

40 Days Sermon Final Week

READ 1 JOHN 1:5-2:2 (ESV)

"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. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

"1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

40 DAYS ENDING

You can go ahead & take a seat. If you have your Bibles turn to 1 John chapter 1...this is the passage of Scripture we just read & what we will study today. The 40 days of prayer & fasting is coming to an end this Friday. 40 days has flown by! My favorite part of the 40 days has been the prayer groups I've been a part of. Tuesday mornings at 6am there has been a faithful group of men that meet me on the square to pray together & then Tuesday nights at 6pm we have had a faithful group of families praying together. I hope & pray the hunger for prayer stays now & forever & doesn't die out after the 40 days ends. Finish strong this week everybody! And be praying for P Ron as he is battling some sickness & really wanted to preach but needed me to jump in last minute to preach in his place.

Each sermon we have done in the 40 days has been something from the Gospel of John but I want to close it out with touching on something from one of the letters of John. Chapter one in 1 John is one of my favorites & the Lord has convicted me & encouraged me & convicted me all over again through this chapter & I pray He does the same today in you. I've heard it said that *"the aim of preaching is to disturb the comfortable & comfort the disturbed."* Disturb the complacent, hard hearted people, the comfortable...and comfort the disturbed, brokenhearted. I will seek to do both of these things today through God's Word.

1 JOHN STUDY

Today may be a gut punch & heart convicting message for some. If something in this message offends you today just remember I didn't write this...God did...so you can take it up with Him. Be open to all that He has for you today & whatever He highlights in your heart just listen to His leading & obey for your utmost joy & His glory.

Here is some context! The letter of 1 John was written by the disciple John. He writes this letter to encourage Christians that are discouraged to remain in their faith! Don't walk away, remain faithful to Jesus until the end! He also writes to address some heretical teachings that were going around. People from within the church had begun to teach that Jesus was NOT the Messiah...& in fact never really even came in human form. They were belittling the teachings of John...saying he really didn't know what he was talking about. They began to go as far as to teach that sin isn't really a big deal & it didn't matter how you live your life...that the commands of Scripture to live a certain way were irrelevant. It was called gnostic ideology...“Just focus in on the knowledge part of Christianity & live how you want to live.” And so John catches wind of what's going on & led by the Holy Spirit he writes this letter.

PART 1

So let's read a little bit. **1 John 1:1-4.**

“1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

John is making a claim here that he knows what he is talking about. The false teachers said Jesus never really came & didn't really walk around as a human & John says “I saw Him with my own eyes. I touched him with my own hands.” John was the closest friend Jesus had while on the earth. Fun facts about John...He was the ONLY disciple at the foot of the cross when Jesus died. Jesus told his mother Mary to live with John & John would be her care taker. John was Jesus' best friend...and **a close, best friend has an ability to shed light on your life in a way unlike anyone else.**

Since high school I have had the same best friend...his name is **Austin Duke**...he is now the kids pastor at Life Point Church over by Riverdale HS. He knows every detail of my life...good & bad...he is someone I am fully accountable to & if Austin was here he would be able to shed light on MY life in a way nobody else could. He could speak into the night I accepted Christ & chose to follow Him & we went & ate at subway afterwards & I wanted to tell everybody in there what had just happened to me & wondered if THEY knew Jesus. He could speak into the time where we went on a run around my block & as we started to leave my driveway we noticed a HUGE spiderweb with a MASSIVE spider right above my drive way right at face level...a spider the size of a shoe...and so we walked around it & went on our run. And when we got back we decided to go back inside & BOTH OF US forgot about the spiderweb & the spider. And guess

who walked right into the spider web??? HE DID. And realized it immediately & started screaming “HELP, HELP! LANDON HELP! WHERE IS IT, WHERE IS IT?!” And literally had his shirt off of his body in 1.2 seconds...and guess where I was.....half way back down the street running for my life....I ain’t about to help him...he was on his own! I could have died trying to help him...he knows I hate spiders how selfish of him to ask for my help.

