

True Light, True Life

1 John 1:5-10

Let's open our bibles to First John, Chapter 1 this morning. We will be reading verses 5 – 10.

“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. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:5–10, ESV)

Intro

Tom Cruise famously said in “A Few Good Men”- “I WANT THE TRUTH!”

And what was Jack Nicholson's answer? – “YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH!”

C.S. Lewis said this about truth:

“If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth; only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair”

Lewis hits on a very profound truth here... Discerning and determining the truth sometimes demands that we get uncomfortable and if we are unwilling to get uncomfortable we have no hope of every discerning the truth.

Martin Luther said a similar thing in a more concise manner “Peace if possible, truth at all costs”.

But, It's true, right? ascertaining the truth can cause conflict because it requires we ask difficult questions and be ready to hear difficult answers. Questions that might be uncomfortable to ask; answers that might be uncomfortable to hear. Discerning the truth can take us out of our comfort zone, put us out on a ledge, open us up to hurt, pain, criticism and sometime, the truth can even shake our entire world.

But isn't it true what C.S Lewis said?... If we are unwilling to get to the heart of a matter, we will end up self-deceived, mislead and will lead, ultimately, to despair because the longer you go living a lie, the harder it is to even recognize the truth when you see it.

I think of today's world petty and surface level it can be. Isn't it easy for us to get drawn into these things through social media, politics and the news? There's so much fake news and untruth out there that sometimes it feels impossible to even determine the truth anymore. Women can be men, men can have babies, men can compete in women's sports and use women's bathrooms. Where is the truth??

For those of you who are married... I wonder, what your marriage would be like if when you were dating, you were satisfied with surface-level information about the other person rather than digging in and trying to get to the truth of who they are? What if you were perfectly satisfied with only knowing how they look or where they live or what kind of car they drive? Do they make a lot of money? Will you get along with their mother? What's their latest tweet? Was it about me? If you were satisfied with this surface level truth about the other person, could you have any real assurance of a happy, fulfilling marriage? Or, would it likely take a difficult turn when the other person starts talking about having kids in the first week after the honeymoon, but you wanted to take lots of vacations and maybe consider kids after five years? What if you found out later that the other person had been arrested and served time on drug or sexual abuse charges? Shouldn't you have known about that before you got married? Wouldn't asking some deeper, even uncomfortable questions about the other person have potentially saved you from a lot of heartache and despair and provided you with a more sure idea of who you were marrying?

Sometime, we can use truth to hurt others, too. We can have no problem pointing out negative truth's about other people, right? No problem pointing out the faults and failures of others because it is way easier than dealing with the truth of these same things in our own lives. Many times, we convict others for the very behaviors and sins we ourselves are engaging in, but that nobody sees. It's easy to point out how so and so takes the Lord's name in vain, but in secret, we use all sorts of foul language and coarse joking. We can condemn someone for their marriage falling apart and yet look too long at that woman walking by on the sidewalk, or look at pictures on the internet? You really any better than them?

For the Christian, we ought to be all about the truth, right? We are supposed to speak the truth in love, but how often do we speak to condemn, instead? When we confront a brother or sister with the truth of their sin, it should be so they might be restored into fellowship, right? Not used to step on them in order to make us feel "more holy" than them. When we are going to point out the speck in another's eye, we are first supposed to pull out the plank in our own eye, but how often do we really take the time to examine our own hearts and motivations?

And yet, isn't the Christian life all about learning truth, admitting to the truth, confessing the truth, living in the truth, loving the truth, hoping in the truth. But are we doing that as

we ought? Are we being honest with others about who we really are? Have we been honest with God? Have we been honest with ourselves? How do we really even know?

Paul wrote in second Corinthians 13:5:

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”

Ah.. Paul says, we are to Examine ourselves... Test ourselves. And what are we testing for? To see if Jesus Christ is in you! In other words... Paul is telling each of us as professing Christian to test ourselves to see if we are truly in the faith!

