

Confidence because we walk in the Light

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[0 : 00] Okay, so grab your Bibles, page 1228.

How about I just quickly pray for us again? Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your word, and we pray that you would help us to understand it, particularly given John is a bit different in writing.

And we pray that through your word that you might encourage us. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder if you've ever gotten dressed in the dark and had a bit of a wardrobe malfunction, like this guy who put on two different colored shoes.

I mean, I realized they were when he got in the light of his car. Or perhaps for the girls, you put your makeup on the dark, like Michelle did one day. No, actually, to be fair, one of our daughters was having fun at Michelle's expense.

But it is hard to see in the dark, isn't it? As we heard from the kids' talk, yet you turn on the light and it reveals everything, doesn't it? Which is why it's sometimes good to look at yourself in the mirror in the dark, because you always look better, don't you?

[1 : 14] The point is, light reveals and exposes the truth, both good and bad. It helps us to see what is true, like whether we're wearing one brown and one black, so that we can then walk in that truth by having the same shoes in this case.

And the idea of light is what begins our passage here today. Our passage actually runs up to chapter 2, verse 14. The light comes up again towards the end of chapter 2, and the last bit, 12 to 14, kind of summarizes.

But as I said last week, John is wordy and circular. He wants to show out that all the themes are interrelated. Sometimes when he comes back to them, he expands on them or amplifies them.

This style of writing apparently is called amplification. And so it's not always easy to read big chunks. As I said last week, it's best to read one John like you drink a hot cup of tea, you sip it slowly.

And so I've shortened it today to chapter 2, verse 2. And so that's just the section we're looking at that Magda read for us. Marlise read for us. Magda's the mum. Sorry, Magda. And we're going to sip it slowly.

[2 : 28] And as we do, like I said last week, it will reassure us, give us confidence, because that's John's purpose in writing. I'd remember there were some people who left the church, and it had shaken the reader's confidence in Christ.

And so John has written to reassure them again. And so last week we saw that we have confidence of eternal life for lots of reasons. But the one reason we were given last week is because the Christian message is based on historical evidence.

And so if you're not a Christian in this room, then it's worth going back and checking out Christianity. Christianity, there's loads of historical evidence for it. It's not a fairy tale, despite what our society says.

But this week we can have confidence of fellowship and forgiveness because we walk in the light. So point 1, verse 5 of your Bibles.

John writes, John says, And now light is sometimes a symbol in the Bible for what is good and pure.

[3 : 48] So God is good and pure. In him there is nothing evil or impure. Darkness in that sense. And that's true. But in this passage today, I think light seems to be a symbol for revelation and truth.

As I said at the start, light reveals the truth, doesn't it? Or as John says in his gospel, in his biography about Jesus, he writes at the start, the true light, that's Jesus, that gives light, reveals truth to everyone, was coming into the world.

In fact, Jesus somewhat famously said that, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness of ignorance, but will have the light, the truth of life, eternal.

Jesus reveals how to have eternal life, in other words. And so the message John heard from Jesus is that God is light. He is the ultimate source of truth. In him there is no darkness, no faulty bit of revelation, nothing false or ignorant.

God reveals the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But people today still say, I don't know if you've heard the people say this, what's true for you is true for you, what's true for me is true for me.

[5 : 05] Everyone seems to live by their own truth, don't they? But the problem with that is it doesn't always work. An extreme example, but a real life example at the moment, sadly, is President Putin saying, well, it's true for me, I can take back your country.

But how's that working out for the Ukrainians and the rest of the world? Or we live by the truth of others, whether on social media or our current culture.

But again, it doesn't always work. Because we change our truths and we as humans are flawed. We're not reliable. I heard a story of a man who walked past a clockmaker's shop every morning on his way to work at the factory.

And every morning he would stop, take out his pocket watch and adjust his time to the clock in the window. Because his pocket watch was not very reliable. And part of his job at the factory was to be the timekeeper.

And he would ring the bell at four o'clock to signal the change of shift. And so having the right time is important. But one day the clockmaker struck up a conversation with him as he stopped outside his shop.

[6 : 17] And the clockmaker said, look, I've noticed each morning you stop outside my shop and set your watch by my clock. And the man explained, yes, I do. My watch is unreliable. I'm the turnkeeper at the factory.

I have to ring the bell every afternoon at four o'clock. And the clockmaker said, look, I'm terribly sorry to tell you this, but my clock in the window is not very reliable either. He says, I have to set it every afternoon by the bell I hear in the factory.

We are not reliable as sources of truth. God is, for God is light.

He reveals the truth. And so his word determines the truth. If we don't walk in the light, in his revealed truth, then by definition, we are walking in the darkness of what is false.

false, even if our world says it's not. Because the answer is either true or false. And the problem with this is that we cannot have fellowship with God.

[7 : 23] So have a look at verse six in your Bibles. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

You see, as we heard before, light and darkness do not mix. Oh, sure, they play around at the edges of one another. But when you walk into a dark room and flick on the light, the darkness disappears, doesn't it?

