

# **“Walk In The Light”**

**1 John 1:1-2:2, Psalm 133, Psalm 23:5**

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*Pastor James York*

Growing up on the Dairy Farm one of my chores was feeding our 115 cows dinner. The cows were divided into three groups. Each group got a different amount and ratio of 3 different forages, 2 proteins, a grain and a mineral/vitamin supplement. There was a lot of temperamental automation to the mixing process that had to be closely monitored and adjusted. The control panel had around 40 switches that had to be turned on and off in a certain sequence to deliver the proper mix of feed. The whole area was lit up with a series of flood lights.

For 1 to 2 hours I would work to serve the cows dinner. In the bright light I felt perfectly safe, however when I finished and turned off the lights it was scary. I have no idea why we didn't choose to always be in the light by having a dusk to dawn light back by the mixing shed. In the darkness, with the machinery silent, there were all sorts of strange noises: things and plants rustling in the wind, pigeons walking on the tin roof, ice screeching across metal chutes and the pitter patter of scurrying critters. Often I would take a good look at my path, turn off the light and then quickly walk to the milking parlor. Did I mention that the mixing shed was behind the barn and exercise lot, therefore the path went behind a silo, over a conveyer belt, under an auger, then over a metal fence, around the feeder into the exercise lot, and through a group of heifers. I was then able to open the door to the milking parlor where I would be comforted by light once again.

Since I traveled the path numerous times, almost every day, I thought I could walk it safely in the dark. One dark night, as I rounded the silo, I saw the glow of 3 pairs of eyes staring at me. Afraid, adrenaline flooded through my body, and I ran. This extra burst of energy was soon to become a big pain. I instinctively knew when I felt the conveyer belt to leap it, take two steps, duck under the auger, take one step and jump the fence. Except this time I came up to quickly under the metal auger, hurting myself, knocking myself to the ground and letting out a scream that my Dad heard all the way in the milking parlor. He came running out and helped me up. I was hurting, bruised and very embarrassed by the pain I had caused myself by my choice, to run in the dark.

Today's scripture portrays the comfort, safety and life giving power of the resurrected Jesus as light. Sin is portrayed as darkness. We are urged to walk in the light of Jesus our eternal life giving Savior.

First John explains. **1 John 1:1-2:2 “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- this life was**

**revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us-- we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with God's Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from Jesus and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Jesus there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Jesus while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as Jesus, himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and God's word is not in us. 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; and Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."**

Easter has once again flooded all our lives with light. In Jesus there is absolutely no darkness, there is nothing to fear. In Jesus one is comforted, safe, renewed and resurrected in the light of God's love. Today's scripture is full of verbs, actions, for us to do, that John keeps repeating. We are to hear, see, look and touch the Word of Life. The gospel of John explains how the Word is Jesus, who has always existed in loving fellowship with God and will always exist in loving fellowship with God. Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit have created all life, love, joy, peace, beauty, goodness and all the many radiant forms of light. Our Triune God will sustain them all. God will cleanse, resurrect, enhance and perfect them all for eternity. In Jesus there is absolutely no darkness, no pain, diseases, hurt, sadness, tear, tragedy, suffering, death or any form of darkness what so ever. Absolutely no darkness has ever or will ever come from God. All darkness is the result of sin.

John urges us to do three things. First we are to walk in the light of Jesus. Second, to not walk in darkness by sinning (this always hurts yourself and others). Third, when you do sin, be honest about your sin, confess and get back into the light ASAP.

John describes walking in the light as declaring to others what Jesus has done in history and is doing in your life today. It is hearing Jesus and telling others about Jesus. It is looking for Jesus, touching Jesus and pointing Jesus out to each other. The light is constantly being revealed to us. We are to observe and testify to the light. Proclaiming the light creates fellowship with God and each other. The fellowship John is talking about is much, much more than beverages, treats and small talk fellowship. It is Koinonia, communion, coming together in harmony, weaving one's life, heart, thoughts, being and spirit together with God and others. It is clinging together to Jesus, the vine, the source of all life. John has written these things so our joy may be complete. Easter, Jesus'

resurrection, eternal life, light is being revealed, it is tangible, visible and audible. The light can be felt with our hands, seen with our eyes and heard with our ears. We are called to join with God in making the Light visible, audible, tangible and a reality to each other and everyone. We are called to know Christ and show Christ, to share God sightings, to share joy, peace, love, to share the light of Easter resurrection.