My point is...when you are someone’s best friend...you know things & see things that nobody else sees. For John...as the closest friend of Jesus...he was able to have the authority to say “*I saw Him...I walked with Him...I laughed & cried with Him...I touched Him & I saw Him die on the cross & saw Him risen from the dead. I have heard His voice & proclaim to you that which He taught me...because He was my friend & He absolutely was the Son of God.*” **John clears things up that if anyone has an authority to speak into the truth of who Jesus is...it was him. This is what he is making clear in his intro in the letter.** And he continues in verse 5...

PART 2

“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.”

Right off the bat John says “*this is what we heard with our own ears from Jesus & now we teach to you....that God is LIGHT & in Him is NO darkness at all.*” This one verse tells us so much about God. He is LIGHT & in Him is NO darkness. I have a picture of a symbol...I wonder if you know what this symbol represents??? (SHOW YIN YANG PICTURE). This symbol represents Yin & Yang...a way of describing the eastern way of thinking that all good AND evil derive from the same source. Simply put that God is both good and evil. Light and darkness. You see it in a lot of other religions that God is good AND evil. The truth of Christianity is that God is light & in Him is no darkness. He is ONLY good....and not evil.

Some of you here need to let this truth sink in to the deepest parts of your heart. God is good. God is light. He is not the author of evil. If you are a Christian & struggle at times with thinking the hardship in your life is God punishing you I need you to know THAT IS A LIE. God is light & in Him is no darkness....this is good news for us. He doesn’t double punish...Jesus bore on Himself your punishment. We don’t have to live in fear of wondering if God is having a bad day & gonna turn on us because He is fed up with us.....He is light! We continue reading as John keeps using the analogy of comparing darkness & light...verse six.

“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. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us

our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

There is so much packed into these five verses. Remember John is writing to clear up this lie that you can live however you want because sin is no big deal. John says if you say you know Him & have friendship, fellowship, with Him while at the same time you walk in darkness...you lie & do not practice the truth. He says “if you say you have no sin...you deceive yourself & basically claim God is a liar.” Here is the bottom line truth John is saying....

Anyone who claims to love Christ & **deliberately** disobeys Him is guilty of a lie. Anyone who claims to love Christ & willingly, carelessly with no thought or hesitation...deliberately disobeys Him is guilty of a lie. I remember listening to an old teaching by R.C. Sproul, an incredible teacher of the Bible & theologian, & I remember him saying there are four categories of people.... 1.) Those who are saved & they confidently know it.... 2.) those who are saved & doubt it at times... 3.) those are NOT saved & know it.... & number four.... 4.) those who are NOT saved...but think they are.

It is possible to think you are a Christian & not be. I am not trying to cause you to doubt your salvation in Christ or cause you to second guess....but what I AM doing is pointing out a hard truth. NOBODY HAS A GENUINE ENCOUNTER WITH GOD & STAYS THE SAME! We little by little grow & are changed by the gospel. Jesus says you will know a tree by its FRUIT. It is pretty simple. Apples grow on apple trees. If a tree claimed to be an orange tree but apples keep growing on it...what is it?? An orange or an apple tree?? You know a tree by its fruit. Fruit is how you live your life & relate to other people.

John is directly countering the lie that you can live however you want to live because God doesn't care....He ABSOLUTELY cares...to live a life of deliberate darkness proves that you may not know the Light. This is a sad & scary reality. And I pray that if anyone here falls into this category that God would open your eyes to the truth.

Now...here is what John is NOT saying...He is NOT saying “*to be in the light means that you never ever struggle with sin....to truly be a Christian means that you are perfect. And if you struggle with sin means you probably aren't saved.*” NO.

