

# The God of Light in whom there is no Darkness

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[ 0 : 00 ] We are going to begin our time together this evening hearing the words of Psalm 56, sung in garlic.

Psalm 56, and we can read them in English from the beginning of the psalm. Psalm 56, and we can read them in English from the psalm.

They rest my words. Their thoughts against me are all for ill. They meet, they lurk. They mark my steps, waiting my soul to kill.

From the beginning of the psalm, or amsidion hugh gye, or bial laden, modog gyswas. Ceydd hraen.

Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen.

[ 1 : 30 ] Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen.

Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen.

Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen. Ceydd hraen.

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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[ 4 : 17 ] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 6 : 51 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 9 : 21 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 11 : 51 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And we give thanks that we are reminded of what he is to do through the Spirit of God.

[ 14 : 21 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

And where COVID comes.

And there is one who says that.

And just that.

[ 18 : 51 ] God is light.

And the truth.

Amen. We can read again at verse 5, this then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

And so on. Well, as you can tell from the name given to this first epistle, the author of it is considered to be the Apostle John.

Some think that he wrote it possibly from Ephesus, but conservative scholars, despite opposing views, hold out this to be the most likely location from which John wrote the epistle.

[ 22 : 13 ] A general epistle, as you can see, is written to the church at large. And while no person or place is mentioned as the recipient of the letter other than to address them as my little children or beloved, it's clear from that that all the recipients are at any one time members and adherents of the Church of Christ.

The commentator Lenski says about the passion of the Apostle John that he is always in the shadow. He never seeks the limelight for himself.

And it is only when absolutely necessary that he refers to himself in his own gospel. And when he has to refer to himself, then he avoids using his name.

There are some general characteristics that belong to this epistle that repeat themselves.

And we find them recurring. Words such as fellowship, knowledge, love.

[ 23 : 31 ] We find these words again and again used by John throughout the epistle. We also find that he wants the reader to understand his reasons for writing the letter.

He wants them to be clear that this is not just any letter, but it's a letter that has a specific goal in view. That you may add to your joy.

That you may guard against sin. That you may be warned against false teachers. That you may enjoy your faith being strengthened.

And that you may be assured of eternal life. These are things that John comes to again and again throughout the epistle. Now I want us to look at verse 5 onwards.

And note first of all that John is here wanting them to understand that what he is saying to them has been given to him to say to them.

[ 24 : 53 ] It's not something that he does voluntarily. It's not something that he does of his own bat as it were. He is called to declare.

This is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you. This is what we know to be true. This is what we have learned to be true.

This is what we have been taught ourselves as truth. And it is now a role to let you know about that. And this is the message that he begins with.

God is light, he says. God is light. Notice he is not saying, He is not the light, or our light, but God is light.

He is speaking about God and what God is. The very essence of God.

[ 26 : 03 ] The nature of God. The theologian Alfred Plumer says about John that the Greek church gave him the title, the theologian.

And while other writers tell us what God does, he tells us what God is.

And to state that God is light is to say something very specific about God. And the immediate context may help us discover that at least part of that involves moral perfection.

Light is an emblem, an emblem of knowledge and purity. John Stott suggests that it is in the nature of God to reveal himself, just as it is in the property of light to shine.

Perfect purity Another well-known theologian, Martin Lloyd-Jones, tells us that where we want to start our theology, is important.

[ 27 : 38 ] And there is no better starting point than this. This is what John has to declare God is. And God is holy.

I was reading, just as I was waking this morning, my eyes were fixed upon a plaque we have on the wall of the bedroom.

And these, now these three remain, faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love. Words, you know, comes from the mouth of the Apostle Paul, as we have them recorded in 1 Corinthians 13.

And some people have abused that declaration of God and say, this is what he is essentially.

This is what he is. More than he is anything else, he is the God of love. And there is nothing more certain than God is loving. But before anything else, the reality of the holy otherness of God is before us, in the statement that God is, and God is light.

[ 28 : 58 ] We cannot even understand God's plan of salvation. That God is just and righteous. And this is the only way by which a lost sinner can be saved.

The way that God has ordained, the way that God has provided, the way that God has set before us in the Gospel. You'll notice that John goes on to say that not only is this God as light, it is light like, it's free from any impurity, it's free from anything that would sully it in any way.

But then he cites three claims that are apparently being made, but need to be contradicted.

Three times he uses the words if we see. Now it's not just simply a theoretical exercise or a speculative exercise about what people might be saying.

What he is identifying here is very real positions occupied by some to the detriment of the Gospel and to the detriment even of their own soul.