It flees to the corners and recesses of the room. It doesn't hang around for fellowship and a cup of tea with light. Because light and darkness are simply incompatible.

And so if you claim to have fellowship with God, who is the light of truth, but then walk in the darkness of falsehood, then you're lying to yourself and you do not live out the truth.

Sadly, we see this even in churches today who prefer the darkness of culture's truth compared to the light of God's genuine truth.

[8 : 31] Though it's likely here, John is thinking particularly of those people who left the church, who claim to have fellowship with God, but don't actually walk in his revealed truth about Jesus, that Jesus is the Christ.

Remember, Christ is not his surname, it's a title, like professor or doctor, and it means anointed king, the king who saves. And so I showed you this last week, later on in 1 John, he talks about these antichrists and he says, they went out from us, that is, they left our church.

And he says, they deny that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist, which kind of makes sense, you know, anti-Jesus being the Christ. And now they're trying to lead others astray.

And John says, it's just not possible for those people who deny the truth, who walk in the darkness of falsehood about Jesus, to then claim to have fellowship with God, who is light.

It just doesn't work. It's incompatible. And so John is warning us, not just to make sure that we ourselves don't walk in the darkness of falsehood, but also that we're not fooled by those who do and yet claim to have fellowship with God.

[9 : 51] because they lie to themselves and the truth is not in them. On the other hand, verse 7, but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

If we walk in God's revealed truth about Jesus, just as God is in the know about that truth, I mean, he revealed it, then we do have fellowship, he says, with one another.

I don't know about you, but when I first read that, I expected him to say fellowship with God because that's what he's just been talking about with the others who claim it. Well, he will talk about that later and next week when he talks about knowing God, but his focus seems to be about reassuring their fellowship with one another.

And just like back in verse 3 where he speaks about fellowship with him and the apostles before having fellowship with God and his son. And so why this priority? Why this focus?

Well, because the church he's writing to has been rocked by a church split, by those antichrists who left, remember, and are now trying to disrupt the church by leading others astray.

[11 : 12] Their fellowship has been shaken, in other words. And so John writes to reassure them that it's not actually broken. For if they walk in the light, they really do have fellowship with one another.

Their fellowship is not actually destroyed by those who left because in the end, those false teachers, those antichrists, whatever you want to call them, those who don't really believe in Jesus, well, they were never really part of the community.

They were actually walking in darkness. But if you walk in the light, he says, you can be confident you really do have fellowship with one another. And now for us, I don't think our fellowship has been rocked by anyone claiming to be anti-Jesus, being the Christ, and then leaving and trying to get others to follow.

So how does this help us? Well, I think it helps us by reminding us the basis of our fellowship is not that we all barrack for the same football team, even though we all know Carlton is the best.

It's not that we all love lamb roasts, even though there's no better dish. No, the basis of our fellowship is walking in the light, in God's revealed truth about Jesus, that we all believe in Jesus and follow him as our king or the Christ.

[12 : 34] After all, he is the one who creates our fellowship in the first place. And this has at least two implications. There was more, but I don't have time for more, but two. Firstly, it frees us to have fellowship with one another who are different, who barrack for a different team, dare I say, even hesitant.

Poor. Or more seriously, it enables us to get past those differences that perhaps annoy us, that person who just can't park straight in the car park.

The person who took your seat in church today or the person who said something insensitive to you, whether they realise it or not. Because what's more important than all those things is that we walk in the light.

That's the basis of our fellowship. And second, it reassures us that we really do belong. You see, sometimes we might feel like we don't belong or fit in here because of our differences.

Whether it's because we come from a different background or education or have different gifts. Or perhaps it's because we don't know as many people as others know.

[13 : 50] Or simply because we're feeling a bit flat. But if you walk in the light, if you trust in Jesus and follow Him, then you really do belong here.

you do fit in. Because again, the basis of our fellowship is not any of those things. It's that you walk in the light of God's revealed truth about Jesus.

Are sure we need to work at expressing that fellowship as we're able. You know, making efforts to welcome others and talk to them even if we are feeling flat. But we can be confident we do belong.

So do you walk in the light of God's revealed truth? Do you believe in Jesus and seek to follow Him as your King? The answer is yes. Then you do have a place in this fellowship.

You do belong. Walking in the light gives us confidence we have fellowship with one another. And secondly, it gives us confidence we have forgiveness of sins. So point to in the rest of verse 7.

[14 : 52] So he starts in verse 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.

You see what he's saying? If we walk in the light of God's revealed truth about Jesus, then we can be confident His blood forgives us, purifies us from sin.

And did you notice at the end of verse 7, how many sins? all sin. Past, present, future. Even that sin that you're most ashamed of.

Such that we no longer need to feel guilty for it. How good is this news? Especially because we still sin, don't we?

And so we still need forgiveness. You see verse 8 and 10. So verse 8, he says, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Or verse 10, something similar.

[15 : 55] If we claim we have not sinned, we make God out to be a liar and His word is not in us. The repeated word claim suggests John is again thinking of those antichrists who've left the church, who not only claim to still have fellowship with God, but somehow or other they claim they don't even sin anymore.

