

The Reality and Ramifications of God's Nature (1 John 1:5-10)

Introduction:

The Strike

One time the electrical workers of a big city, who felt underappreciated and underpaid, called a strike to initiate a city-wide blackout. It had hardly begun when a child of one of the laborers became seriously ill. When the physician arrived, he told the mother that the little girl would need immediate surgery to save her life. There was no time to take her to the hospital, so the doctor quickly prepared the kitchen table for an emergency operation. Darkness was falling as the final sanitary precautions were completed. The doctor flipped on the light switch, but there was no electricity. It was impossible to perform the surgery without light. Just then the father burst into the room and happily exclaimed, 'The strike is complete. There isn't a light burning in the city!' The little girl died on that kitchen table.

Source unknown

- I. A sad story but it reminds us of the importance of light, doesn't it? Light is one of those things that we pretty much take for granted until we find ourselves without it. The truth, however, is that without light there is nothing but chaos and confusion. This is why the first thing that God did while the earth that He formed sat in darkness, was to bring forth light. The Bible says,

Gen 1:1-3

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Yes, light is a necessary element to human existence and without it our survival would be impossible. When we get up in the morning, one of the first things we do is turn on the light. We need light to get ready for the day. We need light to work. We need light to play. We need light to see what we are doing and to know where we are going. Almost everything that we do necessitates light. Now, with this in mind, turn your Bible to 1 Jn. 1:5-10 and let's read that passage together. This will be our text for our lesson.

- II. When John calls God light in ver. 5, He is pointing to the very nature of God. In this lesson we want to spend our time considering The Reality and Ramifications of God's Nature.

Lesson:

- I. **The Reality of God's Nature:**

When John says that God is light, he's referring to God's perfect purity. Everything about God is perfect and pure. All of His actions and activities are perfect and pure. All of His decisions and determinations are perfect and pure. All of His promises and plans are perfect and pure. All of His words and ways are perfect and pure. Everything God ever does, everything that God ever says, everything that God ever thinks is perfectly pure and free from all fault. This is the message, says John, that we have heard. Now John tells us two things about this message.

A. Revealed to them by Jesus (v. 5a).

The word *message* here means an announcement. God is light was the announcement of Jesus when he came on the scene, not just by the words He spoke, but by the life that He lived. All of the words of Jesus pointed to this truth. All of the ways of Jesus pointed to this truth. All of the works of Jesus pointed to this truth. And may I say to you that no one was ever more qualified to give us a message about God than Jesus for He and the Father are one and they have been together from the beginning.

John 1:1-2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.KJV

When Jesus spoke about God, then, He knew what He was talking about and His message was that God is light. And that message was picked up and proclaimed by his apostles. Let me ask you: should this not be our proclamation too? Of course it should because God hasn't changed. God is still light, that is, He is still perfectly pure and free from all fault and we should be telling this message to everyone who will listen. We should be saying to people if you turn to God, you will never regret it because God is light. If you give your life over to God, he will never disappoint you, He will never lie to you, He will never betray you, He will never leave or forsake you because God is light. This was the announcement of Jesus. This was the announcement of the apostles. And this should be our announcement too. Now, what is the practical result of this message? John tells us.

B. Results in An Absence of Darkness (v. 5b).

"In Him is no darkness at all," John says. Listen to me: darkness and light cannot coexist. When you walk into a dark room and switch on the light, what happens to the darkness? The darkness is completely swallowed up by the light, isn't it. The fact is when light comes on the scene, darkness ceases to exist and so it is with God. You see, the message of Christ

concerning God was two-fold. Yes God is light, but that's not all—the message is that in Him there is no darkness AT ALL. Listen to me: there can be no darkness in Him. There can be no darkness near Him. There can be no darkness around Him because the darkness is swallowed up by the glory of His illumines light.

II. The Ramifications of God's Nature:

If God is light, then there are certain things which must stand true and John mentions two of them in our text. Let's look at the ramifications of God's nature.