[ 30 : 38 ] First claim is that they have fellowship with God while the evidence is to the contrary. If we say he says that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth.

If we are walking with God who is the light and we ourselves are darkness or as he has it here, walking in darkness, that cannot possibly be right.

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Not only fellowship with God but also with his people is what is claimed.

But habitual behaviour that can only be explained as the product of darkness, either the darkness of ignorance or distance from the light.

A person who is in the grip of that cannot be in fellowship with God. To be in fellowship is to be in the light.

[ 31 : 50 ] And he asks the question, it's with what fellowship has light with darkness? What communion has Christ with Belial? What does the dark do but hide the truth?

Those who do not want the truth to be known prefer the darkness. They prefer things to be kept in a way indistinct.

The saying is don't muddy the water. Instead of having clear water you have muddy water and this muddy water it's to distort and to hide and to keep hidden what is otherwise brought to vision.

Sin is always a barrier to God's fellowship. And David had to acknowledge his sin before being restored.

And the opposite of doing that produces the opposite effect. If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with the other in the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin.

[ 33 : 11 ] The application of the blood forgiveness and sanctification proceed from it. Fellowship with those who are of a like mind and a like spirit.

I was reminded in reading of the way that Moses was with Pharaoh he was sent to Pharaoh to bear witness to the truth and Pharaoh when he was exposed to the truth confessed confessed but his confession was a confession of necessity.

It was as someone describes it a temporary expedient. The reality was although he confessed his sin he did not hate his sin.

Yes he hated the affliction his sin had brought upon him but he did not hate sin. there is a need in repentance not only for us to be enlightened as to what sin is and exposed to the consequences of that sin but to appreciate the danger that we are in if we don't.

The second claim that we have here is that some say that they are without sin. There is no sin inherent to their nature.

[ 34 : 52 ] That is itself a contradiction of the truth because God's word says that all have sinned and the way people seek to get around this is by saying well what is sin?

There is sin is just a man-made definition and why should we acknowledge such a definition?

Because we're all alike and sin is an offence. The word itself and the meaning of it offence so we shouldn't use it and that's just a tool of the devil.

The whole world lies in wickedness is the testimony of scripture and we see politicians struggle with the reality of prisons that are full of people that have broken the law and sin is a breach of the law and it's for one sin or another that they are in the prison but the prisons are full so what do we do?

we change the law to accommodate the inability that is within society to deal with the reality of sin in the world.

[ 36 : 21 ] We, as it were, distill the sins so that they are not in receipt of the penalty that would put them in prison.

it's a false way of dealing and many people do that with sin. They distill their sin in the sense that they say well so and so did the same and if they did the same and if so many people do the same it can't be wrong.

It can't be as wrong as the scripture makes out. The thing that John is saying here is forgiveness follows confession confession.

And if you don't confess sin then you're denying sin. And that failure to confess means that forgiveness cannot be used.

And it is in and through Christ that that forgiveness comes. In what sense is a relationship with Christ a real relationship if you are like he was sinless which is nonsense.

[ 37 : 29 ] If we say we have no sin then we make him a liar. And that's the final thing. His word is not in us.

Christ alone is the sinless one. But it is not just the fact that we deny it but our guilt is even greater because the error and the delusion that we are under is to accuse God of being a liar.

We accuse God of being something that he cannot be because we refuse to believe his word. We refuse to believe what he says is truth.

We refuse to acknowledge the guilt that he says that belongs to us and that can only be assuaged by his doing.

he is the propitiation for our sins. He and he alone he is the one who covers it. He is the one who has dealt with the wrath of God for sin.

[ 38 : 35 ] And if we have not appreciated that, if we have not understood that, if we have not acknowledged that before God, then we are still in darkness. We are still in need of salvation and that salvation can only be in and through him.

Well, may God in his mercy bless to us the reality of what the relationship with Christ entails, that we may be in his light and that we may enjoy what that entails.

Let us pray. Lord, we give thanks that your word teaches us that there is but one God, the only living and true God, and that you are a God who is light like no other is light.

The psalmist of old acknowledged the fact that the Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed, my life strength is the Lord, of whom then shall I be afraid.

Those who have experienced the life changing relationship with you and have you as their light and have you as the lamp that lightens their way for them, they are assured of salvation at your hand.

[ 40 : 05 ] Bless us, we pray, and bless your word to us. Cleanse from sin God before us, in Jesus' name. And now may grace, misery and peace, in the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all now and always.

Amen.