I'm not sure how they can really work that out. There's lots of theories. Perhaps they thought their so-called fellowship with God kind of meant that anything they did no longer counted as sin.

And so it was effectively as though they didn't sin anymore. I'm not sure. But either way, I doubt any of us would think that, would we? But we can downplay sin, whether it's by convincing ourselves it's not that bad or ignoring it when we do instead of owning up to it, or wishing we talk less about it at a church, at our church, as someone asked me to do a few years ago.

But that's the walk in the darkness of falsehood, not in the light of God's revealed truth, isn't it? Which is why John says in verse 8, if we claim this, we deceive or lie to ourselves.

And the truth is not in us. Because the truth is we do still sin. Or verse 10, we make God out to be a liar, which is worse. Because his word says we still sin.

[17 : 25] I drive the kids to school most mornings of the week, and I must confess that I still lose my patience with other drivers on the road, and I do yell at them, what are you doing?

Go, it's green. And I do that in front of my kids, two of whom are learning to drive themselves. Not a good example.

Or when I drive, I actually, no, I don't need to tell you more stories. I lose my patience still when I drive. And that's just one sin I still sometimes commit.

You see, we all still sin, so we keep confessing our sins as we did at the start of the service. because the great news is we can be confident God will forgive us.

For verse 7, if we walk in the light, he's revealed truth about Jesus, then the blood of his son purifies us from all sin. Or verse 9, which we skipped over, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

[18 : 36] We often read that verse around church confession, we did it today, but the God is just bit often puzzled me, I don't know if it puzzled you, because if God is just, doesn't that mean he should punish us for our sins?

Isn't that justice? But then I realised that, no, no, his son's blood has purified us from all sin. Our punishment has already been paid.

And so justice cannot demand a double payment, you know, one from Jesus and another one from us. And so God's justice actually means he must forgive.

Of course, this only applies to those who believe. Because by believing in Jesus, we receive the gift of forgiveness. It's by believing in Jesus that his death counts as ours.

That's what God promises us. And God is faithful to his promises. God is faithful and just so that he will forgive us our sins. Of course, this doesn't mean then we now, you know, sin willy-nilly because God will forgive us anyway, it doesn't matter.

[19 : 43] After all, if we walk in the light, then we'll seek to follow Jesus instead. And just, it's just that if we do sin, we can be confident of forgiveness. Chapter 2, verse 1 and 2. He says, My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also the sins of the whole world.

You see, John wants us to be confident that we really can have forgiveness. forgiveness. And so he repeats the idea he's already said back in verse 7. I mean, this time he amplifies it or expands it.

He explains how Christ's blood can purify us. How? What's there in verse 2? He is the atoning sacrifice for our sin.

Jesus makes atonement. That is, he pays for our sin and turns aside God's wrath at it, so that God can be free to forgive us instead.

[20 : 49] Or as John puts it, Jesus' atonement, his payment for our sin at the cross enables him to be our advocate, to defend us, and to plead our case before our Father, our judge.

And Jesus always wins the case for our forgiveness, because he's already made atonement at the cross. He's already paid for our sins, dealt with God's just anger at our sin.

In fact, his atoning sacrifice is sufficient for the sins of the whole world, he says, though it's only effective for those who accept it, who believe. If only all the world did.

But his point is, if his atoning sacrifice at the cross is sufficient for the sins of the whole world, then it's definitely going to be effective for your sins who believe.

Be confident you have forgiveness. And his confidence actually encourages us not to sin anymore. And let me see if I can illustrate as we close.

[21 : 52] When I was younger, I started playing soccer for the under-sevens. I was about six years old, under-sevens. Now, I wasn't the best player on the team, so the coach didn't actually put me on much.

But I remember one time he finally put me on, and for somehow or other I ended up down near the opposition's goals. I don't know, I think I'd wandered down there or something or other, and someone passed me the ball.

And so it was just me and the goalie on the other side. But the problem was everyone was screaming at me from the sidelines. I thought something had happened. And I couldn't make out what they were saying, but I did hear the coach say, what are you doing?

And so I thought, oh, something happened. Did the ref blow the whistle? And I didn't hear it. And so I bent down and picked up the ball. The ref then did blow the whistle. Handball.

And as I came off, the coach told me off and didn't put me back on. I didn't play soccer again until 20 years later because of that game.

[22 : 56] Don't feel sorry. The point of the story is God is the absolute opposite to that coach. He doesn't scream at us or sideline us.

He forgives us every time we ask. And does that not encourage us to keep playing for Him? To keep trying not to sin?

Do you walk in the light of God's revealed truth about Jesus? If you do, then know with confidence you have fellowship with one another no matter your differences.

And know with confidence you really do have forgiveness of sins no matter your sin. How good is our God?

Let's pray. Our gracious Father, we do thank you so much that you have revealed the truth about Jesus to us, that there is historical evidence for it.

[24 : 04] It's not blind faith. And we thank you Father, that we who believe and walk in that truth can be confident that we really do belong, that we have fellowship with one another, and that we really do have forgiveness of sins.

I thank you so much for this. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. worldly visions, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

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