

# Born of God: "Walking In The Light"

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[0:00] Holy God, there's no one like you. There's none besides you. Open our eyes to see your wonder.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh upon us. Melt us. Hold us. Fill us.

Use us. God, give us a hunger for holiness. For you are holy. Spirit of God, would you do your loving, convicting work this morning.

And I pray that every sinner in the room would not fear your convicting work. For perfect love casts out fear. Pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. If you would open up your Bibles to 1 John chapter 1. We're going to be looking at 1 John 1, 5 through 2, 2.

[1:12] And I have left... Nope. Nope. I have left my introduction on my pew.

Have you ever felt like you've been taken for granted? Maybe there's something that you uniquely contribute to your family.

Maybe you uniquely contribute something to your workplace or your school, your friend group, or maybe it's your church. But that unique contribution goes unnoticed.

It goes underappreciated, undervalued. You ever feel that way? Do you think it's possible to take God for granted?

God's holiness. God's holiness is his moral purity.

[2:27] It's his moral brilliance. It's his squeaky clean character. That if you're in his presence, you will start to feel a little dirty. God's like the sun.

And his moral brilliance shines bright. And it exposes the darkness of sin. Which is moral impurity. Which is defilement. Have you been taking God's holiness for granted? Here's how you can know. When was the last time you realized that some thought of yours that originated in you, some feeling that came out of you, that some word that shot out, that some action or inaction was actually a personal affront to your holy God?

When was the last time you realized that? Or when was the last time you personally admitted to God himself that some thing that came out of you, that you are responsible for, was sin against him?

[3:43] Are you taking God's holiness for granted? Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, we learned that last week, he is the incarnate eternal word of life.

Well, this Jesus shed his blood so that sinners like us can enter into a personal relationship with a holy, brilliant God like him. And that fellowship with God is marked by joy, and marked by hope, and marked by clarity, and marked by confidence.

There's peace, and there's peace. But sometimes it gets uncomfortable. Because of the fact of the matter is, we are still sinful, brothers and sisters in Christ, and we have come into a real relationship with the holy God.

Here's what I'm going to argue this morning. God's holy brilliance will continually expose our sinful darkness and show us our need for Jesus.

God's holy brilliance will continually expose our sinful darkness resident in us, and it's uncomfortable, and it shows us our ongoing need for Jesus.

[5:11] I want you to see that from 1 John 1-5 through chapter 2, verse 2. And we're going to make this known, I want to help you to see it by two moves in the sermon.

The first move is point number one, one holy message, and then the second move, I'll tell you when we get there. We're going to spend the bulk of our time in the second move.

God's holiness will continually expose our sinfulness and show us our need for Jesus. So, point number one, one holy message. Look at chapter 1, verse 5.

This is the message that we have heard from Him and proclaim to you that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. In verse 5, you see the word we, that's John the Apostle speaking on behalf of all the other apostles.

But he says, I've got a message I've been telling you. This is a message from all the apostles. And I want you to see who this message is actually from.

[6:17] This is the message we have heard from Him. Who is that? Well, you go back up in your Bible to 1 John 1, 1-4, and you realize that the Him is no other than the incarnate, eternal word of life, the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, who this John writing knew personally, who this John writing, He heard Him.

This John writing, saw Him with His own eyes, and this John touched Him with His own hands. He, the guy writing this, touched the resurrected body of Jesus Christ.

Have you ever gotten a letter in the mail? And you're like, how serious should I take this? And so you look up at the return address and you're like, ah, whatever. You toss it. If you're a child here and you see that letter, that note is from your grandma or grandpa, you're like thinking, oh, this is going to be good.

You're like, because it shows us who the sender is. The sender of the message that John is about to tell us is the incarnate, eternal word of life, Jesus Christ.

Which means the message is really important. What is this message about? In 1 John 1.5, we read what this message is.

[7:52] That God is light and in Him, there is no darkness at all. In the Greek, it's really interesting.

