

"Knowing God"

Easter 3

1)

1 John 1:1-2:2

2)

April 18, 2021

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and forever. Amen. ()

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

God wrote in Genesis – **“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth.”** We talked through this, this last week here in our adult instruction class and it really was mind-boggling to imagine what that must have been like that. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth and then you read the next two verses and we're told how the Earth was formless and empty. What would that be like to be in the midst of nothingness – formless and empty. And then, God speaking into it and saying, let there be light.

If you've experienced being in a dark room, no windows and having no light, you might get a sense of an idea of what I'm talking about. But to go to from absolute and complete darkness to God saying, let there be light. God created light for a reason on day one, we see God creating light and separating light from Darkness. And on day 4 – we see God creating the Heavenly beings to govern the day in the night, the sun, moon, and stars. Light and darkness is a good thing. In the dark, we get our sleep and during the day, we have the opportunity to serve him.

Now, the reason that I bring that aspect of light and darkness up is very evident in our lesson from first John here this morning. Where God says through the Apostle John – **“God is light and in him there is no Darkness at all.”** One of the aspects in which John is referencing that we'll talk about is the aspect of our Christian Life and our Walk w/ God – how we serve God in everything we do. But the very first aspect that I'd like to talk about here this morning is the aspect of what does it mean to know God, and that aspect of knowledge of God, when that light of faith has been turned on in our hearts, by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Knowing god, one of the aspects of knowledge that John highlights and there's reason which we'll talk about here in just a moment, but he also talks about it in terms of knowing god and

Walking with God, and having fellowship with God as being very similar concepts. For example, in the Old Testament, that aspect of knowing God and fellowship and walking with God, are very closely related. We're told how Enoch walked with God. We're told about Noah, Abraham. God wants us to walk with him and that knowledge of our God is that knowledge of knowing that Jesus is our Savior from sin. That is one of the aspects that the Apostle John really highlights in our lesson here this morning.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

What is John saying in order for our joy to be complete? It's to have that fellowship with and again, going back to that concept of knowing God, walking with God and having that fellowship with God. So what does that look like? And what exactly does God mean, when he tells us and wants us to know him? It's more than simply just a had knowledge of knowing that God exists. It's a deeper heart knowledge as well and it's that belief and trust in your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin.

Consider the apostle John's life. I'd imagine fellowship was important for him as he spent the end of his life exiled on an island alone. He was the last of the apostles alive. He wrote this letter around 85 to 95 AD. And one of the reasons perhaps that he had to write this letter, was there was an aspect building up when people would leave the church. And they were looking to attain a higher knowledge of God in the early Christian Church.

Cerinthus

- Gnosticism = religious ideas that emphasize knowledge over teaching

- Cerinthus denied that God created the world, and downplayed the deity of Jesus saying the Christ descended upon Jesus at baptism, but left him at the crucifixion
 - o So, no virgin birth

John wasn't making any of this up. He said, **“We are eyewitnesses of this...”** We had the opportunity to see Jesus with our very own eyes, this is what we proclaim. He said that on multiple occasions. This is what we testify to the truth.

Now that aspect of knowing God is also shared with us here this morning of Walking with God, and I go back to that verse of **God is light, and in him, there is no Darkness at all.** The aspect of Walking with God is one in which God wants us to think about here this morning of, how do we live our Christian life? And to think about your Christian Life as being your walk with God.

Think about the very first example he gives us and that comes in the first in the middle section there in verses 8 and 10. We're told –

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...

¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

So, one of the aspects that we're thinking about here is the aspect of simply downplaying sin. There are many false teachers, many who claim to be Christian continue to promote the idea that sin isn't that big of a deal. In fact, many false teachers fill arenas, at least pre-covid, broadcast the message online or fill up your Sirius XM radio. Dial saying that sin isn't that big of a deal and perhaps don't even bring it up at all. They tell you how you need to be the best you and promote prosperity now.

John tells us here this morning, **if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us** and then goes one step further and says, really what you're doing when you say you're without sin, is your calling God out to be a liar.

