

God is Light

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[0 : 0 0] find on page 1021. The next four Lord's Day evenings, before I go on holiday, I was thinking how to find a sort of a four-part series, and it came to me that we should perhaps think on four aspects of God that we find in Scripture.

God is light, God is love, God is spirit, and God is one. And when I was in the vestry this morning, I happened to notice that in fact for the Bible class, they're looking at two aspects of God's character, God as spirit and God as one. So I think we should look at these four aspects in our Sunday evening services beginning this evening with God is light. Let's just read again from verse 5 to verse 7.

1 John 1, This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. We say we have fellowship with him, while we walk in darkness we lie, and do not practice the truth.

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. Last Wednesday evening at our home Bible study, we were focusing using, I'm ashamed to say using very much St.

LaFerguson's work on sanctification, thinking of the whole matter of holiness. What it means to be holy in obedience to the command of God, that God gave that command to be holy as God is holy.

[1 : 4 3] We were considering the holiness of God in terms of the beauty of God's holiness, the beauty of holiness. And we were thinking too of our own strivings for holiness, to grow in holiness.

And of course we realized how weak we are in our stumblings, even in our stumblings, when we do strive, when we fail so often, and yet we know that we are to grow in holiness.

We know that we're to be separate for God, and separate from sin. To be holy, as God's word tells us, to be holy in fellowship with God, and with one another.

To be like Christ in every aspect of our being, as we seek to glorify God, and enjoy him forever, which is what sanctification, holiness is all about.

Glorifying God, enjoying him forever. But, you know, while we say this, well, of course, you know the Lord Jesus as your saviour, your aim is to grow in holiness, to be more like Christ, to be less world-like, then, you know, we can be so aware that, you know, so often we can contradict that desire to grow in holiness, by living in the darkness of sin, and yet at the same time claiming, claiming to live in the light of God's commands.

[3 : 1 6] And it can happen so easily, we can behave like those who claim, you know, that actually God and sin can coexist quite happily. That it's possible to be a Christian, and continue to sin willfully.

That was the case with the false teachers who were around us when John was writing this letter. You go to chapter 4, verse 1 of 1 John, and John tells us of these false teachers, these false prophets, even who claimed to actually have no sin in themselves.

But John is showing us how absurd that thinking is. In fact, it's devilish thinking. It's thinking from the father of lies, the devil.

And John's going to show in his letter, that when you follow God, you're following God who is light. And if we're following God who is light, then we're to walk in that light, and not in the darkness of sin.

And if we're to strive to be holy, and live our lives to the glory of God, then we live our lives in the light of God's presence. And living in the light of God's presence, that we run, that we run away from the darkness of sin.

[4 : 32] And that we seek to shine for our Saviour, as we shine for Him in the light that God has given to us, in the Lord Jesus. So, this evening we're going to consider this great truth, this truth that Scripture tells us, of God as light.

To seek to, more to understand God's character as light. And of course, not just to do that, but to apply that truth, the truth that God is light, to apply that in our own lives.

Well, let's think of the background to verses 5 to 7. John, the disciple, John, the apostle. John has been given a message, a message to give to the church.

It's a message that's timeless. It's a message that's as relevant now as it was when he first wrote these words almost 2,000 years ago. It's a message that John was given by the Lord Jesus, so that the church might be built up in Christ.

It's a message that is so simple, and yet so utterly profound in its depth. God is light. Verse 5.

[5 : 47] And in Him is no darkness at all. In the first four verses that we read at the start there, these first four verses, we call them the prologue. Well, these first four verses set out this marvelous truth, this wonderful truth, that the message and the messenger are one.

That the word of life, the message of salvation that's found in the Lord Jesus Christ, at the same time, is the person of the Lord Jesus. He's the light that appeared in human form.

And here's John, as with the other apostles. They saw Jesus. They saw the word of life. They heard the word of life. They touched the word of life.

And their experience of being with the word of life, with the Lord Jesus, with the message and the messenger. That, of course, led to their testifying to Jesus.

