

## Relationship Versus Sin: I John 1:5-2:2

Last Week as we began our study of I John we saw that the Apostle John, who is the author, wanted people to experience the unconditional love of God that he was able to experience. And in an effort to protect those who were in danger of allowing outside circumstances and beliefs to influence their faith, John writes warning of ideas, and teachers who will try to discredit the work of Jesus Christ.

We also saw that John called us to become partners with him in faith, relying heavily on the truth of Scripture, and not on human desire or emotion. That we would unite ourselves with God and develop a relationship with him through his Son, Jesus. And finally, we saw that the result of a relationship with God is joy. Joy in the fact that we have forgiveness, joy in the fact that God loves us, joy in God's provision for us, and joy in His gift of eternal life to us.

This week we will continue in **I John 1:5-2:2**:

John, in an effort to support the work of Jesus Christ, begins by pointing out our need for him due to our inability to help ourselves. In a sense, John is endorsing the very one he has come to love and doesn't want us to miss out on this valuable relationship. Yet, as we will see, our honesty is needed as we live out the Christian life. We can only find help when we are willing to admit that we need help.

### 1. God is the light of the world(vs.5)

*This is the message he has given us to announce to you: God is light and there is no darkness in him at all*

John is telling us that God is the light of the world. All through Scripture we find that God is referred to as light. **Psalm 27:1**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation – so why should I be afraid? The Lord protects me from danger – so why should I tremble?*

*Jesus said to the people, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." **John 8:12***

The term light, when you look at the Greek language can be defined as "to make ones thoughts known, or to show ones thoughts so they can be seen." God wants the world to see the truth. He wants them to see that he is showing or making known the answers to life. Just as one would use a flashlight when walking a dark trail to see where they are going or what may be coming their way, so we must use God's light to see where we need to go and to guard us against anything that may come against us. **Ephesians 5:8-9** says:

*For though your hearts were once full of darkness, now you are full of light from the Lord, and your behavior should show it! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.*

The light that emanates from God produces the same behavior we would expect from God himself. That which is good, right and true. When there is light we find the absence of darkness. Light has a way of exposing intentions, motives, attitudes and hearts. Yet, light also has a way of repelling darkness or causing tension with darkness. But darkness can also cause rebellion or tension against light.

As God looks at the behavior of mankind, a pure and holy God, who is good, right and true cannot look upon sin and disregard it, or excuse it away. He senses a responsibility to expose it and to deal with it so that justice will be served.

But John continues on in verse six and warns of Christians who are unwilling to let Light lead the way.

## **2. Situational Christianity. (vs. 6)**

*So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness. We are not living in the truth.*

This type of Christianity can be identified as "Situational Christianity." One who fluctuates depending upon desires, wants, control, or whatever else that causes one to live in denial.

John in this verse was actually confronting the claims of false teachers. They were telling Christians that they could live in sin yet still remain forgiven. How often do we as Christians believe the same. Or should I say "want to believe it!" But the Apostle Paul dealt with a similar teaching in **Romans 6:1-2**:

*Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more kindness and forgiveness? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?*

*"But," some say, "our sins serve a good purpose, for people will see God's goodness when he declares us sinners to be innocent. Isn't it unfair, then, for God to punish us?"* **Romans 3:5**

The lie of thinking that we can keep dabbling in sin and yet also have fellowship with God is one that many proclaimed Christians struggle with today. Why is this a lie? Well, if fellowship means to have something in common then obviously sin has nothing in common with God. Walking in darkness would mean that we are going against everything God stands for. **Ephesians 4:17-24** says:

*With the Lord's authority let me say this: Live no longer as the ungodly do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their closed minds are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They don't care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways. Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed. But that isn't what you were taught when you learned about Christ. Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus, throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness – righteous, holy and true.*

Many professing Christians struggle with confusion, hardened hearts and minds, with no conscience, doing whatever they want whenever they want. They leave no room for God. They cast him aside as if he were a spiritual handyman that was only in need when something needs to be repaired. Yet, a true Christian allows God to change the way they think and how they act.

I was watching something on TV the other day and a statement was made. Two people were discussing a conflict in life. One person was talking about how they struggle with their faith. The second person stated, "why do you let someone else think for you, why don't you think for yourself?"

But isn't that the problem? We think too much for ourselves without letting God have a chance at molding us and developing us. Situational Christianity is man's way of letting God think for him in some areas, yet there are other areas where they feel they have the better choice. Or should I say the more comfortable, or satisfying choice.

We cannot be a true Christian if we're living in both worlds. In fact, if we think we can, we are living in a lie. We become liars to our faith, to ourselves and to our God.

### **3. Live in the Light (vs. 7)**

But John challenges Situational Christianity and tells us to live in the light instead. In verse Seven he says:

*But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin*

There is only one way we can be sure that we are walking with God. We need to allow God to take residence in our lives. That all decisions be made with his help, all emotions be measured against God's heart for us, in all situations we acknowledge that God can intervene, and in all that we do we do it for the pleasure of God.

