

## Children's Moment

December 6, 2015

**Title:** Walk in the Light

**Theme:** Jesus, brought light into the world

**Object:** Night Light and Flash Light

**Scripture:** **19** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. **20** For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. **21** But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:18-21)

**S** Are you afraid of the dark? It is not unusual for children to be afraid of the dark. Some of you may have a night light in your bedroom. You shouldn't be embarrassed. In fact, it might be a wise thing to do. Suppose you wake up in the night and need a drink of water. If you get up in the dark to go get a drink, you might stub your toe or bump your shin. Ouch! That hurts.

**S** If you go for a walk at night, it is a good idea to carry a flashlight. Even if you are not afraid of the dark, you might trip and sprain your ankle. A flashlight will help you avoid those things that could harm you. If you have the choice of walking in the dark or walking in the light, which would you choose? I know which one I would choose!

In our Bible readings today, Jesus talks about light and darkness. **S** Jesus said, (Jn. 3:19) "Light has come into the world." Do you know what the Light is that Jesus was talking about? He was talking about himself. In another place, **S** Jesus said, (Jn. 8:12) "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in

darkness, but will have the light of life."

You might be surprised to know that some people actually choose to walk in darkness rather than in the light. Can you imagine that? Why would they do that?

**S** Jesus tells us, (Jn. 3:20) "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their evil deeds will be exposed."

Every day we make choices. If we live by truth, we walk in the light so that it may be plainly seen. **S** As Jesus said, (Mt. 5:16) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

What choice will you make? **S** Will you walk in the light or in the darkness?

Dear Lord, help us to make the right choices and walk in the light. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **S** Walk in the Light

Last week we saw that John makes clear that the message of Christ is the foundation for relationship with God through Christ, for relationship with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and for relationships with other Christians.

**S** John continues in verse 5 writing, “*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.*” How do we know that we can trust and have faith in the message given from Christ? First, we know we can trust Christ, because He is the only begotten Son of God who is the Light of the world and therefore, Jesus is the Light of God “*and in him is no darkness at all.*” No darkness means no deception, no sin; in God is found only pureness, truth and the light that floods us with truth and forces back the darkness of this world.

**S** God is all that is true and all truth is found in God. We only have spiritual wisdom or knowledge to know the truth of God and of His Word because God regenerates our souls with His Light. **B** King Solomon wrote, “*To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, 3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity.*” *One must have holy fear of God. 7* “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*” (Proverbs 1:1-3 & 7) There is worldly knowledge that may help you do your jobs well. However, the knowledge of mankind is but several thousand years old. On the other hand God’s knowledge spans eternity. God gave man the ability to gain

knowledge for we are created in His image. The knowledge of man had a beginning and it will come to an end, but God's knowledge will never end. Man's intellectual education and degrees are good, but they are for the short breathe of this life. Our society does not understand this because it lacks spiritual knowledge and wisdom. This is why our country and our society and the world is becoming a wasteland of self-serving people filled with corruption because they are dependent on their knowledge alone and not God's.

John did not choose the word "truth" in verse 5, but he used the word "light." We have observed in John's gospel that truth in Israel was "relative" to who had the power at the time, the Pharisees, Sadducees or Romans. Today it is the same; truth is presented in "relative" terms by the Democrats, the Republicans, the President, the Sierra Club, and oil industry and on and on. But, we, you and I, have chosen to hold fast to the eternal truth of God and let it be our light in this dark world. **S** It is in the light of Jesus Christ, that one finds absolute truth. With God's truth comes peace and joy and hope. **B** Jesus made this clear when He said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:27) Did you not experience this for the first time when the Light of God came into your soul? When I knew Christ as my Savior and Lord for the first time this suddenly made sense and I fell to my knees and weep because of my thankfulness to Jesus for saving such and unworthy wretch as me. This is how a former slave trader, John Newton, could pen those words that touch us so deeply in Amazing Grace. I pray that I will never forget that moment and I pray that moment for you will be burned by the Light of God into your memory and soul for all of your life.

