

**In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and may our Lord and Savior sanctify you in the truth, for His word is truth. Amen**

**St. John, Apostle and Evangelist (2020)**

**Walk in the Light.**

**Rev. Toby Byrd**

***“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. If 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.” (1 John 1:5–7, ESV)***

St. John begins his first letter by writing, ***“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim.” (1 John 1:5, ESV)*** Thus, St. John, the last of the apostles, the twelve who were eyewitnesses of the ministry of Christ, continues to proclaim so the Gospel message so that the Gospel and those who walk in the fellowship of Light, will not be lost. How else can anyone believe that which cannot be seen or touched? There is no other way than by hearing and believing through the eyes of faith. In the face of a world that only deceives and destroys, St. John continues to proclaim the message of God that produces salvation.

This letter by St. John is a marvelous proclamation of the Gospel. In a world which refuses to seek Christ, St. John targets its treachery and wanton ways of darkness. The message which he and the other apostles were commissioned to proclaim is not their message, but the message which they heard from Christ. This message is that God is Light. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the world’s only authentic and reliable source of life, hope, and abundant blessing, not just for some, not for a select few, but for all. Moreover, God is not just Light, but He is without darkness. Therefore, ***“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” (v. 6)***

Fellowship with God, walking with Him is the sum and substance of true religion. Thus, any number of people claim to have such fellowship with God. But such claims prove baseless if one fails, as have those who have left the true church, to walk the walk that goes with the talk. To walk in darkness is to live habitually in the very sphere of sin and death, it is to choose death rather than life, as so many of St. John’s contemporaries did when they were confronted by Jesus. Therefore, so say that we walk in the Light when we walk in darkness, makes us liars. For lying belongs to darkness and truth belongs to light.

Therefore, walking in the Light is walking in the truth. When the truth of the Gospel, the truth that Jesus is and gives, abides in and defines the believer, it becomes the very basis from which the believer lives. When you live for the sake of, or act in, or do as one devoted to the truth, then you will not follow an alien model of what is right. Instead, you will live from that reality which alone is genuine in a world covered by darkness and fraught with deception; a reality which alone endures and alone defines that which is truly real.

Therefore, ***“if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,” (v. 7)*** we live for the sake of the truth. Walking in the Light, having fellowship with the light, is truly belonging to the Light and the Light is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But let us never forget, walking in the Light does not mean that those who do never sin, but that when they do they do not seek to hide their sins from God. For as St. John has said, to walk in the Light is to abide in fellowship of the One who

is Light Himself. St. John reminds us, ***“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*** (John 1:4–5, ESV)

Furthermore, to walk in the Light is to ***“have fellowship with one another.”*** (v. 7) One cannot have fellowship with God and be alienated from the community, this is the way of the schismatic. Fellowship with God cannot be had apart from fellowship with Jesus and fellowship with Jesus cannot be had apart from fellowship with the apostles, and fellowship with St. John and the apostles cannot be had apart from the community that is the fellowship of the Light. Therefore, fellowship with God requires that one participate in the community of those who find their life in Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. This fellowship is family, it is the household of God, it is the communion of saints created by God for fellowship with one another, living in fellowship with Him. And to remain in this fellowship requires hearing the Word of God proclaimed from the pulpits of His Church. It is there that His called minister strengthens fellowship by upholding, exhorting and encouraging God’s blood-bought people to continue steadfast in the faith, rejecting what the schismatic have abandoned.

Moreover, this fellowship of walking in the Light is strengthened by knowing that ***“the blood of Jesus [God’s] Son cleanses us from all sin.”*** (v. 7) We who live in the Light are reminded of our frailty that we might continually avail ourselves of the purifying blood of Christ. Therefore, we readily confess our sins and seek forgiveness through the means God has made available; the blood of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. As God’s people we take refuge in His infinite mercy, saying; “Be merciful to me, a sinner,” imploring Him in mercy to grant us forgiveness, to renew and lead us, so that we may delight in His will and walk in His ways in thanks for His grace. Therefore, we do not deny our sin, but readily admit them that we may receive the forgiveness that God promises and has made possible through the atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus upon the Altar of the Cross. *Walk in the Light* of God’s grace forever. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.