It's like saying, there is absolutely none, none whatsoever darkness in God at all. God is light and in Him, there is no darkness whatsoever is describing the truth of God's character.

It's talking about something that's true of our God. It's His holiness, His moral purity and it's being described as a moral brilliance, a light in which there is no darkness.

He's like the sun, shining in holy brilliance. If you come into its presence, you're going to become aware of yourself, your sinfulness. If you flip back in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 6, if you're not too familiar with it, go right into the middle of your Bible, you're probably in the Psalms, and then go right.

You start going right, you come to Isaiah chapter 6, and Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah is given this vision of God high and lifted up in the throne of the temple.

[9:12] and around this God are these angels. They're called seraphim. They're flaming ones. And with two wings, they cover their eyes and with two wings, they cover their feet and with two wings, they fly and these seraphim are calling out to one another, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of His glory. holy. God is right now in heaven being exalted for His moral brilliance.

Three times. There's no other characteristic of God spoken to God repeated three times. Just His holiness.

Unless you think this is only an Old Testament phenomenon, if you roll to Revelation chapter 4 verse 8, all of these living creatures are around the throne in heaven and they are calling out to the one upon the throne, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, He who was and is and is to come. So let me just take a little sidebar. God is not bored with His own holiness. When God thinks about His holiness, He's not kind of like, not great, my holiness.

[10:50] He's not disappointed, His shoulders don't drop when He thinks about His own holiness. holiness. He delights in His own holiness. He's like, oh yeah, holy, holy, holy is me.

So let's make sure we know this. God is happy in His holiness. It brings Him great joy. In fact, He wants to bring as many people into this shared joy of His moral brilliance as Christ's blood can

gather.

Sidebar two. There is no living creature in the presence of God right now who is bored or upset with the holiness of God.

Right now in heavenly glory, all of the occupants of heaven are focused on the one on the throne and they are saying holy, holy, holy are you.

God's holiness is of incredible value to God and to all of the angelic hosts who glory.

[12:20] Nobody in heaven has taken His holiness for granted. Look what happens in verse 5 in Isaiah 6 if you're still there. Woe is me for I am lost for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

Here we have this prophet who is given this vision of God in His moral brilliance and His reaction is woe is me.

He becomes acutely aware of His own darkness, His own sinfulness, His own uncleanness, His own moral dirtiness, His own sinfulness and His response should be our response to a holy God. This message that we're reading about that John is saying is I heard this from Jesus, God is holy, there's no darkness in Adam Hall. This is shining brilliance that exposes darkness and what we read in 1 Peter 1 16 is this same holy God who says I am holy says to all of us you shall be holy. You shall be holy for I am holy. And what we're reading here is that there's no darkness in God's character whatsoever. And then we think about ourselves, right?

[14:00] There is resident darkness in me and in you. Each of us has this sinful nature producing sinful thoughts, sinful feelings, sinful speech and actions and sinful inactions that if we're being completely honest, we know they grieve God and we know we should care more about it.

If you're taking God's holiness for granted, you will be taking your own sin for granted too. But if you're taking God's holiness seriously as God himself takes his own holiness seriously, you will begin to take your own sin seriously.

And God does too. You see, being in a relationship with a holy God will expose your sinful darkness.

So let me ask you this question. Is there a particular area of your life that you know is sinful but you've been rationalizing it?

You've been trying to ignore God's holiness in light of it. You've been downplaying it. You're like, I'm like everybody else. It's kind of like this.

[15:28] You walk into your bathroom and there's a couple lights that are out around your bathroom mirror and you look yourself in the mirror and you're like, man, you're a good looking guy. And then you replace the bulbs and it gets really bright.

And then you start looking at yourself and you're like, you're not the beauty I thought you were. Look at that ugliness. God's holiness is his brilliance that will expose our ugliness just like a well-lit bathroom mirror.

