

~ 1 John ~

Lesson 5- Walking in the Light

Let's begin by reading our text today- **1 John 1:5-7**

We are continuing our study of 1 John and we are learning about the Light. Two weeks ago, we learned what it means to have fellowship with the Light. That to have fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ is to share life with them. Lay down your selfish will and commit your life to Jesus Christ, abide in Him, love Him, and put your absolute trust in Him for eternal life. Last week we learned, "that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all." This statement is the underlying means of why we have eternal life in Jesus Christ. Because God's Light was manifested in His Son, who is the True Light, and He gives Eternal Life to all who believe in Him. If you abide in Him and commit your life to the Light, then you are in fellowship with eternal life.

Now in verse 6, John says, "those who are in fellowship with Him cannot walk in darkness. If you say you are in fellowship with Him and you are walking in darkness, you are a liar." Today we will begin looking at how John is exposing the darkness by comparing between the light and the darkness.

Before we get started, I want to define some key words in these verses:

1 John 1:6-7-⁶ *If we say that we have **fellowship**, (koinonia, κοινωνία) with Him, and **walk**, (peripateo, περιπατέω) in darkness, we lie and do not **practice**, (poieo, ποιέω) the truth.* ⁷ *But if we **walk**, (peripateo, περιπατέω) in the light as He is in the light, we have **fellowship**, (koinonia, κοινωνία) with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

All three of these Greek words have the same idea that work together to determine the fruit of your life. Notice the progression... It starts with your commitment:

Practice- poieo, ποιέω, a commitment of the heart

- Whatever your heart is committed to, will determine your walk

Walk- peripateo, περιπατέω, a habitual behavior, manner of life, walk of life

- Your commitment and your walk of life is a direct result of who you are in fellowship with.

Fellowship- koinonia, κοινωνία, a partnership, this is a oneness, it means to share in common, to share life with

If you are committed to evil (the opposite of Truth), then you will walk in darkness and you are in fellowship with the darkness. If you are committed to the Truth, then you will walk in the Light as He is in the Light, and you are in fellowship with the Light. John is making a simple point with no compromise.

That is what John is doing in verse 6. He starts by making a contrast between the Light and the darkness. Those who are in fellowship with the Light compared to those in fellowship with the darkness. This begins a major thread throughout this epistle. John is giving us the tools to expose the darkness and discern between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.

Last week we began looking at this contrast between light and darkness, and we spent some time to read what Jesus said about this. In **Matthew 6:24**, Jesus tells us that you can't be in fellowship with darkness and in fellowship with light at the same time. You can't serve two masters. You can't serve God and mammon. You can't love God and love this world. Then in that same discourse continuing into Matthew 7, Jesus gives us the example that a good tree cannot bear bad fruit..., Matthew 7:18. This is exactly what John is saying when he says if you say you are in fellowship with the Light and walk in darkness you are a liar because you cant do both.

Now if you go back a few verses to **Matthew 7:15**, you will see the point Jesus is making. This is how you know false teachers. Those wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus says, "**You will know them by their fruit.**" Not by what they say, because they are liars and they will say anything to deceive you. You will know them by their behavior, their walk of life, their choices and what they are committed to. This is the point John is making.

As John introduces these false heretics into his letter, he does so by exposing them to the Truth. This is the only way to expose the darkness, to shine the light of Truth. John is doing this by contrasting the Light and the darkness. And he is teaching us how to distinguish between what is false and what is Truth. It is not by what they say, it is how they behave. What is the fruit they are bearing? What is the behavior and manner of their life?

In this first chapter, John is setting up his entire epistle to make a point to assure the hearts of the believer in our eternal life in Christ, and to distinguish between the spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.

In the latter half of the first century, in addition to the Legalism of the Judaizers, there was a false heresy that began to rise up from the enemy to sway those in the church away from the Light. We first see Paul battling against these people in Ephesus and in **1 Timothy 6:20**, Paul gives these heretics a name, these were what is known as the Gnostics. Those who thought they could attain to everlasting life and happiness by attaining to a higher level of gnosis, γνῶσις, knowledge, and they were using scripture to sway Christians into their heretical thinking.

The enemy is deceitful. It comes at you subtly, disguised as an angel of light. And so the Gnostics began teaching of enlightenment through knowledge or gnosis, γνῶσις. They admitted that Jesus had come to shine the Light, but this is what is so deceptive. The Gnostics twisted the word of God to say that Jesus came to bring the spark of knowledge or gnosis, γνῶσις, and they said once you understand God through this spark of knowledge, then you could achieve salvation.

