

Walk In The Light

1 John 1:5-7

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7 (ESV))

As I read and study and ponder over the truths given in these scriptures, daily I realize that there is far, far more depth within the meaning of each of the words than I could ever think or imagine. And that is so with some of the very first words given here, beginning with the word “light”, the very first “light” that entered into our world.

You’ll recall that it was on that first day of creation that God created “light” saying, 3 . . . “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. (Genesis 1:3-4 (ESV))

Over much time and study, I have come to believe and accept that there is far, far more that each of us should know about that “first” light. Did it have other qualities and features within it, qualities and features that go far beyond the ordinary basic power and facility of “lighting up” the world?

You’ll recall that there in the Garden of Eden, before Adam and Eve were tempted and fell, there existed a perfectly harmonious world, “harmony” between God and man, harmony between Adam and Eve and harmony even between man and all the animals. The words there in Genesis give reason to believe that all the animals lived off the vegetation and therefore were harmless to Adam and Eve.

And I have wondered if that harmony came from that “perfect light of God” that shone in those day, a “light” that allowed everyone, Adam and Eve and the animals to see each other as God sees them, vision filled with love and grace and mercy.

And then, as I have continued to study about that “light”, I have encountered other truths such as these words in our text that describe God as being “light”.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5-7 (ESV))

And then also, the Lord Jesus saying in John 8:12,

12 . . . "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." (John 8:12 (NASB))

And then even further, as Jesus spoke about those who follow after Him,
14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 (NASB))

I know that God sternly warns us away from adding anything to these scriptures. And I never want to do that. But with that being said, we can see from these words that I have just read, that God hides many of the "secrets of His kingdom" within His manner of wording.

And it seems that this "light of God" spoken about here has those very special "secrets of His kingdom" interwoven within it, a kind of "light" that is able to actually reach into the souls of men and to influence and to guide many of the things and activities that take place in our daily lives.

Listen to these words and consider if you can hear nuances of hidden meaning beyond the simple words.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7 (ESV))

These simply-put words declare a message to us about "light", and also about "darkness", saying to us that there is more within their meaning than our simple thought processes might first perceive.

And yes, even unbelieving people are able to know when analogies and metaphors are being used. And these words clearly are given in a metaphorical manner.

But the Holy Spirit within me loudly declares that there is still even more, far, far more to be understood by these words than a simple metaphor can explain? This kind of "light" and this kind of "darkness" speak meanings that reach far beyond what the simple and ordinary intellectual mind can perceive. These meanings reach into realms of the spirit,

“spiritual thoughts” that must be “spiritually discerned”, our minds perceiving thoughts and understanding by the Holy Spirit that we would not otherwise be able to know.

As for the “darkness” spoken about here, we said in our message last week that though yes it has a semblance to the kind of darkness of the nighttime, and yes also that it has a semblance to “blindness”. But it goes much further in its effects on us. This “darkness” actually reaches into our souls with a whole other kind of “darkness”, strange and inexplicable, a blindness and a darkness that our ordinary mind can’t even realize is present.

And this darkness is so pervasive, covering over and enshrouding the minds, the souls, the spirits of every person and every activity that exists on the earth.

And unlike the nighttime kind of darkness, this special “darkness” actually has a nature and a personality of its own. With sin as its foundation, this “darkness” has a “predatory” sinful nature, a nature that pursues after us and seeks to reach into, and to invade and to dominate and to control everything that takes place within every heart and every soul that resides within that “darkness”, the way people think, the things they say and the things they do.

But again, though this darkness is so pervasive and has such dominance and control, its presence goes unnoticed by its residents, utterly imperceptible to their ordinary minds and thoughts, people fumbling and stumbling about in their miseries, not able to recognize what is causing their suffering.

And in many ways, there is a similar sense regarding the special kind of “light” that is spoken about here, “God’s light”. Those who do not have Christ as their Savior walk within their “darkness”, with God’s “light” shining all about them, but they seldom, if ever, see it. It is right at their fingertips, a powerful “light” that could change them, and bless them and guide them to a better life.

And on those special occasions when God opens their eyes so they can get a glimpse of Him and be drawn to Him, too often that precious “light” is so painful to their “spiritual eyes” that they quickly turn their heads away, and retreat back into their “darkness”.

But praise be to God, as some people do receive Christ and are saved, they begin right away to perceive glimmers of “light” that they had never seen before. Like a person who has been blind from birth would be shocked and excited if they were to be miraculously healed and suddenly able to see their loved ones and the things around them for the first time, so also, the new “sight” given to a new believer is shocking, but

it's also very exciting to them. Suddenly, they are able to see people and things in the way that God sees them. And they are blessed and forever changed.