And after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, their desire to spread the good news of the living Savior, to spread back the message to the church.

[6 : 56] So that the church would be built up in unity and the fellowship that comes from knowing the Father and the Son through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

And now in here in verse 5, John's, we might say, repeating that emphasis and his experience with the message and the messenger. And he's focusing in on what we call the essence, the true meaning of that message.

And John states categorically the true meaning, the essence of that message, which is that God is like. Now, later on in his letter, John's going to express the other great aspect of God's being that we mentioned at the beginning that God is love.

And God willing, next Lord's evening, we'll think on God is love. God is love. God is love. But this evening, we're looking at God is light.

And John begins this epistle with this great statement and this great theological statement, God is light. We talk about theology, the knowledge of God.

[8 : 07] Well, here's this great theological statement, God is light. Now, John's writing this, what, some 2,000 years ago? Not quite, of course. But it's no original message.

It's not a message that's originated in John's mind. But John wants to make it absolutely clear that this message that he's been given is from God in the person of the Lord Jesus.

It's a message that's been given from the incarnate Son of God Himself. So this message is the authority, the authority of God. And God's revealed this message through, God the Father's revealed this message through His Son.

Because that message that was given when Jesus was in earth. So, that all who would live their lives for God would do so with that knowledge that God is light.

But then you might say, why is the message summarised in the statement that God is light? Why has John been given this particular message to declare by God about God?

[9 : 14] What about the fact that God is light that has such priority, such significance for the church of the Lord Jesus? Well, let's look at the message. Let's think of the message as we see in verse 5 there.

What's he declaring in this message that God is light? Well, firstly we've got to say this. This message that God is light is anchored, it's rooted in what God's already said of Himself.

What God has already revealed in the pages of Scripture. So, we say this is no original message from John. There's no new idea about God.

God. This is an eternal truth. So, back to the word theology. It's eternal theology revealed by God in Old Testament times, revealed through God's prophets.

It's a message, of course, that would be revealed again through the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. So, if you and I are to live our lives for God, we're to live our lives in that knowledge of who God is.

[10 : 17] And if we're to live our lives as children of God, we've got to know God. If you're a Christian and you've got to testify that you know God as your Lord and Saviour, you've got to know who God is.

And in knowing God, that you yourselves are anchored in that truth that God has revealed about Himself. Now, as we said later on, John's going to tell us that great theological truth that God is love.

But firstly, he deals with the truth that God is light. So again, here's theology rooted, rooted in the Word of God, revealed by God Himself.

This is theology, knowledge of God that has to, we might say, precede any teaching about what it means to live our lives as Christians, you know, for practical Christian living.

In other words, we're not at liberty to make up our own ideas about how we're to live for God. We live, you live, your life, and you are to live your life in light of correct theology, correct understanding, knowledge of God as you find that knowledge in God's Word.

[11 : 31] So, here we have this statement, God is light. This is theology anchored in the Word of God to guide you, to direct you, how you're to live as you seek to live for the glory of God and to do so in the beauty of holiness.

So, what does this, what does this tell us of God? Well, as we said, this is rooted in Old Testament Scripture. We go back to the Old Testament and we see there God making Himself known as light.

Psalms 104, we were singing Psalm 104 just a moment ago. Oh Lord, my God, You are very great. You are clothed with splendor and majesty. And then verse 2, covering yourself with light is with a garment.

Or you go to one of what we call the minor prophets, Habakkuk chapter 3, His splendor covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light.

Or Daniel, Daniel chapter 2, He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with Him. So, to know God is to know that God is a glorious God.

[12 : 50] I mean, you know, when we see light being used, light of course is a metaphor, it's used to convey God's greatness, God's greatness and the beauty of His holiness. So, when we speak of God being light, we see God, as we said, in beauty, in His splendor, in His radiance, in His purity, in His righteousness, in His perfection.

You know, still, in the Old Testament, light was that quality that was used to speak of God being eternally present with His people. Isaiah.