How do you respond to that? How do you respond to sin in yourself? What do you do?

Well, that brings us to the second point of the sermon. Two ways to respond. John is very clear in 1 John 1, 6 through 2, 22 there are two ways to respond to your sin when exposed by the holiness of God.

In fact, there are two batches. In chapter 1, 6 through 2, 2, there are six if statements. But you can group them like John does into two groups of if statements, two batches.

[16:52] And the first set of if statements that we're going to look at are the response that you don't want to do in light of God's holiness. It's when you deny your sin and you live a lie.

Let me show you. Look at verse 6 of 1 John chapter 1. Verse 6 says this.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. What this batch has in common is that they're all different forms of denying one's sinfulness. And the first one we just read is a kind of hypocrisy. Being two-faced. Saying one thing but doing another. You see it right there in the text. If we say we have fellowship with him, the God of light in whom there's no darkness whatsoever, if we say we're in a relationship with him, a deep, meaningful, abiding relationship with him and yet we walk in darkness.

We keep on practicing and giving ourselves to sin like it doesn't matter. We don't care. That's called lip service Christianity.

[18:15] It's hypocrisy. And what John calls it at the end of verse 6 is it's a lie. You're not practicing the truth of God's holiness.

You're living a lie. And it's confusing to others who are watching. Back in the 90s, DC Talk released the album Jesus Freak.

And one of the tracks is called What If I Stumble? And it begins with Brendan Manning saying this. The single greatest cause of atheism today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips but walk out the door and deny him with their lifestyle.

This is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. Our hypocrisy, this living a lie, is not only unhealthy for us, it's confusing to everybody else.

The second if statement in this batch is in verse 8. Self-deception.

[19:30] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. So remember where we started, God is light, he is holy, in him there's no darkness at all. But if you're saying, I got no sin in me, no stick, it's not showing anything out.

John says you're deceiving yourself. You're rationalizing sin away. And here is the way we do it. You know what, you're right, I see that too, but you know what, it's a result of my upbringing. It's how I was raised.

Or, you know what, that is, you're seeing something there, that's true, but you know what, it's because of my genetic disposition that I'm inclined to do that. It's my genes fault.

I'm going to blame my DNA on that one. Or maybe it's something like this. You know what, I just have kind of a brash personality, so I yell at people and demean them.

[20:37] That's just my personality. me. All of these ways are self-deceptive ways to not acknowledge your sin.

There could be an element of truth to each one, by the way. But certainly, the way that you were raised is not responsible for your sinful choices before God.

certainly, your genetic disposition isn't responsible for disobeying God. Your personality, no matter how shiny and wonderful it is, it is not responsible for you rejecting God's glory and His holiness. You see, one of the things about sin you need to understand is this. Sin is by nature deceptive. your own sin is going to try to deceive you by blaming anything but you for your wrongdoing in God's sight.

Self-deception. And that's not even the doozy. Look at verse 10. I mean, this is like doozy.

[21:59] If we say we have not sinned, God is light in Him and there's no darkness at all. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar.

And His word is not in us. You know, why that doesn't sound too bad? Do you understand what He's saying? If I'm saying I'm not responsible for my sin, like there's no sin in me or I haven't sinned, not only am I deceiving myself, I am calling Jesus a liar because it's Jesus who first spoke this message that God is light and in Him there's no darkness at all.

It's John heard that from Jesus and speaks to us today. But even more so, John also heard Jesus say this. Check this out. This is in Mark chapter 7.

What defiles a person, according to Jesus, this is Jesus speaking, what defiles a person comes from within. Out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

All these evil things, says Jesus, come from within and they defile a person. They make you morally dirty in God's sight. According to Jesus, we have a sin problem and if you're denying it, you're calling Him a liar.

[23:49] when you deny your own sin, you're accusing Jesus of promoting falsehoods. Jesus is wrong.

