

Friday, January 12, 2018

## Effort

## 2 Peter 2-3

*But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*  
2 Peter 3:13-14

There is a point in time in which Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years. This is called the millennium. At the end of that period there will be a cleansing fire. God will purge by fire all sin and effects of sin and Satan, and those who chose to reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ will be thrown into the lake of fire along with the demons. There will be a new heaven and earth—a restored heaven and earth. Jesus Christ will make all things new. We who have trusted in Christ are citizens of that new earth and heaven. So, we make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with God. By God's grace, I have been given insight into this great truth and so, I am compelled by His love to want everyone to come to repentance. I see that the best way for this to happen is for me to be striving to live my heavenly life now—as much as I possibly can!

*Father, help me continue to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with You so that others may come to repentance as well and be rescued from the eternal punishment reserved for those who reject You. Amen.*

January 8 - 13, 2018

Saturday, January 13, 2018

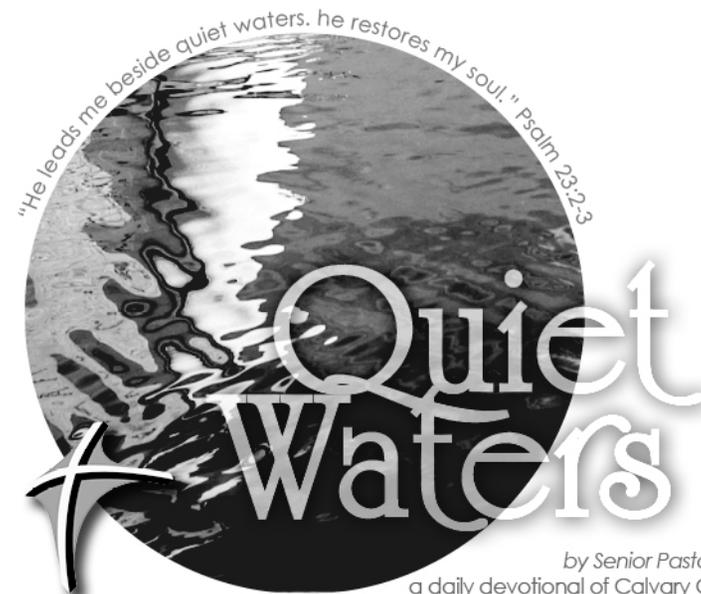
## Darkness

## 1 John 1-2

*This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 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, purifies us from all sin.*  
1 John 1:5-7

God is light, God is love. Both of these statements are found in 1 John. The two are tied together in the nature and character of God. The nature and character of God is fixed. He has not, will not, and cannot change. This is called the "immutability" of God. God is who He is and will remain so forever. Where God is light, He is love. Where God is merciful, He is just. In God there is no darkness at all. His love brings with it His light. So the question becomes, "How can I live in the light and in the love of God—as well as in His faithfulness, His goodness, His holiness, and so on?" The answer, of course, is found in Christ. As I walk in the light of Christ, I live in the love and light of God and through Him the darkness in my life is dispelled. As I live in community with others who have been freed from the darkness by the light of Christ (the truth of the gospel) we all walk in that marvelous light (see John 3:19-21). This is what allows us to have fellowship one with another and allows all the "one anothers" of Scripture to come true in our lives. There is no darkness in God and His children have no reason to walk in the darkness.

*Father, help me surrender totally to You in Christ so that I may live in and radiate out Your love and light. Dispel the darkness in me. Help me to be in a community that is dispelling the darkness and allow me the blessing of the community that You have designed for Your children. Amen.*



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka  
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, January 8, 2018

Grace

James 4-5

*But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

James 4:6

James speaks to his readers about the care needed to keep from being friends with the world. The world will influence them to seek their own pleasures, which will cause fights and quarrels. Friendship with the world is hatred toward God. That is a powerful statement that James makes. He says that choosing to be a friend with the world actually causes a person to become an enemy of God. These are strong words with deep truths. The reason this is so important is that Satan is behind the desires of this world. He must be resisted. Resistance to the devil comes with submission to God. Submission to God brings a humble admission that He is sovereign and in control. Grace is what is needed. My false sense of self-sufficiency (which is really a synonym for "pride") places me in opposition to God. Clearly, that is not a place I really want to be. I long for His grace to wash over me. It is His grace that allows me to gain humility and it is His grace that continues to overwhelm me in my humble submission to Him. And he gives more grace. Amazing.

