 3:1-3)

We cannot let the influencers around us convince us to deny Jesus either in what we profess or in how we live. We must reject their false teachings and live Jesus before the world. We demonstrate our true faith when we purify our lives, our words and our deeds so that our love for others is obvious. Anything less denies our Lord.