Certainly I'm not. And when you do that, when you deny your sin, you're also denying what Jesus offers.

forgiveness, forgiveness, cleansing, life. That's why John says His word is not in us. If you deny it, obviously His word isn't functioning in your life.

These three denials show us how not to respond to God's holy brilliance. don't do that. But let's just say you have a growing awareness of your own hypocrisy.

Let's just say you're starting to see your own self-deception. Or maybe perhaps you have this lump in your throat saying, I think I have called Jesus a liar.

[25:02] What do you do? Well, you don't deny it. You acknowledge it. You acknowledge it to Him.

Thomas Watson, the Puritan, said, till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet. Let's look at the sweetness.

The second batch of if statements. And what they all have in common is not denying your sin and living a lie.

They all acknowledge your sin and live in gospel truth. When we are in a relationship with a holy God, His brilliance will expose our sinfulness again and again.

So we go to Jesus again and again. So let me show you this batch of three. honesty. The first of these three acknowledgements is in verse 7.

[26:10] It's a humble honesty. 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, cleanses us from all sin. This is a picture of walking with God.

It's in contrast to being a hypocrite. Verse 6. Don't be a hypocrite. No. Walk in the light.

Acknowledge your sin.

Humbly, honestly, recognize your sinfulness in light of God's holy brilliance. Be honest with God. Be honest with each other. Don't deny your sinfulness.

Honestly, acknowledge it. What we see here is that is actually what fellowship with God is for 21st century disciples.

ourselves. It's not a hiding of our sin. It's an acknowledging of our sin to our great, holy, loving Father.

[27:13] True fellowship with God, if we are walking with Him as He is in the light, extends to being in rich, meaningful, deep, aimed relationships with others who have been born of God too.

true fellowship with God and others means we're not hiding our sin from one another. Remember Genesis 3, Adam and Eve blew it, God comes walking in the garden, and they're hiding from God. God finally calls them out, and then they blame each other. That's not walking in the light. Walking in the light means being humbly honest with God, open to Him, yes, yes, that's sin too, and not blaming each other, helping one another, confessing our sins to one another, helping each other follow this holy God.

So maybe the question becomes, when was the last time you confessed your sin, not just to God, but to some other believer? Which is a scary thought.

To be honest about your sin with someone else, it means taking a risk, but that's exactly what fellowship is. Of risking honesty about ourselves in light of God's holiness.

[28:38] Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet in our fellowship together. This brings me to the first gospel reality, the gospel truth.

When we are living this way, humbly honest with God and each other, we have this assurance.

Look at the end of verse seven, that the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

By living that way, it demonstrates that you've been truly born of God. You belong to him. You're walking in the light with others who are walking in the light too.

This acknowledgement ends, results in this gospel assurance. It's covered by the blood. The next acknowledgement is in verse nine.

It's confession. And it's in contrast to the self-deception of verse eight. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[29:45] Instead of rationalizing our sin away, we honestly admit our sins to God. That word confession in the original language means same word.

And what that means is you are calling something in your life what God calls it. You use the same word for it. So some people will say there's a guy looking at a girl and he'll say something like, well, you can look but you can't touch.

You know what God calls that? Lust. And it's sinful. So in order to confess our sins, we need to call these sinful desires in our hearts just what God calls them.

That's walking in the light. And there's a great promise in this. If we confess our sins, if we are honest with God and we're calling what we're seeing as he sees it, there's this great promise.

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. How is he faithful? He's being faithful to his word. Well, what do you mean? If we ask him to forgive us, he will faithfully forgive us.

[31:04] Exodus 34, 7. He's a forgiver of sin and iniquity. Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew, the Lord's prayer, to tell our Father in heaven, forgive us our trespasses.

And so when we confess our sins, he is faithful to his word to forgive those sins. You can bank on it, but the question is, on what basis?

How can he forgive my sins? He's just. His justice, that is outworking of his holiness, comes into play.