Isaiah spoke of a future time in the new heaven and the new earth. And again, using light to tell us of the glory of God, the glory of the presence of God.

Isaiah 60, verse 19, the Lord will be your everlasting light and your God will be your glory. And of course, John himself, when he was with the Lord Jesus, he knew he spoke of the Lord Jesus in these terms.

And he testified to that future promise. Remember, when he was given that vision of the new Jerusalem, when he said, the city has no need of sun or moon nor to shine in it, for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the lamp.

[14 : 12] John, as we said in the prologue there, he spoke of seeing and hearing and touching the Lord Jesus. He spoke of having seen the glory of God in the light of the Lord Jesus.

He saw the light of God in the presence of the Saviour. Remember, in his gospel, John spoke and informed his readers about the glory of the word of life.

He spoke of the greatness of the Lord Jesus and the beauty of holiness. He spoke of the Lord Jesus and his splendour and radiance and purity and righteousness and perfection.

He spoke in his first chapter in the gospel of John. He spoke of himself as a witness to that light, the true light that gives light to every man.

He spoke of that light that was coming into the world. Later on in his gospel, John recorded Jesus' words of himself. Remember when Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

[15 : 19] And now when we come here to this first letter of John, again this theme comes through. Now, we're going to come obviously to the practical implications of this truth that God is light.

but let's just keep to our bearings for a moment and maybe one more application that we find in Scripture of God being light and what light reveals.

Because you and I wouldn't know God. We wouldn't know God unless God had revealed, made himself known in his character, in his being, through his word.

And it's a word, of course, that's described in terms of light. Psalm 119, again, we didn't quite get to this point, Psalm 119, verse 115, your word, yes we did, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

We're not just singing these words. Then as we said, when we think of the Lord Jesus, think of him in this idea of revelation, revealing the truth.

[16 : 24] Remember when old Simeon saw the baby Jesus in the temple. Remember what Simeon said of Jesus. He spoke of Jesus as a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

So, bring all this together. What have we seen so far? God is light. God is light in his being. God is light in his revelation of himself and revelation to mankind. And if God is light in his being, if God is light in his being, in his purity, in his holiness, if God is light and making himself known in his revelation to mankind about who he is, then it has to follow that there's no darkness in God at all.

There's no impurity in God. There's no immorality. There's no unrighteousness. There's no imperfection in God. And so, the message that Jesus has given, which John heard and which John is passing on, is that there's hope.

There's hope for those who are in the darkness. There's hope for those who are in that spiritual darkness of soul. Why? Because the light of the world has come to take mankind out of that darkness.

It's what Jesus said himself. John 12, verse 46, I've come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. And so you see this wonderful message that God is light, with that knowledge that there's no darkness in God.

[17 : 54] And with that faith in the Lord Jesus that every Christian has, then there's got to be the practical implication for all Christians. And that's what John moves on to in verse 6 and verse 7.

And let's look at verse 6 then under the heading The Lie. We say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness. We lie and do not practice the truth. Now, let's just look at what John's saying here.

If we say, now, this isn't his own argument of course, I know he said earlier if we say, but this is what other people are saying. If we say, others in the church may well have been saying this, false views about, you know, their own human nature.

It would seem that there were those in the church who claimed that they could be perfectly good Christians, that they could have a relationship with God as Lord, and yet still sin willingly because, well, they argue, well, we're saved.

It doesn't really matter what we do now in our lives. You know, God's not going to punish us now that we're His. We can still carry on doing as we did before. We can still live in the darkness of sin.

[19 : 09] No big deal. But there's that kind of thinking, that claiming that sin just didn't matter. absolutely a lie.

But John tells us, John tells us about that lie. He's saying it's utterly false. In fact, he's saying it's dangerous. It's completely at variance with God's Word, God's revealed Word.

A God of light demands that we live according to His light. Even if there's no darkness in God, so God expects that as children, that you and I avoid any kind of spiritual darkness in our own lives.