Consider what I am saying! This "light of God" is filled with wisdom and power and might. And as it begins to filter into our hearts and minds and souls, we really do change. We see everything differently. Our hearts and our attitudes are softened towards people that we once despised. We hear a whole different conversation taking place as we talk with people. We gain an understanding and knowledge and wisdom that we never had before. And that is when the Holy Spirit begins a very powerful work within us. He begins to enable us to "walk in God's light".

For myself, I think of the transition that has taken place in my own thinking and understanding regarding matters such as abortion and homosexuality.

As an unbeliever, I seldom even thought much about women having abortions. I would know that their new pregnancy was inconvenient to their plans and lifestyles. And when they would casually make their trip to the abortion clinic to have that "little blob of tissue" removed, I was comfortable with their behavior, even sometimes agreeing with their decision.

I lived within the "darkness" and my mind was influenced and controlled by that "darkness". And I had no idea that that "little blob of tissue" was a precious child of God, personally woven together in that mother's womb by the very "Hands of God". How sad! How so very sad, for that baby, for that mother and for me! How so very, very sad!

And I can recall, in my earliest days of working at the bank, I worked alongside three homosexual men. My thoughts in those days were very casual towards their behavior. I really had no idea about sin and especially that their behavior was offensive towards God. Yes, I understood that such things as killing people or robbing people was a "sin". But as for homosexual behavior, the thought never occurred to me. Those three men were just "who they were" and it was OK with me.

On one occasion, when one of their homosexual spouses passed away, I can recall that many of my fellow workers treated the matter in the same way they would have with an ordinary husband and wife.

Again, how so very sad, for them and for me. We all lived and walked in "darkness", never able to "see" the "lostness" of it all, that those men's homosexual lifestyles and behaviors were an offense to God and detestable to Him. And as for me, my

acceptance of their behavior as being OK was probably every bit as sinful in God's sight.

But thanks be to God, when the Spirit of Christ came to live within my heart and my soul, my mind began to be "renewed", slowly at first, but then more and more. The "light" that God speaks about here, began to shine on those kinds of sinful behaviors and on many other kinds of sinful behavior. And I began to see all those people and their behaviors through a different "lens". I began to see them through the eyes of Christ.

I must confess that at first, the "light" was so shocking to my senses that my first reaction was to immediately begin to despise those women who were having abortions. How dare a mother mercilessly slaughter her little baby!

But then over time, my heart softened towards them personally. And although yes, I still do, to some degree, struggle with condemning thoughts about women who do those awful things to their little babies, the "light of Christ" continues to soften my thoughts about the person, while still despising their sin. I now have compassion for them as they live within their "darkness". And I know that their only hope is that someday they will allow the light of Christ to come into their souls and change them, as it did me.

And likewise, with those who choose the homosexual behavior and lifestyle. They also live and move and have their being within that all-pervasive "darkness". And they have no idea, no clue that their behavior is despicable to God. And even when they hear someone pleading with them to "turn to the light", they instead turn a blind eye.

And again, though I still do struggle to have compassion on those people who make their choices to have behavior that is completely detestable to God, my heart has softened a great deal towards them. The Holy Spirit reminds me that I also once walked in "darkness", and yes, even now still do have struggles with it. That realization gives me far more compassion today than I have ever had before.

One last personal example . . . before I answered the "call of Christ" to be my Savior, I was a "heavy drinker". And I have a genetic predisposition towards anger and violence when I drink. As soon as I received Christ into my life, that was one of the first "glimmers of light" that the Lord Jesus put into my life. I knew that I would have to quit alcohol immediately and forever, no more drinking, not even a casual beer or wine. And God enabled me to do that, quickly and completely.

And that is part of what God is saying to us here in these words,

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7 (ESV))

As the Holy Spirit lives within us, His “light” immediately begins to shine into our dark world and reveal the many sins that have controlled our life and our behaviors for so long.

But as these words tell us, there is a response that is absolutely required from us. This is where the “sovereign hand of God” interconnects with our “free will”. This is where each person must respond to the “light”, turn away from the “darkness” and begin “walking in God’s light”. And no, it is not the simple and easy step that it sounds to be. Our freewill response must be impelled by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

And it is only as we fully surrender to God’s Spirit that we can move further and begin to “walk in His light”.

And thankfully, the Holy Spirit does not leave us wondering what we are to do next. It’s not a matter of us just giving up our “old ways”. Yes, we must do that. But more than that, we are to “put on the “new” man, the “new” woman” that we have become in Christ. We must immediately begin a lifelong endeavor of adding the things of God to our new faith that He has given to us. As we are told in 2nd Peter 1,

5 . . . for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. (2 Peter 1:5-8 (NKJV))

And as we add each of these Godly attributes to our faith, God’s Spirit within us will enable us to begin “walking in His light as He is in the light”.

May we pray!