

“Walk as Jesus Walked”

1 John 1:1-2:6

Reading John’s introduction here, it sounds like he’s going out of his way to tell us something about Jesus. When John wrote this he was writing to people who mostly never saw Jesus, heard Jesus or met Jesus. We are in the 80s AD, 50 years after Jesus died and rose again, with fewer and fewer eyewitnesses left to give firsthand accounts of Jesus. Not surprisingly, false teaching had crept into the church about Jesus.

Some were saying God’s Son came upon this man named Jesus at His baptism and left Him just before He died. But that heresy denies God became flesh and that Jesus rose from the dead. John opens his letter stating specifics about the reality of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who pre-existed in eternity and appeared in the flesh. John would write in 4:2

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

John begins very strongly by telling us something undeniable but essential and that is that

Jesus Really Walked With Us (1:1-4)

John presents clear facts about Jesus that he wants these misguided believers (and lost unbelievers) to get straight. Because if these facts are true then that will change how they live. The false teaching that God’s Son came on this Jesus fellow and left before He died created a false understanding about the material and the spiritual. That the two were separate and unrelated. We’ve been in Corinthians for a while and learned that knowledge was almost worshipped. That you could reach a level of knowledge that separated you from reality. And as long as you believed mentally there was a god or who Jesus was, that’s all that mattered. You could live any way you wanted. You can do anything you want because it wasn’t the real you. The real you is your spirit, your soul. Your body is just a temporary house that has certain needs that you fulfill. How you fulfill them doesn’t matter. Therefore you don’t sin because that’s your body, as long as your mind is clear.

John begins with the reality of the incarnation; that Jesus Christ really was God in the flesh from conception to ascension and remains alive today in God’s presence. John emphasizes

Jesus because one of us (vv.1-2)

God is light, John will say in v.5. He is holy, pure, completely unlike us. And yet, His Son took on flesh. John said, we are the eyewitnesses; seeing, hearing, touching the ‘Word of Life’, an expression that means all that is important and necessary to life. He is everything we need and has all the knowledge we need. He is the manifestation of God. God sent Jesus to be one of us so we would know exactly what God is like.

Yet He never sinned. And He died for all our sins. If Jesus didn’t really take on flesh and didn’t rise from the dead then where’s the atonement for sin? Where’s the victory over sin? This false teaching about God’s Son coming on this human Jesus at His baptism denies the substitutionary

payment for sin, because this Jesus died but not God's Son. Very confusing and creates a lot of problems.

But what this separating the sinless, spiritual Son of God from the material Jesus leads to the thinking that you can separate yourself from your body. And the body is limited so you feed it what it needs. So then belief in Jesus was disconnected from physical life. They believed their actions were unrelated to their thoughts. So as long as their mind was 'pure' they could do what they wanted with their bodies. So they falsely concluded they didn't sin because it was just their body doing it, not their mind.

To some new Christians, these teachings were appealing. They spoke of Jesus and spiritual knowledge but without the need for moral accountability. In other words, you can have God and still sin. Thankfully, John writes his letter to reveal the errors of false teaching in order to turn these believers back to the truth about Jesus. How did he intend to turn hearts back to God? Through sound doctrine combined with his own personal eyewitness accounts.

John's thesis in his letter is this: if you truly know Jesus Christ as Your Saviour you should be showing how Jesus Christ is continually changing how you live. If Jesus didn't become flesh and die for our sins and rise bodily, how can we know Him? Look at John's purpose here in v.3 and 4

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.

Jesus became one of us so

We could be one with Him (vv.3-4)

The whole point of the incarnation is to have fellowship with God and Jesus. From Genesis to Revelation it is always God's purpose to dwell with His people. Jesus was sent to show us how to know we have a relationship with God through faith in His Son. John said, we saw, heard and touched Jesus; we related to Him. We walked with Him and so can you if you believe He became one of us to die for the sins that separate us from Him and God. And that brings us into a unique relationship with other believers, John says. And this results in real joy. God designed us to be satisfied in Him alone. If Jesus wasn't one of us, then we can't be one with Him. We can't know real joy together because only the physical sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus secures our relationship with God.

But John is writing 50+ years after Jesus has died. And his relationship with God and Jesus continues and this joy is continual based on how close we're walking with Jesus. Now John challenges the false teaching some of his listeners are following.

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 yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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.