Whoa, “now wait just one cotton-pickin’ minute”, you might say. “I am a Christian! I know I am, because I was raised in a Christian home. I said the sinners prayer when I was six years old then went to bible college at 12. I’ve been a member of a church since High School. I give my offering every week, without fail and I’m sitting here every Sunday listening to Pastor Doug preach, who, by the way, is much better than you are Erroll so why are you even up there today bringing all this up, anyway!?!???”

Yes... I guess CS Lewis and Martin Luther was right, the truth can be uncomfortable. But before them was Paul who said “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith”. Test yourselves and as CS said, you may find comfort; You might even fail the test, but I say, either way... good, because at least you know the truth and when we know the truth of a matter, we can work honestly and productively, with no barriers of doubt. We can find a path forward and receive lasting comfort and lasting assurance if we only know the truth.

The good news is our passage this morning will provide us with some of the necessary tools we need to take this test, but before we dive into it, let’s take a moment to ask God to help us.

Let’s pray.

-Pray-

A cursory look at our passage this morning can leave one with an uneasy feeling. It Sounds harsh and direct, doesn’t it?

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth”!

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”

“If we say we have not sinned, we make him [God] a liar, and his word is not in us”

It sounds, almost, condemning... definitely, uncomfortable. What is John getting at here and why does he sound so harsh? Well, the short answer is, it's a test... A test designed to get to the truth. Just like what Paul was talking about earlier.

In fact these three questions, are but the first three in many spread out in John's first letter to the Churches, designed to aid professing Christians in determining the truth of their spiritual standing before God.

Why is this important to John, you might ask? Because, as a faithful Pastor and Shepherd of God's flock, it is incumbent upon him to ensure the spiritual health of the Churches under his care. There was already, in the first century and then continuing on into the second Century many errors that had begin to creep into the churches from other religions and philosophies and John, being an overseer of the Churches in Asia Minor was dealing with everything from the philosophies of the Greeks and Gnostics, to the legalistic demands of the Judaiysers, to the Pagan religions in Ephesus and the surrounding areas.

John, seeing some of the error that was creeping into the Church through people who were coming from these other religions and philosophies, and even seeing it under attack by those he called AnitChrist, sensed the need to nail down certain fundamental truths, and he ultimately ended up with a myriad of theological truths along with tests, validations and contrasts which he designed to help the true believer to understand how they should live in the light of the salvation they had inherited as a child of God. He's ultimately ended up with a sort of Guidebook, if you will, for Christian living.

John starts from the very beginning by nailing down the fundamental truth that Jesus is fully God, fully man and he is also the Messiah in Chapter 1 verses 1-3. He then moves on to our passage today where he nails down another great truth; the nature of God and then springboards off of that to help the believer understand better the nature of their faith. Again, the focus here is to get at the truth, but not truth for truth's sake, it is out of a Pastoral desire to see the spiritual health of the Churches under his care be strong and genuine.

John says in Chapter 5 verse 13:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13, ESV)

Earlier, in chapter 1, John brings fellowship into the mix... He desires to have true Christian fellowship with the believers in the churches in his care; in fact he says nothing would make his joy more complete than to know that all professing believers in the church were true believers. But to do that, John is going to ask difficult and uncomfortable questions of us, to get us to look honestly at our walk to help determine if we are "truly in the faith", to borrow Paul's language.

To help us draw out some complex truths this morning I've divided the message into two simple parts:

First – True Light

... Where we will examine the truth of God's nature

and – True Life

... Where we will further examine the truth of how Christians should live in light of God's true nature.

True Light

First, 'True Light' Starting in verse 5 of our passage:

“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.” (1 John 1:5, ESV)

While ultimately our passage is designed for the believer to examine truth in their own lives, John doesn't start out here by pointing out all our faults and failures as believers, instead, he starts by nailing down the true standard for holiness... God himself; as he proclaims “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”. This is designed to point out two things:

first, to remind us that God is set apart from his creation and is not like us in his nature (we are not to think of him like the Greeks, Egyptians or Romans think of their little-g gods; as basically super-sized men).