Here is what John IS trying to get at with comparing darkness & light....to live in darkness means to not see...to be blind....but to live in the light...is to see....because **LIGHT IS REVEALING**. Because God is light He allows you to see the sin, the darkness, in your heart & see your need for a Savior. Here is an example I like to use....I am going to knock on this table a song...I am representing what it's like to be in the light & you all represent being in the dark. **(KNOCK ANALOGY)**...now that you are “in the light” you can't unhear it! You see it now! Where once you couldn't see now you do! This is what it means to be in the light. I now can

see God for who He truly is! And I now can see myself for what I truly am...oh my goodness, I am sinful & need saving...you finally can see other people for who they are....everything changes when you are in the LIGHT & grow closer & closer to the Light.

And the nearer we come to God, the more terrible sin will be to us. If we sin as believers we HATE IT...we don't want it & fight against it...& as we grow & read the Bible & see where we are off...we repent again & again & again because we want to be pleasing to our Father & obey His Word because we know His way is LIFE & JOY. The nearer we come to God the more TERRIBLE SIN IS TO US...WE HATE IT. We are children of LIGHT. We see it. This is why those who walk in darkness don't understand the things of God...it is why they don't see how their lives are displeasing to God...it is why they can't see their own sin & need of a Savior...THEY ARE BLIND & IN THE DARK. This should help you have **tremendous patience** for those in your life that do not know Jesus yet. You are going on & on & on about how amazing God is & they stare at you glossed over....why??? **(KNOCK!)** Because they don't hear it yet....they don't understand....but my encouragement....KEEP ON TELLING THEM! KEEP ON KNOCKING.....because perhaps one day, by the Spirit of God, they will hear it too. Darkness....to light. He did it for you. He can do it for them. Amen??

I hope you are getting this. John drills in this comparison of light & darkness. Light is good. Darkness is bad. Light is honest & true. Darkness is dishonest & full of lies. Light brings life. Darkness brings death. Light is safe. Dark is unsafe. Light gives sight. Darkness is to be blind. God is light. Walk in the light.

I want to read verses 7 through 9 again. *"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. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to **forgive us** our sins and to **cleanse us** from all unrighteousness."*

These verses tell us two things we need to know...this is life changing:

- 1.) We find forgiveness & cleansing when we confess our sin to God. (v. 7 & 9)
- 2.) We find fellowship & accountability when we invite others into our fight against sin. (v.7)

We find forgiveness & cleansing when we confess our sin to God. Verse seven says that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. It was the blood of Jesus that was shed for us on the cross that covers us & cleanses us. Me & Tarah in the fast have watched a LOT of the Chosen & a lot of different documentaries & creative films on different biblical time periods...one being the Exodus plagues in Egypt. It was pretty neat to see how Netflix handled the plagues according to Scripture. As you may know the last plague in Exodus was the death of all first born children because Pharaoh wouldn't let God's people leave slavery in Egypt...however... for those that took a lamb & sacrificed it & covered the doorpost of their home with the blood

of the lamb...they were passed over. Death would not enter their home & because of the blood they were passed over. Just watching this story on the documentary & seeing the visual of what it could have looked like just reminded me all over again how thankful I am that because of the blood of Jesus...the doorpost of OUR hearts can be covered & the blood of Jesus is sufficient to save us. If the doorpost of your heart is by faith covered by the blood of Jesus....you are forgiven & saved. Eternally secure. The price has been paid in full.

And now as believers we live lives of ongoing confession & repentance. It is a life style. When I sin I run TO God & know that He forgives me because I am in Christ. And He not only FORGIVES but according to the verses God CLEANSSES US from all unrighteousness. Sometimes we can know we are forgiven of our sin but we still feel dirty. Some of you have been sinned against...in different ways...& because of it...it caused you to feel dirty...no matter what you have done....or what has been done against you or to you....if you are in Jesus....you are cleansed. Washed & purified. Clean. When you can truly let this reality sink in it can lift such a heavy burden off of you & allow you to move forward in your journey of faith.