The Gnostics said that because they had the spark of knowledge “from Jesus”, they had a relationship with God, that they were perfect and had no sin. They believed the inner man was born perfect and sinless but was trapped in this corrupted sinful flesh. But they believed in a dualism where the flesh could not affect the spirit. Therefore, they could do anything their flesh desired, and it didn’t affect their inner man. They said to become righteous, a person must ascend to a certain level of knowledge to unlock their spirit from the sinful flesh. They did not believe Jesus to be the propitiation for sin or that He even came in the flesh. Only that He was endowed with the power of the Aeons to bring salvation through knowledge.

They claimed that those who attained to this higher knowledge were then a part of a higher class of people above everybody else. This continued to feed their flesh with pride and arrogance. So here you have these people who think they are better and smarter than everyone else. They can fulfill any selfish desire without consequences and the entire time think they have fellowship with God. Doesn’t this sound like a group of people in the world today? I am not going to name any names, but you can still see this same spirit in the world today.

If you remember our study on 2 Timothy (Lesson 9), we spent some time talking about these people and their heresies that are still in effect today. This is false teaching and the doctrine of demons, but they did it in a very subtle way. They would even quote the Bible to prove their point, and this is what led to them rewriting and corrupting the Bible, which has had lasting effects even up to today. This is why most modern translations are missing 48 complete verses and have thousands of other changes that differ from the KJV and the NKJV.

Irenaeus tells us there was a man by the name of Cerinthus who was contemporary with the Apostle John in Ephesus. And it is this man and his group of Gnostics that John is writing about. Irenaeus writes in his book: “Against Heresies” – chapter 3.11.1, “*John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men...*” Notice how Irenaeus says John is battling these heresies... by proclaiming the Gospel.

John was dealing with Cerinthus and the Gnostics while he lived in Ephesus, but these heretics began attacking Paul 40 years earlier when he first set up the church in Ephesus around 55AD, and he warned the elders when he left on his 3rd missionary journey to beware of these savage wolves, **Acts 20:29-32**.

In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells us how vicious these people were. He talks about the beasts of Ephesus in 1 Cor 15:32; he says there was an open door in Ephesus but with many adversaries, 1 Cor 16:8-9; and in 2 Cor 1:8 he speaks of the trouble that came to him in Asia. And in 1st and 2nd Timothy you remember from our study that

Timothy was ordained as bishop of Ephesus, which is the same church John is writing to, and Paul warned Timothy of these heretics and charged him to expel these false teachers out of the church, 1 Tim 1:3-7, 18-20; 4:1-2, 6-7; 6:3-5, 11-12, 20-21; 2 Tim 1:13-15; 2:1-2, 14-26; 3:1-9, 13-15; 4:1-5.

Now in First John, in a rebuttal to these heresies, John gives us tests of Truth so that we might expose these false heretics. John begins verse 6 by writing, “if we say...” This tells us there were heretics within the church “saying” something different than the Truth and John is giving us the tools to distinguish between the spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.

Notice the way John words verse 6, “if WE say”, not if THEY say. Why does he word it this way? Because these false heretics were within the church, wolves in sheep’s clothing, pretending to be one of the brethren and then swaying them away from the Truth. This is like what Paul said in Galatians 1:6–8- ⁶ *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to **pervert the gospel of Christ.** ⁸ But even if **WE**, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*

John says “WE” because these liars were pretending to be one of the brethren in the church. In this letter we can begin to see their lies based on what they were “saying” versus what they are “doing”. Six times John speaks of these hypocrites “saying” one thing, and then “doing” another.

1 John 1:6- *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

1 John 1:8- *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

1 John 1:10- *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

1 John 2:6- *He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

1 John 2:9- *He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.*

1 John 4:20- *If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar...*

1 John 3:18–19-¹⁸ *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.*

It is not what we say, but what we do, our commitment, our manner of life, our behavior, the fruit that we bear shows what is in our heart. This is opposite what the Gnostics were saying. The Gnostics were saying it didn’t matter what you did in the flesh, because the spirit was perfect and could not be tainted with anything physical.

