

## Walk in the Light 1 John 1:1 – 2:2

Walk in the light, beautiful light,  
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.  
Oh shine all around us by day and by night,  
Jesus is, Jesus is the light of the world;

Oh we shall walk in the light, beautiful light,  
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.  
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Jesus is, Jesus is the light of the world;

There is a saying in the Christian community “we much walk the talk.” What is meant is that we are to know God and walk in obedience to God. It is not enough to say I know God, but our behavior should be a reflection of that knowing. In order to know God, God has revealed Himself in creation (Rom. 1:20), but creation alone could never tell us the story of God’s love. God has also revealed Himself much more fully in God’s Word, the Bible. But God’s final and most complete revelation is in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Because Jesus is God’s revelation of Himself, He has a special name: “The Word of Life” (1 John 1:1). Christ reveals to us the mind and heart of God. He is the living means of communication between God and men. To know Jesus Christ is to know God!

John, the writer of our scripture, is a trust-worthy witness because he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. His was a firsthand “religious experience” not inherited from somebody else or discovered in a book! No, John knew Jesus Christ face-to-face. He and the other Apostles heard Jesus speak. They watched Him as He lived with them. They even touched His body. They knew that Jesus was real—not a phantom, not a vision, but God in human bodily form.

We who have accepted Jesus' sacrifice have become the children of God. Certain characteristics are true of all God's children. A person who is born of God and walks in the Light lives a righteous life. (1 John 2:29) A child of God who walks in the light does not practice sin (1 John 3:9). A believer who walks in the light will occasionally commit sin (1 John 1:8–2:2), but they will not make it a habit to sin.

God's children who walk in the Light also love each other and our Heavenly Father (cf. 1 John 4:7; 5:1). We have no love for the world system around us (1 John 2:15–17), and because of this the world hates us (1 John 3:13). Instead of being overcome by the pressures of this world, and swept off balance, we, the children of God who walk in the Light overcome the world (1 John 5:4).

John wrote this letter to share Christ with his readers in the first century church and with us. John tells us as we walk in the Light we have fellowship (v. 3). It simply means "to have in common" (like our fellowship meals). As sinners, we had nothing in common with the holy God. But God, in His grace, sent Christ to have something in common with us. Christ took on Himself a human body and became a human. Then Christ went to the cross and took on that body the sins of the world (1 Peter 2:24). Because He paid the price for our sins, the way is open for God to forgive us and take us into God's family: we have fellowship with God.

Another thing that happens to us when we accept Jesus and we walk in the Light we have joy (v. 4). Joy is God's answer to the emptiness, the hollowness of human life. Joy is not something that we manufacture for ourselves; joy is a wonderful by-product of our fellowship with God. Sin is the cause of the unhappiness that overwhelms our world today. Sin promises joy but it always produces sorrow. The pleasures of sin are temporary (Heb. 11:25), but God's pleasures last eternally—they are forevermore (Ps. 16:11).

Jesus said, the night before He was crucified, “No one will take your joy from you” (John 16:22). “I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11). The Apostle John writes, in effect, “Faith in Jesus Christ gives you a joy that can never be duplicated by the world (not illness, separation, heartache, fear, loss or lack). I have experienced this joy myself, and I want to share it with you.”

It is said every form of life has its enemies. Insects have to watch out for hungry birds, and birds must keep an eye on hungry cats and dogs. Even human beings have to dodge automobiles and fight off germs.

The life that is real, that walks in the light, also has an enemy, and we read about it in this scripture. John illustrates his point by using the contrast between light and darkness: God is light; sin is darkness.

The New Testament calls the Christian life a “walk.” This walk begins with a step of faith when we trust Christ as our Savior. But salvation is not the end—it’s only the beginning—of spiritual life. “Walking” involves progress, and as Christians we are supposed to advance in the spiritual life. Just as a child must learn to walk and must overcome many difficulties in doing so, a Christian must learn to “walk in the light.” And the fundamental challenge is sin. But sin is not simply outward disobedience; sin is also inner rebellion or desire. For each of us sin can be something different: for some it can be greed, for others pride, for others refusal to live the ways that God instructed in the Bible, for some it is independence, thinking that I can live righteous without any help from God. Sin separates us from fellowship with God.

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New does the Bible hide or excuse the sins of the saints. In escaping a famine, Abraham became weak in his faith and went down to Egypt and lied to Pharaoh (Gen. 12). Later, the patriarch tried to “help God” by marrying Hagar and begetting a son (Gen. 16). In both cases, God

forgave Abraham his sin, but Abraham had to reap what he had sowed. God can and will cleanse the record, but He does not change the results. One writer says “No one can unscramble an egg.”