And of course, in practical terms, that means really we do have to take stock of our lives as Christians. if you testify to the Lord Jesus who came into the world to bring the light of God into our lives.

And if you claim to be a Christian, you and I have to take stock of our lives. Because we can't have a foot in both camps. We can't serve two masters.

[20 : 25] We can't wear two faces, one in public and the other in private. We can't have, on the one hand, the public face of respectability as a Christian. And in the private face, on the other hand, that would reject Christ and His demands that we live by the light of God's truth.

So if you're a Christian, you testify to the Lord Jesus. If you're to live by the light of God, you're to reflect the Saviour. You're to be like Christ, the light of the world.

And living as light, shining in the darkness. And seeking at all times to avoid that compromise in your Christian witness. Because remember that your fellowship, your fellowship is with God and with one another.

Your fellowship, your communion, same word, your communion, your bond as believers. Well surely it's for you and I to seek to build up the kingdom of God.

To do it one with another in that mutual affection, in that mutual service and serving the God who's like. You know, if we start to think that we can walk in darkness, if we think that, you know, we can have that so close attachment to the world and that we're quite happy to compromise our faith and think that, well, as long as we and say we're Christians, that's all that matters.

[22 : 00] That's a lie. That's living a lie. That's not living by the truth. Let's have this test. I think we mentioned this on Wednesday night. Have this test.

Hold up. Hold up. All that you hold that's most dear in your life, hold it up to the light of God. Hold it up to the light of His Word.

Because the light of God reveals His truth. And ask yourself in the honesty of your heart, can that which you're holding up to the light of God, to the light of His Word, can that be reckoned acceptable according to the light of God or does that light of God actually expose darkness?

And we have to each one of us, every single one of us, ask ourselves, am I living a double life or am I being consistent? Am I being consistent in my faith, in my walk with God?

Am I being consistent in my testifying to the light of the world? Well, God's Word tells us here, John tells us here, that, you know, if we do live in darkness, then fellowship with God isn't possible.

[23 : 18] Why? Because sin matters that fellowship. fellowship. But where I sin mars fellowship with God when we're walking in darkness rather than walking in the light of God's truth.

Well, obviously the opposite is true, the converse is true. If you walk in the light, then there is fellowship. That's what John tells us here 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' Son cleanses us from all sin.

Let's just think of this wonderful truth here of fellowship in relation to the light of God. You know, verse 7, you might have thought that John would have written these words, but if we walk in the light, if He is in the light, we have fellowship with God.

But no, look at what he's written. He's, what he's just written in verse 6. He's written a fellowship in the context, yes, of fellowship with God.

But then he speaks of walking in the light and the immediate consequence of that is fellowship one with another. What are we finding here?

[24 : 31] It's a very practical answer we've got here that fellowship with God involves fellowship with God's people. True fellowship with one, one with another is a clear evidence, clear evidence of a life that's lived in fellowship with God.

So if you and I have fellowship with God, if you have communion with God, if you're walking, in other words, walking in the light of God's truth, if you've got that close relationship with God, if you're enjoying God, man, do you find us to enjoy God if you're enjoying God?

and it follows, we would say seamlessly, that you'll be in fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ. But then that brings up a question, what do we mean by fellowship?

It's a word that we use so often in church, one of these church words that we keep using time and time again. Well, let's think it through last Lord's Day morning.

There was fellowship, fellowship in the sense of the original words, certainly the New Testament, the communion, communion of believers.

[25 : 45] We saw that at the Lord's Table last Lord's Day morning, that sharing, that sharing of bread and wine, that expression of a shared love for the Saviour, as we remember his death till he comes through word and through what we call sacrament, the bread and the wine.

But notice here, what we see here in verse 7. It's very, very careful, very carefully worded. If we walk in the light this season like we have fellowship with.

That little word with is so important in context of fellowship one with another. Because fellowship is a sharing.

It's a sharing with one another. It's a communion with one another. And that's so important because it means not just being associated one with another.