The original language John used for this word “cleansed” could be taken to mean presently cleansed AND being cleansed. What this means is that you are in the eyes of God cleansed & purified by the blood of Jesus....and at the same time...you are BEING cleansed if you are in Jesus. **This means that all the time, day by day, constantly & consistently, the blood of Jesus ought to be carrying out a cleansing process in the life of the Christian.** This is called sanctification. The ongoing journey of being transformed to look more & more like Jesus. A CLEANSING PROCESS.

We find forgiveness & cleansing when we confess our sin to God.

And then the last thing I want to say...number two...We find fellowship & accountability when we invite others into our fight against sin. (v.7)

We need one another in this fight against sin. It is easy to get pumped when we talk about fighting against Satan & the devil & sing songs about the demons fleeing at the name of Jesus....but we have to realize we don't JUST have an outer enemy we are battling together....we have an inner enemy...called sin. Satan doesn't make you sin...you choose to sin. The inner enemy & it is present in you & me...men & women alike....young & old....& until the end we will be in this war of putting our sin to death by the Holy Spirit helping us. This is real. **And we need each other in this fight.**

Verse seven says *“7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...”* The word there for fellowship means deep friendship....or better translated partnership...like teammates competing together....like soldiers locking arms to fight the battle....partners...friends....walking in the light with God...confessing our sin when we fall &

pressing forward. We. Need. Each other. **When you have people in your life that you can confess your sin to it is a safe place for growth & healing.**

I will never forget the first time I actually experienced this. I've shared this story before but when I became a Christian in college I had this view of church being the place you act like you have it all together & when you interact with church people you "have it all together." And when you screw up around them or show your true colors...you either isolate & forever hide or change churches....You didn't talk about your REAL struggles....you just hid them. And there was a night in one of the first college small groups I was in where about 15 guys that were all my friends...were in a room & we went around the circle to share prayer requests...& it was the most superficial, surface level answers you could ever imagine. The circle went around...one guy goes "yeah...pray that I make a good grade on my test tomorrow...." Next guy "yeah....pray for my cat"... and the next guy "I have an unspoken prayer request..." and it went around the circle & got to the last guy...TJ Mitchell...who almost immediately began to cry...tears flowing down his face he began to share how he keeps falling into sexual temptation with his girlfriend & how he has been bound to pornography for several years.

And you could have heard a pen drop in the room. I remember thinking "*oh my gosh...did he just say that in church....*" And then TJ finished & the guy who actually went FIRST started to share again but this time....he was honest....and then the circle went back around...the next guy, honesty...the next guy, transparency...and then it got to me....and I knew I had a decision to make in that moment....I could stay hidden & in the dark...keep the strong image....or I could be honest & confess my struggles with sin....my deep problem with anger & addiction...& I could confess my sin & have fellowship with my brothers who are in the fight with me.....& I remember I took the off ramp into confession & honesty...I was finally known & it was so freeing.....& that night did something for that group of guys that would go on to lead to such deep friendship & accountability & changed all of our lives forever.

When you have people in your life that you can confess your sin to it is a safe place for growth and healing. I have experienced this firsthand & still do to this day. We need one another. Next week C-Groups are launching...if you aren't in a small group join a C-Group! Perhaps the Lord will help you find this trusted circle of people like I am talking about. Maybe you already have these trusted people in your life. Whatever the case...find your people & fight to live in the beauty of what it means to belong to godly community.

CLOSE

This is what it means to walk in the light. We need God. And we need one another. The church.

As we close I want to read again chapter two verses 1 & 2. "*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation* (the one who takes for us the wrath

of God...the propitiation...) *for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*"

Let's stand together.

I want to pray & spend some time in worship lifting high the name of Jesus.

While we sing I encourage you to spend some time with God & confess any known sin to Him knowing that He is faithful to forgive. He calls you to Himself as you are...bring your sin to the foot of the cross & know that it is forever nailed there & the record of your sin is cancelled by the blood of Jesus. Bring ALL of who you are to Him & worship His name...the King of Kings.

Let's pray. (PRAY)

Come on let's worship.

PRAYER:

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MAYBE FEEL THE CONVICTION OF THE SPIRIT IN THEIR SIN.