



gracefellowship

Summer Shorts
June 14, 2020
1 John (Part 2)

:: 1 John 1:5-7

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out 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, purifies us from all sin.

Illustration: Caverns

One of the cool things about the area in which we live is that there are amazing caverns that run underground all over this region. I love to go and see the crazy things that are underneath us, but most of us are completely unaware of. On most of those tours, once you are hundreds of feet below the earth's surface they will take you into a chamber of the cavern and tell the group to stand still, then they will turn the lights off. When that happens you literally cannot see your hand in front of your face. The darkness feels thick. It feels overwhelming- like you're trapped and can't move. In fact, darkness invites lots of problems, let me give you two:

Problems with Physical Darkness:

Physical Darkness is disorienting.

Physical Darkness is frightening.

:: Genesis 1:1

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Often when we talk about light it's in the sense of seeing with our physical eyes.

John often uses the imagery of darkness to address spiritual realities. Throughout the Bible we see the imagery of dark and light as spiritual metaphors to help us understand the difference between the ways of God and the ways of our fallen, sin-filled world.

Darkness and light are natural enemies. When God created the world the first thing He did was introduce light. God pronounces power over the force of darkness by lighting up His creation. This is a physical light that appears- without the aid of the sun, by the way! God doesn't put the sun and the moon in the sky until day four! It's almost as if God's very presence is enough to dispel the darkness and light up the universe.

Problems with Spiritual Darkness:

Spiritual Darkness is hostile to the Christ life.

:: John 1:5

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Darkness seeks to obliterate the light- but is unable to overpower it.

Spiritual Darkness represents the immorality of life without Christ.

:: 1 John 2:9-11

9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.

10 Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble.

11 But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

It's amazing when you really think about how simple this should be. The greatest command we have toward one another is to love. Jesus commanded us to love our enemies and bless those who persecute us! How much easier should it be to love people who are unified under the banner of Jesus? But here is what I find more than I like to admit

- We are gracious and patient with non-Christians (as we should be).
- We are judgmental and quick to respond in anger to the slightest thing we disagree with when it comes to our brothers and sisters!

When we are full of the light of God's love we are able to extend greater grace to people who have wronged us.

:: Colossians 3:12-17

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Our shared love for Jesus and the work the Holy Spirit is doing in our hearts to unify us should cause us to look for ways to move beyond our differences and unite around the truth of God's Word. The greatest way to dispel the darkness and evil in our world is to expose ourselves continually to God's light. That light is specifically found in the person of Jesus.

The more we come to know Jesus the greater our ability becomes to fight against the temptations to sin. The fact that the Bible says Jesus is light helps us to understand more about His character.

:: 1 John 3:1-10

1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Sin takes God's good gifts to evil places.

- Sin takes the pleasure of food and turns it into gluttony- that which should sustain the body makes us overweight.
- Sin takes the beauty of the human body and distorts the image of God through pornography.
- Sin takes the beauty of our skin colors and turns us into racists.
- Sin takes knowledge and the ability to learn and puffs us up with pride and egotism.
- Sin takes fellowship and relationships and twists them into factions and cliques.

Any good gift you can think of that God has given, sin has a way of distorting. That's why Jesus had to come and rescue us! We needed the light of God to permeate the darkness of our world and bring hope and healing. Look at the rest of this passage from 1 John 3; pick back up in verse 5:

5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.

6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.

10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

Jesus came to destroy the devil's work! He came to shine light into darkness. The beauty of that is that darkness cannot overcome light. Let's go back to the caverns I was talking about earlier this morning. When they turn the lights off and it goes dark that is a sense that is overpowering that you are unavoidably trapped in that darkness. It's tangible how powerful the dark is. But the moment someone turns the lights back on, the darkness is gone. There is a sense of victory and relief because light once again has taken over where darkness seemed to have control.

This is exactly what Jesus has done in our world! Jesus has defeated the evil of darkness by shining his light, which is love, into the world.

Using the metaphor of Jesus as light, let's make some assertions about Jesus:

1. Jesus is full of splendor and glory.

Colossians 1 says Jesus is the exact representation of the Father and that God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Christ.

:: Psalm 96

1 Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

2 Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

3 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

4 For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.

9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

13 Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.

This week let me challenge you to read through the Psalms and find declarations of God's glory and find ways to worship Him this week that elevates your understanding of His glory and splendor.

2. Jesus as light tells us that God is self-revealing.

Light is first and foremost something that is seen. God desires to be known and makes Himself known. Jesus is the agent of creation. Colossians says "through Him all things were made and without Him nothing was made that has been made."

:: Psalm 19:1-2

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

3. The imagery of Jesus as light tells us about His purity and holiness.

4. Jesus as light tells us that He guides our way.

:: Psalm 119:105

105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

5. Jesus is the light of the world; therefore He cannot condone our sin.

:: Titus 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Through the power of Jesus we have been given the ability to understand what sin is, the power sin can hold over us and how to find victory over even the most devastating sins. The greatest gift God has given to us is salvation from sin through Jesus and the presence of His Spirit in our lives teaching us to say “no” to sin while living self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

We are meant to be people who are in fellowship with God and with one another. That means not only should we desire, as individuals, to walk in light, we should want and expect our brothers and sisters to as well!

It should be a natural thing for us to ask one another if we are walking in light or living in darkness. I’m eternally grateful for men in my life that I can open up and bear my soul with. I’m thankful for people who don’t judge me for my sins, but lovingly point me back to Jesus. I’m thankful for the men God has put in my life who love me enough to ask me hard questions that go to the depth of my soul about my attitudes, actions and beliefs so that I can pursue intimacy with Jesus and not let darkness find a place to grow in my soul.

- Who in your life helps you pursue the light of a relationship with Jesus?
- What role has accountability played in your life to help you overcome sin and temptation?
- Where is sin prevalent in your life right now that needs to be confessed and brought into the light?

Jesus has come to destroy the work of the devil and shine light into the darkest places of our soul so that we might have our sins forgiven and find victory over those things which have gripped our lives and kept us from enjoying sweet fellowship with God and other believers.

- Pray