Secondly, to impress upon us the degree to which the presence of darkness in natural man separates us from him.

All throughout the bible, the authors use the idea of light and darkness as a way to help us understand the difference between good and evil, but it was God who first gave us the idea of light being synonymous with good; way back in the first chapter in the bible, in Genesis chapter 1:1-4:

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and **darkness** was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **And God saw that the light was good**. And God separated the light from the darkness.” (Genesis 1:1–4, ESV)

God himself pronounced that the “light was good”. This is the very first element of creation he called ‘good’; because it directly reflected some of his own attributes in the

creation itself; Light as a reflection of God's goodness; God's Holiness; God's pureness; God's love.

Before light, there was only darkness and 'the earth was without form and void', from verse 2. It wasn't until God cast light into creation that he would first call it good.

One way light is a very good representation of God's "goodness" is that it is revealing, it's illuminating. In the case of Genesis, the light revealed the form of the earth in the contrast between night and day. In the case of his word, the light of his word is his revelation in how it communicates how God has worked out his will in space and time, and in his plan of salvation. Light is also warm and comforting. When we are in the light, we are less fearful, can see what is around us and we are comforted. Light can be nourishing; the sun, for example, helps our body produce vitamins D and C which help with bone health, energy and Immunity.

But in the context of our passage this morning, we will focus on the light representing the truth of God's holiness. And, we should never forget that God is the standard of holiness for his people. Remember what he told Israel in Leviticus 11:44:

"For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy."

His people are to be holy because he is holy, according to the Law, and that would still be the standard for every one of us if we were still under the law. Of course, we know that Jesus' perfect obedience was the fulfillment of the law so our righteousness and holiness is bound up in his righteousness, not our own. Paul talks about this a lot in Romans, that we aren't to be holy in order to be saved, we are to be holy out of gratitude for the fact that we have been saved. It's interesting that even in the next verse in Leviticus 11, there is a preview of salvation. Listen and see if you can catch it:

"For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus 11:45, ESV)

First it was 'be holy' "For I am the LORD your God." In verse 44, then it was "Be holy because I saved you out of the land of Egypt to be your God" in verse 45. First it's 'because I am so', then it is also 'because I saved you, so, be holy...'. In either case, God's work of sanctification in the Christian is designed to help us to become more and more holy as he conforms us to the image of Christ but we won't be perfect, until we are remade in glory. Until then, we still have some darkness in us...

By comparison, John says in verse 5 of our passage that "in him is no darkness at all". This further serves to remind the reader that God is not fundamentally like us, nor is he like the gods of the Romans or the Greeks or the Egyptians. James calls God the "Father of Lights"

in James chapter 1 verse 7, then he says “in him there is no variation or shadow due to change”. The idea there is the same as what John is saying; God is not subject to the same corruptions, errors and whims that we are. He is completely, unchangeably holy. If there is one attribute we can point to that shows God to be completely unlike his creation, it is his immutability... his inability to change and when we consider God’s complete holiness with his complete immutability, it sets the true God on a totally different plane than any other god the believers at that time would have known of.

One of the hallmarks of the creation is that everything in it is constantly changing and degrading... don’t believe me? Just think about how hard it was to get out of bed this morning... wasn’t like that when I was 20, that’s for sure. Not so with God, however; he is forever unchanged in every way, self-existent and eternal. Instead of just saying “God is light”, John could have said “God has always been light, is always light and will always be light”. In Greek and Roman mythology, gods were born, gods were killed, gods would murder, gods would have mood swings. John says, this does not describe the one, true God. He is not *like* light, he is not *sometimes* light... He **IS** light! He **IS** holy... He has always been and always will be.