In verse 6 John says, “*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*” Their fruit is telling something different than what they are saying. “*You will know them by their fruit*”, Matt 7:16. They say they have an intimate partnership with the Light, but yet their fruit says they have a habitual behavior of walking in darkness... What is walking in darkness? John explains this in the next statement, “they do not practice, , the Truth. They are not committed to the Truth. They are liars. And remember who John says is a liar? 1 John 2:22- “*Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.*”

This takes us into verse 7 where John now makes a contrast between those who “say” they are in the Light versus those who are truly walking in the Light... If our fellowship is with the Light, then we will walk in the Light as He is in the Light. Not what the Gnostics were doing by saying they have fellowship with the Light and then walk in darkness. Remember the issue isn’t if we sin or not, because we all sin. The point John is making is what are you committed to? If you are committed to the Light, then your manner of life and habitual behaviors will match this.

In verse 7, John gives us three proofs of someone who is in fellowship with the Light, 1) you will walk in the Light as He is in the Light, 2) you will love the brethren and have fellowship with them and 3) the blood of Jesus is continually cleansing you from all sin. Today we will be focusing on the first proof, “walking in the light as He is in the Light”

In each believer, there is an enlightenment that arises in our soul when we receive the Light. First, a spirit is born again, born from above, and we are a new creation in Christ Jesus, 2 Cor 5:17. The process of receiving the Light is to first acknowledge the need of a Savior. Understanding our depravity without Him, renouncing our old ways by repenting, having a change of thinking, metanoia, and receiving God's gift of eternal life through His Son. It is at this point that we are rescued out from the power of darkness into His marvelous Light. In 1 John 3:5 and 8 John tells us that Jesus' Life was manifested, shined out to the world to take away our sins and destroy the works of the devil. This goes along with what Paul said in Hebrews 2:14- He destroyed Him who had the power of death, that is the devil...

At the cross, death was defeated, the bonds of sin and death were broken and all those who receive the Light are set free from the power of darkness. This enlightenment begins with the gospel, when life and immortality are brought to light by His Word, **2 Tim 1:10**. This initial enlightenment is our justification, when the Light shines in the darkness of our soul, and we are enlightened to our evil deeds and we know that without a Savior to pay our debt of sin we will be in eternal death. Those who receive the Light come to Him and they are born again. But this is not the end of our salvation, but rather the beginning. Remember what Jesus said, to follow Him, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him, Lk 9:23

Our new reborn spirit has the desire to do the will of God because it is in perfect holiness and righteousness. But the old sinful man, consisting of our body and our soul, still has the desires of the flesh, Rom 7:15-25; Gal 5:17-18. But this doesn't mean we just give into the desires of the flesh like the Gnostics. Our spirit is redeemed unto righteousness, but our soul is eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body, Rom 8:23-25. This is when we get our glorified bodies to live eternally with Him. But until that point, in this life, we must crucify the flesh with its sin nature and put it to death, and not allow sin to reign in our mortal body, **Rom 6:1-14**.

This is the process of sanctification. It is a lifetime walk toward holiness in Him, one that we must work at every day. This is why Paul, and the writers of the NT are so adamant about walking in holiness in this life. When the NT speaks of walking in holiness, it is not to be justified, but it is because we are justified that we walk in holiness. This is the fruit of our justification, the fruit of being a Christian, Rom 6:22. It is what faithful Christians do. This is what John means by walking in the Light as He is in the Light. This is having a fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This is, as John says in 1 John 2:29... **ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην**, being committed to righteousness; being fully committed to Him and His will, becoming one in Him. This is the idea of koinonia, sharing life with Him. This is having fellowship in the Light. And as we are in fellowship in Him, the Light continues to shine and we are continually enlightened in His ways, His plans, and His purpose. I want to close today by reading from the book of Ephesians. The Gnostics were raising their heresies while Paul was in Ephesus, so now that we have this background, let's read what Paul had to say to refute their error, **Eph 1:17-20**.

Once we are born again, it is a decision to put off the old man of sin and put on Christ and walk in holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit. This isn't done by our good works, but by giving our heart to Him and committing our life to Him. This is aligning our will with His will, **Eph 4:17-5:1-14**.

This is the enlightenment of the Truth. And what is the key to all of this? Knowing Jesus. And how do we know Jesus? Through His Word. Through reading your Bible every day.

This is walking in the Light as He is in the Light. Those who have fellowship with the Light do not walk in darkness, but they are committed to the Light. This is practicing the Truth. This is knowing Him, being one with Him, this is walking in the newness of life unto sanctification.