The reason why he can forgive your sins is because Jesus died on the cross for your sins. It's been paid in full. And he is perfectly faithful and just, based upon the finished work of Jesus on your behalf, to forgive you and cleanse you again and again and again.

sin, the grace pouring from the cross, never ends. It's good news. But we don't experience this grace by hiding and denying our sin.

[32:22] It's by confessing it. So instead of denying sin in us, we confess our sins. And we don't live a lie.

We actually are living in gospel truth. Experiencing ongoing forgiveness and cleansing that comes from the cross. So do you need to confess your sins to your Holy Father?

Do you need to experience once again his forgiving mercy and grace and be cleansed? Go to him. Tell him. You don't need to fear him.

He's inviting you. The third acknowledgement is at the beginning of chapter 2. It's 1 through 2. And if verse 10 is the doozy of the if statements in that bad batch, this is the doozy of the gospel batch. Look at verse 1 of chapter 2. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. Make no mistake. Be holy for I am holy, says the Lord. The goal is not to sin.

[33:29] And he's got grace for us to say no to temptation when it shows its face. But then look where John goes. And this is the sixth if statement.

But if anyone does sin, anybody interested? If anyone does sin, oh, I want to hear what he's about to say.

We have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous one, the one who never sinned. He is your advocate. What's an advocate? Well, the Greek word is a paraclete. And it's used of the Holy Spirit in the gospel of John. And it's only here that it's used of Jesus Christ. And what a paraclete is in this context here, he's like your ace defense attorney.

Every time you sin, your advocate, the risen Jesus, the incarnate, eternal word of life, fully God, fully man, is taking up his advocacy for you.

[34:36] And he's interceding for you. And he's saying, no, no. No, no. No wrath on that guy. I've paid for him.

My blood has bore your wrath for that sin. That's what he's advocating. And that's why that word propitiation is very important.

If you look at verse 2, he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. That word propitiation means a forgiveness that comes as a result of God's wrath being satisfied by a payment.

And so, brother and sister in Christ, one who's in fellowship with a holy God, who's regularly having your sinfulness exposed, Jesus is regularly making his case for you.

He's advocating for you. No, no. I have paid your wrath. I've borne your wrath for that sin at the cross again and again and again.

[35:54] We do not deny our sinfulness. We acknowledge it. And we experience the covering of his blood. We experience his forgiveness and his cleansing.

And we experience his advocacy because he is our propitiation over and over and over again. You see, by acknowledging your sin, you live in gospel truth.

It's beautiful. It's uncomfortable. But that's how we live for our Lord now. We don't deny him.

We don't deny our sin. We acknowledge it. God's holy brilliance will continually expose our sinful darkness and show us our need for Jesus over and over and over again.

This is one holy message. God is light. And in him, there's no darkness of all. He's holy. And there's only two ways to respond. Either deny your sin and live a lie or acknowledge your sin and live in the gospel truth through the blood of Jesus.

[37:10] Let me close just by saying this. In chapter 2, verse 2, we learn that Jesus bore God's holy wrath not just for your sin and my sin but for the sins of the whole world.

And what he means by that is he's offering forgiveness and cleansing from all the defilement of sin to anyone who would call upon the name of Jesus. Anyone. It's offers to all.

Anyone who would confess your sins to this holy, loving God, he offers you forgiveness and cleansing. But he offers you most of all a relationship with himself.

Think about it. The holy God seeking a relationship with you and he's made a way to deal with your sin through the cross of Jesus.

What would keep you from becoming part of his family? So maybe today is the day for the first time in your life you admit your sin to God and acknowledge your sin before him and experience life in Jesus.

[38:21] and now not only do you get to share in his holiness but in his happiness. Let's pray.

God in heaven would you use these words to find their mark in our hearts and to bring about the intended effect that only you would have.

Father you are holy and we are sons and daughters we want to be holy too. Help us Lord Jesus. It's in your name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.