Because we have a relationship with God we can experience the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. The cleansing away of our sin. **Hebrews 9:14** says:

*Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.*

John's use of the term, "living in the light" doesn't mean that we will be sinless, just as the term, "living in the darkness" doesn't mean that we will be completely evil. Rather, "living in the light" suggests a life that lives under the positive influence of God's truth, and a life enjoying the cleansing power of Jesus' blood as one depends upon God for their forgiveness.

#### **4. Honestly evaluate our lives(vs. 8-10)**

Part of our "living in the light" involves the honest evaluation of the sin or sins in our own lives. In verse 8-10 John says:

*If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts*

People make a mockery out of sin so that the seriousness of sin can be taken away. In reality they try to make sin seem as if it isn't sin at all in hopes that the turmoil of a bad conscience or the reality of eternal hell will be somewhat diminished. People live today stating that, "I am a good person" thinking that if a good God will punish a good person then God is unfair.

But John's words state it clearly. All have sin. Paul in **Romans 3:9-18** paints an even better example of the sin of man.

*Well then, are we Jews better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jew or Gentile, are under the power of sin. As the Scriptures say, "No one is good – not even one. No one has real understanding; no one is seeking god. All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, not even one. Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their speech is filled with lies. The poison of a deadly snake drips from their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. They are quick to commit murder. Wherever they go, destruction and misery follow them. They do not know what true peace is. They have no fear of God to restrain them."*

Mankind has to face the reality of their condition. We are naturally prone to lean towards rebellion and self-centeredness. We struggle with sin no matter where we will find ourselves in life. Some sins are just more prevalent and obvious than others. Some are struggles of the mind and heart. Some are struggles with the fruit of this world. In all cases, we are all sinners. No one is better than the other. We are all on a level playing field. But the difference comes when we, who are Christians, seek God's help of forgiveness and restoration.

John tells us to confess our sins to God. It is amazing how hard it is to admit our wrongs. We allow embarrassment or shame to hold us in our sin, all the while the conviction is eating us alive. **Proverbs 38:13** says:

*People who cover over their sins will not prosper. But if they confess and forsake them, they will receive mercy.*

Confession has various meanings in Scripture. But the confession of sin can be defined as admitting fault in motive, reasoning, or expression, while at the same time acknowledging the promise or covenant (agreement) that can unite mankind with God. Confession can free us to enjoy our relationship with God. It should ease our conscience and lighten our cares. And when there is freedom in our relationship with God, there is joy.

But true confession is not only admitting our faults and actions, but also involves commitment to not continue to sin.. It requires that we re-look at the agreement or covenant that we made with God. Part of the covenant is that we would obey God and not allow sin place in our lives.

Our confession WILL however result in our forgiveness. So many people question this and carry so much guilt from sins of the past. But when God has forgiven us, in the Greek it means, he has sent our sin away, he has left it alone, and he no longer hold it against us. Satan would like nothing more than to hold us back because of our guilt.

But not only has God forgiven those who confess their sins, he has also cleansed them from all the wrong that they have committed. In the Greek this cleansing is a purging of evil or purification that enables us to live pure, righteous and true lives. We don't have to hide anymore but we can live a life exposed and honest before God.

#### **5. Sin is serious (2:1-2)**

However, we need to understand how serious sin is. In chapter 2:1-2 John writes:

*My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely. He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world.*

We have a mediator between us and God. Every time we as Christians sin, Jesus reminds God of the sacrifice that he has made for us so that our sins will no longer be held against us. **Hebrews 4:14-16** says:

*That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.*

We have a mediator who has gone through every temptation we have, or ever will go through. He knows how to help us. He gives us mercy and grace.

But we need to understand that sin such a serious danger to mankind that it took the death of God's Son, Jesus Christ, to solve the sin problem. God does not take the death of His Son lightly. And if God didn't take it lightly, how much we should hold it in respect and consideration in our own lives.

### **Conclusion**

John has told us this morning that Jesus is the light, the solution, the revelation of purity and righteousness, and the way to eternal life. And just as God is light we are to rely on him for direction and influence upon us. We are to live in the light as He is in the light. But living in the light requires that we don't allow darkness a constant and consistent influence or place in our day to day living. Our emotions, our desires, our wants should no longer be dictating our human response, but the light of God should be the determining force in what we do, and say.

We are all sinners, no matter who we are. We cannot obtain any spiritual supremacy over anyone else. We need to acknowledge who we are in light of who God is. Sin is a serious offense against God. We must hold the work of Jesus Christ as a serious aspect of our Christian walk. Let us not cheapen it by thinking Christ's death has now given us permission to continue in our sin. Sin puts our relationship with God at risk. May we live in the light and find fellowship or relationship with God.