It doesn't just mean being together one with another. It means a participation one with another. It means an active sharing one with another.

[26 : 51] It means a true fellowship of God's people one with another. And that means, surely in practical terms, it doesn't just mean that we come to church once a week and then forget one another the rest of the week.

In a true fellowship, there's an active communion, there's an active sharing, there's an active coming alongside one another in the work of the kingdom, because it's the work of the Lord.

And surely that's what living in the light of God means in certain practical terms. That active sharing one with another. We have fellowship with God, we have fellowship one with another.

And that's a most amazing, wonderful truth, a most amazing blessedness, to be in fellowship.

And look at what John goes on to tell us here in verse seven. You have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus' Son cleanses us from all sin.

[28 : 00] What are we seeing here in the connection? Well, when you walk in the light, when you walk in the light of God, we know that we're not ourselves in sinless perfection. That will be when we enter the glory of heaven, but we still sin.

But the wonderful, amazing truth right before us, that when you come to Him in repentance of your sins, and He cleanses you of that sin so that your relationship, so that your fellowship with Him is restored and your fellowship one with another.

You know, if we sin, if we sin breaking fellowship with a brother or sister in Christ, then we know that we've got open access to God. Why? Because of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus.

And we know that we can come to God through Christ. you see, forgiveness, forgiveness isn't just an act of God's grace. It's an act of God's grace in order to restore fellowship with Him and with one another.

That's why we've got to take sin so seriously. Because if we're walking in darkness, if we're walking in the darkness of sin, what are we doing?

[29 : 14] We're damaging. Of course, we're damaging ourselves, but we're damaging that blood bought relationship with God through Jesus. And you know, we're actually causing fellowship one with another to suffer.

But if you're walking the light, if you're living for God whose light, if you're living such a life that reflects His light, and you're hating sin, and you're running from sin, and you're seeking to have done all with all that you once held dear, then you're knowing and enjoying that fellowship with God that will impact your fellowship one with another.

So, let's be the more resolved to walk in the light, to live in the light of the presence of God, to know that fellowship with God who is light, to come before Him in communion, to walk with Him, to get our thinking right and realize we can't continue to walk in darkness and still claim to be walking with God.

We can't be, to use a common term, we can't be spiritual two-timers. Because if you're His, then you and I were to remain faithful to that Word that God has made known to us through the Lord Jesus.

And so you and I are to live, live knowing that God is light. And because He is light, then surely we're to take serious, take seriously our being in that light.

[30 : 57] Light's in a dark world. We're living in a dark world and to be light in that dark world. And to know this, as I just read this the other day, somebody wrote of her particular experiences.

and she said this, that basically said this, that because God is light, the devil runs away from the God who is light.

The devil can't stand the light of God. And when you shine for God, when you portray the light of God in your life, I pray that the devil will run from you.

He spoke, or someone spoke on Wednesday evening of the devil being like that roaring lion seeking whom he'll devour. I pray that you'll live, so live in that light of God that the devil will flee from you, run from you, and that you'll seek to reflect the true light that's come into the world, that you'll live for the Lord Jesus, serving him, telling others of the light that's in your heart, and that there will truly be rejoicing in the presence of God in heaven over one sinner who repents, who comes into that light, even the very light of God who is light.

Amen. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you have made yourself known as light.

[32 : 23] May we come into that light. May we rejoice to be in the light of God and reflect that light in the words that we use and the actions we perform in our very thoughts.

O Lord, forgive us for the many times when we have thought we could live in darkness and still know fellowship with you. Help us, Lord, to rejoice in that fellowship, that communion with you and with one another as we seek to live for you.

So, Lord, we pray again for the forgiveness of our sins, for the cleansing of our hearts, for the renewing of our minds. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, let's close in Psalm 36. Sing Psalms again on page 44.

We'll sing from verse 5 down to verse 9. Verse 5, Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high.

[33 : 30] Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky. And then verses 8 and 9. They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight, for with you is the source of life.

In your light we see light. 5 to 9 to God's Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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