God’s immutable holiness is sure because it is true. This truth is the foundation of the assurance the Christian has that our salvation is secure. His unchangeable nature means his promises don’t change and his Word doesn’t change. Everything he has ever said in his Word is totally, eternally and completely true and will remain true forever!

You want to know the objective, unchanging truth about everything in the universe? Go to the Word of God and you will know the truth. Jesus said “Your word is Truth” and because of God’s immutability, his truth is always true. The Psalmist said “The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rule endures forever” ... There you go... truth, immutably eternity... you don’t get any truer, any longer than God and his Word!

In our passage, John taps into this truth when he said “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you” in verse 5. What is the message? The message is the Gospel, of course, which he had “seen and heard” from Jesus (who John establishes very well as God in the first four verses), then “proclaimed to you (the churches in Asia Minor)” in verse 3 which was the basis of how those churches would “have fellowship” with John and other believers from Verse 3!

John is reminding us that the unchanging truths contained within the gospel of Jesus Christ was not only true when they were preached by Jesus himself, but remained true when they were preached to the Churches in Asia Minor and continues to be true even now as he writes this letter. We can even draw that line another 2000 years later and say the very same truths stand now as they did in the time of the Apostles! John is prepping his readers

for the tests to come by reminding them about the message of hope they had when they believed.

In the same way, he is reminding us that it is the same, unchanging message of the gospel that brought us new life and a hope for an eternity with God and it is this very same message of grace and mercy that true believers grab ahold of when we are feeling discouraged or temporarily in a dark place. If the coming tests cut us deep, the true believer will remember that they are secure in Christ! They will claim God's promises that he will never leave nor forsake us, that he is "for us", that his strength is made perfect in weakness, that there is now, therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the true believer, when there is doubt, they will keep in mind everything that God's word has said about the security of their salvation and clutch the promises of God closely to their chest as their hope and their confidence, and even if they are found to be unfaithful in some things, they can rely on God who is merciful and gracious to his sheep and who is faithful to bring them back if they stray.

True Life

[True Life recognizes the truth about our personal holiness](#)

Continuing now in verse 6:

"If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1 John 1:6, ESV)

This is the first truth test that John gives us in his Epistle. Do we say one thing, yet live another? Do we say "I follow Christ", while we continue to live like an unbeliever, in disobedience... keeping up appearances to the world as a virtuous Christian, yet privately entertaining dark thoughts and feeding the desires of the flesh? If so, John calls us a liar and says we don't practice the truth.

Notice John uses the word "practice" here. This is a deterministic word that qualifies how the professing Christian is living the truth, or not, in this case. In chapter 3 verse 4, he uses a similar term when describing those who "keep on sinning" when he says "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness". In Chapter 3 the term practice sinning is indicative of someone who is not a true believer. Practicing sin and practicing lawlessness is an attribute of natural man as described in great detail in Romans Chapter 1 who make a practice of sinning to the degree of even coming up with new sins. You've heard the term "practice makes perfect?" The unregenerate man can be also be said as one who is working to perfect sin in their lives, they aren't always sinning, but the arc of their lives are moving in the direction of unrighteousness.

Here, however, in verse 6, John says the same thing in the negative about those who continue to walk in darkness even as they say “we have fellowship with the Father”. They do not practice the truth. They are not working to make the truth perfected in them, they are not on an arc of sanctification. Again, not that they never do anything that can be considered good, they simply are not practicing holiness.

This can also be directly contrasted with another group in Chapter 3 verse 7 which are “Whoever practices righteousness”... for them, John says “he is righteous” and in verse 8, he brings back the first group again “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning”.