*Father, I am truly in awe of You and the way that You continue to add grace. I long to be ever more submitted to You and Your will. Please Lord, break my pride. I do not want any part of being in opposition to You. I long to be fully submitted in Your care. Amen.*

Tuesday, January 9, 2018

Insulted

1 Peter 1-2

*"When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."*

1 Peter 2:23

It is important to think about how Christ handled the insults that were thrown against Him. Peter tells his readers in verse 21 that they are to follow in the steps of Christ because He left this example. The example that Christ leaves is that insults can be endured by entrusting all things to the Father who will judge justly. Peter goes on to tell us that Christ bore our sins on the cross so that it would be possible to die to sin and live for righteousness. Living for righteousness is what allows me not to retaliate when I am insulted—because I see that by the wounds of Christ I have been healed. A person who has been healed longs to have that healing impact others. Insults come from places of deep hurt and are really a cry for help. If I allow Christ's example to lead me, I will see those who are insulting me through the eyes of God. I will not retaliate, rather I will respond by saying, "Father, forgive them." As I forgive in the way that I have been forgiven, I release the offender to God, who will make all things right.

*Father, please help me not retaliate when I feel offended or insulted. Help me respond as my Savior did. Give me Your eyes, please, so that I can see the hurt in others, and use me, in some way, to help bring healing to that hurt. At the very least, please keep me from making it worse. Amen.*

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Done

1 Peter 3-4

*Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.*

James 4:1

I don't know about you, but I would love to be done with sin. I read these verses and I wonder if it could be true. There are many reasons why I would love to be done with sin. My sins are in direct opposition to my Father in heaven who loves me so much. My sins are placed on my Savior who bore the weight of my sin on the cross. My sins grieve the Holy Spirit who has chosen to make me His dwelling place. My sins hurt those around me. My sins cause me to live in pride, thinking that the world revolves around me. My sins hurt me. My sins keep others from knowing about Christ and their possible salvation. My sins keep me under the reign of the pretender prince (Satan) who hates me. My sins serve his purposes and cause me to side with him. My sins have me focus on the temporary rather than on the eternal.

My sins keep me from deeper intimacy with God.

I am done with sin.

*Father, thank You for reminding me that it is my choice to be done with sin. I have spent enough time in that place of pain. I am choosing to live in Your will, my precious Father. Help me arm myself with the same attitude as Christ! Amen.*

Thursday, January 11, 2018

Alert

1 Peter 5 - 2 Peter 1

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

1 Peter 5:8-10

Peter's audience knew suffering. They were suffering for their faith. Peter warns them not to let the suffering draw them away from Jesus. Satan prowls to see if he can draw believers away from the love of God. Peter encourages his readers by reminding them they are not alone in the suffering. He reminds them that there is an eternal glory—and this is not it. God's grace will take them to that eternal glory and it will also sustain them here. God's grace will make them be strong, firm, and steadfast, standing by faith against the evil one. This suffering was not the same type of suffering that I fear. This was life-threatening suffering. This was beatings and martyrdom. This was loss of family and jobs—and the only cause was that these believers had claimed the name of Jesus and would not reject His name. This is a lot different than the suffering I think I may be experiencing. I must remember that there are many places in this world where people are experiencing this same type of suffering. As I pray for them, it reminds me that whatever I am going through I can handle with and for God.

*Father, keep me steadfast in the faith. Help me stand for You. Do not let my perception of suffering draw me into the grasp of the lion who is seeking to devour me. Keep my brothers and sisters around the world in the front of my mind and heart and remind me to be interceding for them! Amen.*