Here is a practical example – when it came to marriage counseling, one spouse would come into marriage counseling with the pastor and he had asked the person, whether it be the husband

or the wife to put on a pie chart the amount of fault or blame that takes place in the marriage of what was on him or her and what was on the spouse. In the meeting with the pastor, they put 95% of blame on their spouse and then five percent of that blame on themselves. The pastor would go on to say, well, we can't talk about that 95%, right? Your spouse isn't here, but let's talk about that 5% that you're responsible for when you think about the problems that are in your marriage. Why? Because every single one of us is responsible for our own sins. Do not deceive yourself. Our every thought and every word and every action, God tells us in the Bible that even just having anger in our mind is the same as being a murderer, having lost in our hearts is the same as committing adultery again. If we claim to be without sin, we are deceiving ourselves.

It is spiritually hurting our walk with God and prevents us from having fellowship with God. Because again, **God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.**

Another thing that happens is the false idea that God doesn't forgive sin. In the middle of those two verses eight and ten. John wrote –

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

One of the things that I've heard more and more recently and really, to the detriment of every single person that might think it or might say it, and some of us might have that thought in our minds – when something goes wrong it's the end of the world. I've heard it from a lot of young people. And one of the aspects that I know, and I've heard from many of you, is the emotional toll and the psychological toll that the last year, year and a half has caused on each and every single one of us. But is it really the end of the world? If we commit sin, is it really the end of the world? If we do something wrong and we sin against our God will God tells us in the Bible that the one who is guilty of sin deserves death. So God tells us first of all that it really is a big deal – that it deserves death. But to have that thought, in our minds, that a sin is too big that God can't forgive it. God wants us to put that out of our minds completely. And that's why he says here. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from

all unrighteousness. Not just some unrighteousness. But absolutely all of it.

Think about how that played out in King David's life, King, David was guilty of both adultery by sleeping with another man's wife and then also guilty of trying to cover it up by murdering the woman's husband. God sent the prophet Nathan to David. David confessed his sins and then God through the prophet Nathan, forgave him. The thief on the cross said to Jesus (and remember, he's on death row himself) – **Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus said – Today, you will be with me in Paradise.**

Is there any sin too big God could never forgive? No. He has indeed purified us and cleaned us. He has forgiven us of all unrighteousness. Everything that sets us outside of fellowship w/ God, Jesus died for. The fact that the very end of our lesson today, we're told that Jesus died to pay for the sins of the entire world. Jesus paid for them all.

⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

This is really the last point that I want us to think about here this morning. And that's the false idea – “I am in fellowship with God and now I can just go on my merry way as if sin doesn't really matter, I can keep on going with what I'm doing.

God wants us to stop sinning. God wants us to repent of our sins. In fact, God says here this morning. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet, walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. God wants us to live for him in everything that we say and think and do. And when it comes to sin to repent of our sins; to continue to build ourselves up in that faith and knowledge of our Savior. To not simply just know that God exists. But to know the Triune God, the Father Son and Holy Spirit, to know that Jesus did indeed die to take away every single one of our sins. Through Christ's life death and resurrection gives us that guarantee of forgiveness of sins, new life and salvation.

To have fellowship with God means quite simply – to know God. Where are you at in that journey of knowing god? Perhaps you are a child and your parents are continuing to raise you up in that knowledge of your savior. Maybe you're 21. Maybe

you're 80. Maybe you're new to the faith. Perhaps you've been in the faith, your whole life long. Is there more that we can come to know about God? Absolutely. God wants us to continue to have that fellowship with him to continue to come to know God – to know the truth that Jesus died for your every sin. And that, because of Jesus, you will spend eternity in heaven with him. To know God, to have fellowship with him. Remember the words of our lesson here today – **God is light, and in him there is no Darkness at all** – when we see and live in the midst of the darkness in the world around us – it's important to know that God is light.

Let's pray – Dear Lord Jesus. We thank you for giving us the words of First John here this morning to remind us. That God is indeed light and to have fellowship with him. And come to know God, to know you as our savior help us to continue to do this in our lives, to confess our sins. Help us to continue to grow in that faith and knowledge, and trust in you. And to know that above all, you forgive our, every sin. You invite us to continue to walk with you. We ask all this in Jesus name. Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But 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.

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.