So, two types of people are in focus. Those who make a practice of sinning and those who make a practice of righteousness. If you are one, you are not the other. If you are not one, you are the other. This is the first test of the true believer.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:14 “What fellowship has light with darkness?” when he is talking about the nature of being unequally yoked... pulling in two different directions. If God is pulling you toward holiness and you are unrepentantly resisting that work in your own life because you are making a practice of sinning, you are pulling in the opposite direction. John here, calls that walking in darkness. In John 12:35, he says “the one who is walking in darkness *does not know where he is going*”. In first John 2:11 he adds “*because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*” Ecclesiastes 2:14 says “the fool walks in darkness”.

These are not descriptions of true believers, are they. Further down, John says “The truth is not in them”. So we have to assume, then that while this letter is written to people who claim to be believers, there will be some who will be reading it who are still walking in darkness, who are blind and do not know where they are going. These might be some who are self-deceived or some, who are simply living a double life; one of hypocrisy and lies - desperate not to be found out, but John says, they were never true believers to begin with.

In scripture, true believers are the ones who were blind but now they see. For them, the word of God is a light unto their path and a lamp unto their feet... Held aloft so they don't trip on anything.

John 3:21 says “But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” These are the ones who “practice righteousness”

And In verse 7, John continues on to describes them...

“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.” (1 John 1:7, ESV)

Here John describes true believers as those who “walk in the light”, but, we must be careful not to mix up the cause and effect here. John is not saying that IF we walk in the light, THEN the blood of Jesus WILL cleanse us from all sin. Remember, John is writing to professing Christians in this letter, his desire is for them to have assurance of eternal life. These tests are designed for professing Christians to examine their lives and look for evidence of the truth of their salvation, which has already happened, and is already sure (that’s what it means to have assurance after all).

Remember, if you are a true Christian, the blood of Jesus has ALREADY cleansed you from all sin... Christians ‘have been brought out of the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of his beloved son’(Col 1:13)! Past tense, it is already sure because it has already happened.

Colossians 3:13 - “So the Lord HAS forgiven you”

So we “walk in the light” because we have **already** been forgiven of our sin, not to earn the forgiveness of sin.

Ephesians 5:8 - “for at one time you **WERE** darkness, but **NOW** you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8, ESV)

Paul, here says that our very nature has been changed when we were saved. Notice that Paul doesn’t say here that we were In darkness and came into the light. He says we WERE darkness but are NOW light. We consisted of ‘darkness’, now we consist of light... In other words, our very nature has changed, beloved, we are no longer darkness, we are now light... as God is light and while the darkness of the flesh still envelops us while we wait for the redemption of our bodies, we are not to give in to the darkness because ‘what fellowship does light have with darkness?’.

The truly regenerate will fight the darkness of the flesh, not give into it and where we have found ourselves retreating into darkness, we fight to come back into the light. We “work out our salvation with fear and trembling”... because ultimately the light is living in us. Remember what John said in chapter one of his gospel:

“In him [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light of men”

Beloved we have the power to “walk in the light” because of the life that is living in us is the light of the world and is the light of men... When we walk in the light we are living True Life!

And true life means we invest in the things which build up holiness in our lives. It means being in the Word, Investing in and practicing Love, obedience and faith in our daily comings and goings. Thinking about “*whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, excellent, and anything worthy of praise*”. (Phil 4:8) “*teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,*

singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16).

True Life is truly walking in the light. True Life is true fellowship. This is why John says that if we are walking in the light “we have fellowship with one another”. True fellowship comes from one-ness and the unity in purpose of God’s true Church working and serving together. It is the opposite of being unequally yoked... It is everyone pulling in the same direction, in one Spirit and one mission, with one heart and one mind to see Christ glorified in ourselves, our families and in our communities.

If we are walking in True Light, we are living True Life!

[True Life recognizes the truth about our sin](#)

But, alas, beloved, the test of “walking in the light” is not the only test in our passage today.

Looking at verse 8:

Verse 8 - *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* (1 John 1:8, ESV)

and 10 and skipping verse 9 for now

Verse 10 - *“If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”* (1 John 1:10, ESV)

These two verses almost seem to be redundant, however, a quick look at the Greek for the word “sin” in verse 8 and “sinned” in verse 10 helps us to make a distinction between them.