John repeatedly and emphatically instructions us not sin and to stay out of the darkness. Sinning and being in the darkness hurts ourselves and others, makes us liars, frauds and deceivers. We cannot be in the darkness and in the light at the same time. If we are in the darkness then the blessings of the light, life, love, joy, peace, etc. are difficult to experience because they are camouflaged in the darkness.

John also, after every emphatic instruction to stay out of the darkness, proclaims the even stronger power of the light. The blood of Jesus which is the light, cleanses us from all sin and darkness. Jesus, the light, will forgive our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Jesus, the light, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and the sins and darkness of the whole world. God's infinite grace will always forgive us. However we should never abuse God's grace. We should always strive to avoid the darkness of sin.

John is a realist who knows that he and all of us will keep on sinning and keep on hurting ourselves. If we say that we have no sin, we lie, we deceive ourselves. The truth is not in us. No matter how hard we try, even the purest, strongest willed person in the world will repeatedly sin and thrust themselves into the darkness. As soon as possible, we need to confess, to be honest and move back into the light. The light enables us to see our true selves, to see our sin, so we can confess and enjoy more and more light.

John is warning us that we tend to live in a false reality and be silent about the truth that even though we worship a God who is light we still carry around dark things, dark thoughts, dark feelings, dark words, dark emotions, dark actions and dark omissions. We make matters even worse by hiding our dark sin in the dark rather than confessing our darkness so it can be cleansed, so we can be healed, so we can be illumined by the light. Confession is a normal part of a healthy life. Did you notice that John wrote, "cleanse from all unrighteousness" not past tense, not once and done, rather present tense, confession is an assumed ongoing activity. Confession is not information transfer, God already knows all our darkness. Confession is for our healing, inviting the light to remove our darkness so we can again choose to love and enjoy the light. John also insists that choosing to walk in the light is not a once and for all decision. Confession and choosing to walk in the light are daily sometimes hourly choices by a vibrant Christian. The pattern of Christian life is continually become more self-aware by walking in the Light, confessing one's darkness, accepting God's grace of a new beginning and always striving to walk less in the darkness and more in the light.

Confession is avoiding self-deception, avoiding rationalization, compartmentalization, avoiding our sinless hype so we can step into the light of a fresh future. The 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm proclaims, **Psalm 23:5 "You prepare a table before me in the**

**presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”** God prepares a table for us with our enemies so there can be honest confession, reconciliation and true fellowship; symbolized by our overflowing cup. Psalm 133 declares **Psalm 133 “How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along! It’s like costly anointing oil flowing down head and beard, flowing down Aaron’s beard, flowing down the collar of his priestly robes. It’s like the dew on Mount Hermon flowing down the slopes of Zion. Yes, that’s where God commands the blessing, ordains eternal life.”** An overflowing cup symbolizes the joyful blessings of true fellowship with God, others and yourself. Who are your enemies? Pastor Carl Schenck preached. “Isn’t it true that often we are our own worst enemy? We get ourselves in a lot more trouble than anyone else puts us in! If that is the case then what does scripture mean to say? You prepare a table before me in the presence of my own worst enemy, myself. God’s banquet table is prepared for us even in our fallen condition, even with all our faults, and flaws, even with all the ways that we are our own worst enemy, as well as the enemy of others. Yet still the table is prepared.” It is prepared so honest confession coupled with the light can recreate joyful loving relationships with all and ourselves.

Communion is community. When we are dishonest with ourselves, when our self is divided, when we are hiding something, it is very difficult to live in community. When we walk in the dark we will stumble, fall and hurt ourselves and others.

If you do not tell me honestly how you really feel and think. If I do not tell you honestly how I really feel and think, then, we are both dishonest, living a lie, choosing to walk in darkness, choosing to hurt each other. Sometimes we play games with each other, are indirect with each other, rather than walking in the light of truthfulness. Dishonesty produces a state of unreality, a phoniness of relationship, false community, which deprives us of the fellowship that would be so enriching. Being honest, confession and striving to walk in the light will in time result in an overflowing cup of blessings.

The good news of Easter is Jesus is cleansing us from all our sin. Even better, the light does more than forgive, cleanse and restore. Jesus, the light, is our advocate, our supporter, our helper, our number one fan, our coach, our cheerleader, our teacher, our doctor, our backer, our promoter, our sponsor, our very best friend. Jesus is constantly lighting our path. Jesus is constantly flooding our lives with resurrection light.

Walk in the light of Jesus and share the light. Stay out of the darkness; do not sin. When you do put yourself in darkness by sinning be honest, confess and get back into the light pronto. Amen