A. Fellowship with God Is Ruined if We Walk in Darkness (ver. 6).

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

If light in this text refers to the perfect purity of God, then darkness refers to all that is morally polluted and impure. Anything that is sinful, morally or doctrinally, falls into the realm of darkness. Anything that is contrary to God's will or opposed to God's word falls into the realm of darkness. Anything that is ungodly, anything that is unholy, anything that is unrighteous, anything that is unclean falls into the realm of darkness. Every form of fornication and every type of transgression falls into the realm of darkness. Every look that is lustful and every brand of bad behavior falls into the realm of darkness.

Now then, whatever the form of sin may be, when you live in it, you are walking in darkness. Listen to me, you are not walking in darkness every time you sin. The truth is, and we will get into this a little more later, we all sin from time to time. But when you decide that sin is no big deal and that you can live, lodge and lounge about in it and still claim to have fellowship with God, John said you're lying to yourself. There are a lot of people, both in and out of the church, who are living a life of self-deception, thinking that their actions have no bearing on their relationship to God. Now I can understand why some in the world are under this delusion, but it puzzles me sometimes when my brethren fall prey to the same lie (Some forsaken the assembling and claim to be shut-in, some party on the weekend, some hold grudges, some are in unscriptural marriages, some are perpetual abusers of the tongue, etc.) Your actions do have a bearing on your relationship with God. You can't walk in darkness and have fellowship with God (**Gal. 5:19-21**).

There was once a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon.

The child who was saved grew up to be a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, many years before, had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience.

But the words from the bench silenced his plea, "Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged."

Listen: One day Jesus will say to rebellious sinners, "During your life time I was the Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your Judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

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If you are walking in darkness, allow Christ to be your Savior today by obeying the gospel, so you will not stand before Him ashamed in the terrible day of judgment that is coming upon all the world.

And let's not forget that God sees everything and everybody. You might be able to fool man, but you can't fool God. You can sin on the down low but He Who sits on high sees what you're doing. You can maintain fellowship with Christians who are limited in what they know and see, but when you live in sin, your fellowship with God is ruined because He knows and sees everything (**Heb. 4:13; Psa. 139:1-12**).

B. Fellowship with God Is Reached if We Walk in the Light (ver. 7).

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another...

To walk in the light is the opposite of walking in darkness. To walk in the light is to live a life that consists of habitual holiness and relentless righteousness. It is a life that is characterized by commitment and marked by morality. It is a life that regularly transcends the traps of the devil and overcomes the obstacles that he sets in our path. In short, walking in the light is to live a life that is directed towards God because God is light. Now how do we do this? The answer is simple – we must walk in the Word of God.

Ps 119:105

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Ps 19:8

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Stop and think about this my friends. The statutes of the Lord are right. If you live by the Word of God, you are living right. If you teach the Word of God, you're teaching right. If you believe the Word of God, you are believing right. And if you walk in the Word of God, you're walking right because that means you are walking in the light. Listen to me: the world might say that you are wrong, but you're right. Man might disagree with you, but you're right. Society might frown upon you, co-workers might gain up on you, even family members might dispute with you, but as you are walking in the Word of God you are right because the statutes of the Lord are right and the commandment of the Lord is pure. And listen to this:

Ps 43:3

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

The Psalmist is talking about fellowship. What does light and truth lead to? The answer is it leads to God. It leads to God's holy hill. It leads to God's tabernacles. It leads to where God is and that's fellowship. I don't know about you but if God is there, that's where I want to be. I don't care what else is there or not there, if God is there, that's where I want to be. There may not be a plethora of earthly riches there but if God is there, that's where I want to be. There may not be pools of popularity there, but that's where I want to be. We may not be saturated with earthly satisfaction or flooded with the foolish things of the flesh, but if God is there, that's where I want to be. Now again, how do you get to where God is? The Psalmist says God's light and God's truth will lead us there and that's John's message too. *"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."*

And let me tell you something about this fellowship: if we are walking in the light, our fellowship with God is sure. It is not "we might" or "we could," it is "we have" fellowship one with another and there is nothing that the devil can do about it. Oh how Satan wants you to question and doubt your relationship with God. He wants you to think that your relationship with God is in question. He wants you to think your relationship with God is on shaky ground and that it might at any moment dissipate and disappear. But the truth is we can be sure about our fellowship with God because it is not based on our ability to avoid sin altogether. How do we know this to be true? John tells us! Listen to what he says next:

"... and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin."