From Him, in Him, with Him. We need to maintain our relationship with Jesus by walking with Him. And John says this isn't something that we do in our head;

Walking with Jesus is Practical **(1:5-2:2)**

Three times John says, “If we say”, referring to what the false teachers were saying. What were they saying? They said, ‘We have fellowship with God’ (v.5). ‘We are without sin’ (v.8) and ‘We don’t sin’ (v.10). Yet John argues, you do have a sin nature and you do sin but that doesn’t mean you can’t have fellowship with God. Many were persuaded that sin is only your material self not your spiritual self. So if you dwell mentally with God, if you know God is beyond this world, then that’s all you need. So why then do we have so many commands in the Bible to show our love for God by doing things to and for people? John points out that walking with Jesus

Means doing the Word of God not just giving mental assent (1:5-6, 8, 10)

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

The word for “live” is the word for ‘do’. We need to be doers of the Word and not merely listen to the Word, James 1:22 says. All of us read the Word of God this week. What did we do? What did we obey from it? Many of us listen to messages or podcasts throughout the week. We all gave mental assent to how ‘good’ they were but what did we do? What verse of Scripture did we obey? What relationship did we repair? Who did we show love to? Who were we patient with? Who did we listen to? Who did we humble ourselves towards and serve?

Who did we forgive? John challenges us all here when he says, ‘do you have sin in your life’? You say no? You’re a liar. Wow, that’s bold. How many of us sinned this week? How many of us confessed those sins? That’s doing the Word. That shows the truth is in us and we are doing what God says so we can have fellowship with Him – yes – but John says so we can have fellowship with each other (v.7).

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.

Being in the light (of God) is a way of saying, ‘Open ourselves up to God through His Word’. God is light. Light pushes out the darkness. Sin is darkness in you and me. God’s Word exposes that darkness. What do we do when He sheds His light on our sins? We need to deal with it. Walking with Jesus means doing what the Word says and

Seeking forgiveness so we can maintain healthy relationships (1:7-9, 2:1-2)

Garbage day is a wonderful, spiritual metaphoric day. Everyone has garbage in their life. We all put it on display once a week. My neighbour sees my garbage; I see my neighbour’s garbage. So if I want to get rid of my garbage, I have to confess I have garbage by un hiding it from the inside of my home if I want it removed.

John says, when we have fellowship with God, walking according to the light of His Word, we enjoy fellowship with each other. But if we claim we don’t have sin or haven’t sinned, we lie and immediately break fellowship. The reason why Jesus became one of us and died and rose was so that our fellowship could be restored. So when, we see sin in our life we need to unhide it, confess it to God (and the person we hurt) and the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us from our sins and our unrighteousness and we receive forgiveness and cleansing. The word cleansing in Greek is the word we get in English catharsis; cleaning, purifying; the removal of defilement which brings healing.

Jesus and the Son of God have to be the same person and had to have died a sinless death so as to rise from the dead if we are to have fellowship with God and other like-minded followers of Jesus and to have victory over sins now and ultimate victory over the penalty of sin after we die.

Denying we have sin does not give you a relationship with God; professing we have a sin nature and confessing our sins to God based on the finished work of God-in-the-flesh on the cross in Jesus cleanses – present tense – us from our sins. Look at 2:1-2,

2:1 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.

It shouldn't surprise us that the enemy brings confusion to the message and identity of Jesus so we can deny that we have sin or do sin. Since the Garden of Eden, he keeps trying to convince people there is no repercussions for sin. Even then it was about knowledge. You can be like God.

John continues on the theme of obedience in 2:3-6,

³ We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴ The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Walking With Jesus is to Live as He Lived **(2:3-6)**

John is countering a theoretical religion with a practical faith, boots on the ground relationship with Jesus. So how do we know if we're walking with and like Jesus? John says

Our love should increase as we obey (2:3-5a)

But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him

How does God and Jesus love? Unconditionally. In spite of people sinning against them. Taking the first step. To walk as Jesus walked is to live as Jesus lived. 'While we were yet sinners ...' (Rom. 5:8). 'Live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (Eph. 5:2). 'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient bearing with one another in love' (Eph. 4:2)

Paul prayed for us in Phil. 1:9 that

that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

If I'm listening to a lot of messages, involved in multiple bible studies or listening to numerous podcasts about God's Word and none of this knowledge gives me depth of insight that makes me love people more like Jesus, then I am only hearing the Word and deceiving myself. Maybe I should reduce my listening and reading value so I can focus on one or two things that a good message, book or podcast is encouraging me to do.

Obedience brings peace and joy and fellowship with God not just listening to the Word. To walk as Jesus did is to see

Jesus' selfless attitude increases as we obey (vv.5b-6)

Listen to Paul's challenging words in Phil. 2:3-8

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

And recall Jesus' own words in Matt. 11

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

How do we know if we are walking with Jesus?

This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

We'll be humbler – which doesn't mean making less of yourself but rather revealing less of yourself; your pride, sin and selfishness. Instead show, share and speak less of your thinking and attitude and share Jesus' attitudes and thoughts about others with them. Being more loving, patient, compassionate, gentle. This is how we know we are in Him.

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- If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at olivvet@rideau.net