In verse 8 “If we say we have no sin”, sin here is a noun or something we possess in this context, not do. In verse 10 “If we say we have not sinned”, this is a verb or something we do.

In verse 8, the Greek would seem to indicate that John is addressing an error in some early Christian circles which were based on early Gnostic dualistic beliefs that abstracted the body from the soul and did not create any relationship between the things done in the body and the status of one’s soul. So, the Christian Gnostic might say “Sin? What sin? That stuff the body makes me do isn’t the real me so you can’t hold it against me in a spiritual sense”.

In verse 10, John seems to be speaking more to the errored idea that some Christians have that once they are saved, they no longer sin or that somehow, they are no longer accountable for the sin they commit. Again, the whole scripture taken together shows that this isn’t true, but some had taken the freedom they had in Christ and used it to fulfill their

fleshly desires saying “my sins are forgiven”. This is the error that Paul was combating in Romans 6:1:

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (Romans 6:1–2, ESV)

Ultimately Paul’s exhortation to the Romans is the same as John’s; that we have new life in Christ and have been set free from sin and we should not let it gain a foothold in our bodies:

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:12–14, ESV)

It's not that sin is gone... it is forgiven. It's not that sin doesn't continue, we are to fight it and continually confess our sin because God is a faithful, loving kind Father who loves his children, is compassionate toward his children. He hears our prayers, he sees our hearts. We can deceive ourselves, but we can't deceive God. He knows our hearts better than we know them ourselves, and if, through our words, actions or omissions we fail to do the work holiness demands in finding and killing sin in our lives, then, John says “BEWARE”, you are either self-deceived (in verse 8) or you are intentionally being deceptive with God by calling him a liar (in verse 10) and in both cases it is evidence that Christ is not in you.

But wait, Erroll, it says “the **truth** is not in you” and the “**word** is not in you”, not “Christ is not in you”. Really? Remember, what I said in January... In Johannine theology, Jesus **is** the Word made flesh (John chapter 1). In John chapter 14 verse 6, Jesus said “I am the way, **and the truth** and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.”.

But the good news, is that through our examination today, if you have discovered that the truth is not in you, there is hope. This is where Verse 9 comes in!

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, ESV)

This is repentance! For the unbeliever, having been convicted of sin by the truth of the Gospel message, the only valid response unto salvation! For the believer, the attitude which causes us to humbly present ourselves before God to be corrected and stretched so that we will be more fully built up into the image of Christ.

If any of you have failed the truth test this morning, there is still hope for you. Believe on the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and your sins will be forgiven and you will be cleansed from all unrighteousness, John says.

If you are already a believer and the Holy Spirit has convicted you that you have not been investing in your holiness and your relationship with God as you ought or maybe God has convicted you that you have been saying you have fellowship with the light but has been walking in darkness, confess that to God, don't wait, don't hem and haw. Be specific, ask for forgiveness and for him to strengthen you for the fight it takes to Walk in the Light.

Beloved, John's heart in writing his first epistle is that of a Pastor and Shepherd of the flock. His desire is not to beat us over the head with our sin... and neither is it God's desire to do that. John's heart is evident in what he writes in Chapter 2 starting in verse 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. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:1-2, ESV)

The truth tests in John's Epistle are there to help us learn the truth so we can live a True Life, in the True Light of Christ. Don't pass up the opportunity to be sure of where you stand. Take the test, accept the truths you find there, then, be ready and willing to make any changes you need to make in order to bring your life in line with God's holy standard, because then and only then are you truly living.

As a close this morning, I'd like to leave you with an exhortation from 1 Peter, chapter 1 starting in verse 13 and going through to verse 25. Peter, in this passage, really fills out what it is to live a true life, in the true light:

"Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for

“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.” (1 Peter 1:13–25, ESV)

- Pray -