The word cleanse here means, *"to free from the guilt of sin."* The word cleanse itself admits the fact that we have sinned. If there was no sin, there would be no need for cleansing. But the truth is the cleansing is

needed, necessary and real, but that's not all—it's continual. You see the Greek word is in the present tense and denotes an on-going cleansing. Someone says, *"that's true of small sins but not major sins"*. No, John said "all sin." Someone says, *"that's true of my past sins but not present sins."* No, John said "all sin." Someone says, *"that true of harmless sins, but not hurtful sins."* No, John said "we are cleansed from all sin." What's the condition? We must walk in the light. Remember now, that means we cannot be sinning habitually and purposely and think that somehow God is going to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to our transgression. No, that kind of living constitutes walking in darkness. But if you are doing the very best you can to live in harmony with the will of God, and you are living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, you don't have to worry about some unknown sin that has snuck by your defenses and tiptoed into your life because the blood of Christ continues to cleanse as long as we are walking in the light. Does this give us a license to sin? God forbid! And if you think that you have a license to sin, you are walking in darkness already.

Rom 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? KJV

This is John's whole point. We cannot live in sin and enjoy fellowship with God. We cannot do it! We must walk in the light. We must live in the light. We must abide in the light and then, and only then, can we have fellowship with God.

III. The Result of Man's Denial.

Now, there were those who denied the truth of what John has taught by simply declaring that we as Christians never sin. There are those in churches of Christ today who truly believe that they never sin. Well what that does is remove a very significant part of God's plan of salvation. Remember, the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us. Why did God give the blood of Christ this kind of cleansing power? He did it because He knew it was necessary. Now then, let's look at the result of man's denial.

A. If We Say that We Have No Sin, We Deceive Ourselves... (vers. 8-9).

When John says, "If we say that we have no sin," he is literally saying, "If we say that we are sin-free." Listen: it is just not realistic to think that we are totally sin-free, or to even think that it is required. That kind of thinking devalues God's grace and the on-going power of our Lord's cleansing blood and it robs us of the joy of the Lord because it obliterates our hope. Let's consider the teaching of Paul in Romans 4 for just a moment (**Rom.**

4:1-8, 15). This whole passage cries out the truth that we are saved by faith in God and not by sinless living. And what our text in 1 Jn. 1 does for us is it tells us why sinless perfection is not required—we are constantly cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Now, what is the problem with thinking that we are sin-free? First, it causes us to live a lie. John says that the truth is not in us if we think that we have no sin. And this in turns prevents us from reaching our full potential. How you ask? Let me say it like this. The fact that I sin from time to time makes me want to do better. I want to grow in Christ. I want to become more like God. I want to live more pure and achieve more holiness. Listen to me: I have already become free from sin by the blood of Christ, now I want to be sin-free. I want to be totally without pride, lust, hatred, selfishness, fear, etc. That's my aim. That's my ambition. That's my aspiration. But if I believe that I have already attained that lofty goal, why should I continue to strive for it (**Phil 3:12**). Second, if I don't think that I ever sin as a Christian, it will prevent me from confessing to God (**ver. 9**). Now there is something even worse than believing that we are sin-free as Christian.

B. If We Say that We Have Not Sinned We Make God A Liar... (ver. 10).

Listen: the fact that we are not sin-free, that we all therefore sin from time to time is not just something we learn by experience; we learn this truth directly from God. John's words are God's words. So if we deny the explicit teaching of John that we are not sin-free, we are in reality calling God a liar. Now I don't know about you, but I don't want to be guilty of calling God a liar. If you call God a liar, you are putting yourself in some pretty bad company. Do you know who else called God a liar? Satan. If you want to be linked with the devil a fast way to do it is to call God a liar. And an easy way to do that is claim that you have not sinned.

Conclusion:

So, here is what we have in this inspired text. We serve a God of light. A God who is morally perfect and completely pure in all that He does, says, or thinks. The ramification of this truth is that fellowship with him can only be experienced by those who are walking in the light. If you live in sin and claim to have fellowship with God, you lie and do not the truth. This doesn't mean that any of us are sin-free because we not. But thanks be to God, our salvation is not based on sinless perfection, for as long as we walk in the light by living by God's Word, the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If you are here and still in darkness, God wants to set you free. Obey the gospel and be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.