Peter denied the Lord three times and tried to kill a man in the Garden when Jesus was arrested. Christ forgave Peter (cf. John 21), of course, but what Peter had done hurt his testimony greatly and hindered the Lord’s work.

The fact is that Christians’ sin bothers some people—especially new Christians. They forget that their receiving the new nature does not eliminate the old nature they were born with. The old nature (which has its origin in our physical birth) fights against the new nature which we receive when we are born again (Gal. 5:16–26). No amount of self-discipline, no set of human-made rules and regulations, can control this old nature. Only the Holy Spirit of God can enable us to “put to death” the old nature (Rom. 8:12–13) and produce the Spirit’s fruit (Gal. 5:22–23) in us through the new nature.

Sinning saints are not mentioned in the Bible to discourage us, but to warn us. “Why do you keep preaching to us Christians about sin?” an angry church member said to her pastor. “After all, sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person!”

John said: “Yes,” replied the pastor, “it is different. It’s much worse!”<sup>1 2</sup>

“If we say that we have fellowship with God and at the same time walk in darkness, we lie and are not doing the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other and the blood of Jesus Christ is steadily cleansing us from all sin.”

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<sup>1</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Jn 1:1

<sup>2</sup>Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:883

John wrote to counteract those of us who claimed to be especially intellectually and spiritually advanced, but whose lives showed no sign of it. They claimed to have advanced so far along the road of knowledge and of spirituality that for them sin had ceased to matter and the laws had ceased to exist. We know this for spiritual leaders that live lives of sin and take others with them. They were like Napoleon who once said that laws were made for ordinary people, but were never meant for the like of him. So these heretics claimed to be so far on that, even if they did sin, it was of no importance whatsoever.

In answer John insisted that to have fellowship with the God who is light a person must walk in the light and that, if they are still walking in the moral and ethical darkness of life without Christ, they can not have that fellowship. One who would find fellowship with God is committed to a life of goodness which reflects God's goodness. C. H. Dodd writes: "The Church is a society of people who, believing in a God of pure goodness, accept the obligation to be good like God." This does not mean that you must be perfect before you can have fellowship with God; if that were the case, all of us would be shut out. But it does mean that you will spend your life in the awareness of your obligations, in the effort to fulfill them and ask for forgiveness when you fail. It will mean that you and I must never think that sin does not matter; it will mean that the nearer we come to God, the more terrible sin will be to us.

John also taught that one who really walks in the Light and knows the truth is daily cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus. This is a statement of what ought to be happening in the Christian's life. The meaning is that all the time, day by day, constantly and consistently, the blood of Jesus Christ ought to be carrying out a cleansing process in the life of the individual Christian. John looked on the sacrifice of Christ as something which not only cleansed from past sin but equips one in holiness day by day.

God has promised that he will never despise the apologetic heart and God will not break his word. If we humbly and sorrowfully confess our sins, God will forgive. On Thursday night I was at a Revival at United Christian Church. At the end of the worship and preaching time I saw a man crying. He said he was “no good!” My respond was “that’s okay, since none of us is good, that is the reason we need a savior.” I asked him to accept the forgiveness that only God can give through Jesus.

Jesus is our defense counselor, pleading our case before God that we be forgiven over and over again. But Jesus is also that one that sends the Holy Spirit to make us stronger and stronger, and less receptive to the temptations of sin in our lives.<sup>3</sup>

The story is told of a woman who came to the pastor of the church and said: “I would like to become a Christian, but I’m afraid I can’t hold out. I’m sure to sin again!”

Turning to 1 John 1, the pastor said, “No doubt you will sin again, because God says, ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us’ (1 John 1:8). But if you do sin, God will forgive you if you will confess your sin to Him. But it isn’t necessary for Christians to sin. As we walk in fellowship with God and in obedience to God’s Word, God gives us ability to resist and to have victory over temptation.”

Then the pastor remembered that the woman had gone through surgery some months before.

“When you had your surgery,” she asked, “was there a possibility of complications or problems afterward?”

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<sup>3</sup> Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Letters of John and Jude*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1976, S. 21

“Oh, yes,” she replied, “But whenever I had a problem, I went to see the doctor and she took care of it.”

Then the truth hit her! “I see it!” she exclaimed. “Christ is always available to keep me out of sin or to forgive my sin!”

Each of us must ask ourselves honestly, “Am I a true child of God or am I walking in the Light of God in fellowship, obedience and love?” If you have not experienced eternal life, this real life, you can experience it right now! God has “gone on record” in His Word (1 John 5:9–15). He offers you the gift of eternal life. Believe His promise and ask Him for His gift. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13). Amen.

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