

Theme: Brought into the Light

I. We were cleansed by Jesus' blood

II. That we may walk in the light

Introduction: When people talk, they want to bring their message to life. They will use all sorts of figures of speech to punctuate their conversations.

Some use comparisons to make a point. I'm as hungry as a bear. And from the number of you that have told me the bears recently got your bird feeders, you know right away what that means: bears are voracious eaters. They eat and eat and eat. If I tell you that I'm as hungry as a bear, you get the point.

Sometimes we use contrasts to make a point. It's a lot like comparing two things, but instead of two things that are the same, we contrast two things that are vastly different. An example of that would be: "She was a saver, he was a spender; their habits with money were like night and day." Night is nothing like day. So you get the point that this woman really liked to save money, and the man really liked to spend money.

John uses more than a few contrasts in this text today. He writes about light and darkness. He writes about truth and liars. He writes about owning up to sin and denying that we have sin at all. I suppose that we could pick any one of these contrasts for the focus of our sermon. But I chose the first one: light and darkness, upon which to base this sermon.

John very plainly tells us about the difference between the light and the darkness. Then John stresses two points: 1) Jesus cleansed us by his blood and Brought Us into the Light. And John encourages us that 2) since we have been Brought into the Light let us now walk in that light.

Please give your attention to God's Word today. First we remember that we were cleansed by Jesus' blood and Brought into the Light.

I. We were cleansed by Jesus' blood

In the opening verses of our text, John says, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth." John was an eye witness of our Savior's ministry. He heard from Jesus' own lips the Sermon on the Mount. He listened to those seven words from the cross (the ones we covered during the recent Lenten season) from the foot of Jesus' cross. John writes about the message which he had heard from Jesus. It's very simple John says.

"God is light. In him there is no darkness at all." The original language writes this so strongly. There is not even a hint of darkness in God! That fact established, John continues.

If we go on walking around in the darkness of sin, we cannot be walking around with God. John shows how light and darkness have nothing to do with each other. Remember those contrasts we talked about? John says that God is light; sin is darkness; and 'nary the twain shall meet. God doesn't have anything to do with sin. Sin doesn't have anything to do with God. They are mutually exclusive. There is no overlap.

John then asks, how can we say that we have fellowship with God yet then practice a lifestyle that keeps us walking around in sin? John isn't talking about someone who falls into sin and realizes immediately the filth that he's in, and asks for forgiveness and is washed by the blood of the Lamb of God. John is talking about those who know what sin is, who deliberately and repeatedly live in, walk around in sin.

Does that sound like anyone you know? Do you know of anyone who walks around in sin? They live in sin? They make sin their daily habit? Anyone like that at all? Come on, you must have neighbors, even if you live way out in the woods, there is still that family that lives down the road. Do they fit this description of living in sin? Walking around in sin? Making sin their daily habit?

Now we're getting somewhere. OK, so you have that family that lives in sin firmly in your mind, right? Now, you know what? They're thinking of their neighbors too. Guess who that is? Do our neighbors have us in mind when they think about people who make sin their daily practice? Live in sin? Walk around in sin?

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

As the apostle Paul cries out in Romans 7, so we too can ask, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

John answers the exact same way that Paul did in Romans 7. Paul said, "Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!" John says, "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." Light and darkness are mutually exclusive; so are God and sin. If we want to be one with the Father, then the sin has to be removed. Jesus is the one to wash away those sins.

Oh, how I wish that you all knew Greek and we could sit down together and talk about this text in the original language! Have you ever heard of a katharsis? Or a kathartic cry? Katharsis means cleansing. If you lock yourself in your bedroom after your boyfriend or girlfriend dumps you and you have yourself a good cry, where you actually feel refreshed afterwards, that was a kathartic cry - a cleansing cry. Jesus' blood cleanses us from all sin, ALL sin. Not just some, not just the ones we remember, not just the big ones, not just the underlying inherited sin, but Jesus' blood cleanses us from, just what John says - ALL sin.

If we're ever tempted to doubt just how far-reaching and powerful Jesus death on the cross was, then turn to 1 John 2:2, "He [Jesus Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." Again

how I wish you knew Greek. Jesus is our *Hilasmos*. Let me explain.

God is light, in him there is no darkness at all. But we have sinned; we admit it. Sin is darkness. Those two contrast so sharply that there is no overlap, none whatsoever.

In fact, God is furious when we sin. His wrath burns hot against us. Maybe we don't feel the burning sulfur, but we should. God's wrath boils like a lake of bubbling, molten sulfur. But we want fellowship with God, and we most certainly don't want that lake of burning sulfur. We need a *Hilasmos*.

Jesus is our *Hilasmos*. He can appease God's anger over our sin. He can take that burning, seething anger and quench it just like that. In order for Jesus to do that, he had to be a complete *Hilasmos* - he had to be a sacrifice where God could pour out his wrath, so that we could once again have fellowship with God. Jesus was that sacrifice that brings us back into fellowship, back into communion, with God. That's a *Hilasmos*, Jesus was our *Hilasmos*. Jesus brought us out of the darkness of sin and into God's wonderful light.

Transition: Now John says: Walk in the light.

## II. That we may walk in the light

Go about in the light of God. Live in God. Live in the peace and joy of forgiveness. Confess your sins, and know that God forgives you for Jesus' sake.

Declare the message God declared to you. Share the good news with your children. Encourage them to walk in the light with God and with you.

John says that when "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."

John reminds us to confess our sins, "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." God is the one who worked out for us the forgiveness for our sins. He planned and carried out our salvation. God is faithful to his promises, that for Jesus' sake he "will forgive our wickedness and will remember our sins no more," Jeremiah 31:34.

Conclusion: Light and darkness have nothing to do with each other. There is no overlap; you can't have and hold onto your sin and walk with God too.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, his Son, who with his blood Brought Us into the Light. Jesus was the sacrifice that brings us back into communion with God; back into the light.

That is where we now live. We "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." Jesus Brought Us into the Light, that we may walk in the Light. Amen.