As we think of light and darkness the contrast is clear both spiritually and physically. Light exposes danger and enables you to walk a path that avoids danger and takes one to where they desire. Walking in darkness is a difficult and dangerous event. Have you ever been in Carlsbad Caverns when they turn out the lights? It is truly dark; you cannot see your finger as you hold it up close to your eye. To walk in the caverns in darkness would be dangerous for there are many openings and pits. To walk in darkness you have no idea where you are going and that too is dangerous. Most things in this world above ground are not as completely dark as Carlsbad Caverns. However, it is still dangerous. Many of our choices are not black and white, but shades of gray. This is how the evil one lures people into sin and evil. We all know the story of the frog that is in the pot brought to a very slow boil. He is cooked before he knows he is in trouble. If we hold up to God's light our choices then the gray disappears and truth is revealed. **S** Christians are committed to live in the Light of God as the world lives in shades of gray that grow ever darker.

Verse 5 is foundational to the entire letter John wrote to help churches and Christians live a true life in Christ's Light.

### **S Fellowship in the Light**

Verses 6 and 7 bring to light practical application of the truth of God's light discovered in verse 5. Look once again at 1 John in your bibles as I read, "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **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 cleanses us from all sin."

What does it mean to walk in darkness? If you will turn just a few pages to 1 John chapter 2 beginning in verse 8 the Apostle John gives some clarity. Beginning halfway through verse 8, “... the darkness is passing away (*Satan*) and the true light (*the risen Christ*) is already shining. **S** **9** Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. **10** Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. **11** But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” **B** Walking in the light means you are a person of love; first you love Christ with all your heart and then you love others – spouse, children, parents, brothers and sisters in Christ, and finally the unsaved. Walking in darkness means one has turned their back on God and His Son Jesus and one has embraced the darkness and hate of this world.

John says at the end of verse 8, “the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.” To walk in darkness means one desires things of the fallen world more than things of God. To do this one has to be blind, blind to the light of God. Think of being in Carlsbad Caverns with the lights out, totally dark. If a person reached out and felt with one hand soft fur and with the other hand a cold sharp hard edge, would they not naturally be drawn to the softness of the fur?

When the lights are turned on one sees the warm soft fur belongs to a large menacing cave creature and the hard sharp edge is the sword of Christ ready to do battle with the creature to save the person. The wrong choice was made because of darkness. To love the world more than Christ one has to live in the darkness of the world. John recorded in his gospel account in chapter 3, beginning in verse 18, Jesus saying, “Whoever believes in him (*Jesus*) is not condemned, but whoever does not

believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. **S** 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:18-21) **B** When one walks in darkness they are controlled by the warm soft fur of this world: money, prestige, power and lust. People do not think how short life is, as a young man I thought I could leap tall buildings in a single bound and I could accomplish more than others and did not see the end of mortal life. If one is controlled by the desires of the world and thinks they can have fellowship with God they are only fooling themselves. Let me again read 1 John, verse 6, it is simple and clear, “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

However, verse 7 tells us, “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.” Walking in the light of Christ is not just a little different from walking in darkness, but it is the opposite. Walking in the light means seeing the world for what it is and being controlled by the desires of God as taught in the Bible. If one believes in God’s Light and in Him there is not darkness, then walking with God will bring the deepest fulfillment possible in this life and eternity to come.

Walking with God and walking in His Light and walking with Him in fellowship is a lifestyle one chooses by their new birth given to them by God. As Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, one of the most corrupted and debauched cities in the Roman

Empire, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) When we become a new creation through the power of God and walk in His Light two things happen according to verse 7; first, **we have fellowship with one another** and second, **the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Who is “**one another**” and what does it mean to have fellowship? In context John is implying that “**one another**” are believers in Christ. Fellowship is found in the Light of Christ and walking in darkness there is a void of fellowship.

Think of your most precious friend, for me that would be Joyce, my wife, we have in common the same desires of God. We are living in the Light of God, even though we experience an occasional moment of darkness. We share in the hope of God’s promises found in the Bible. Together we work at avoiding sin and we find strength in our togetherness. We also find strength to live with hope in this world by being in fellowship with brothers and sisters, fellow believers in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes in life a close relationship may change. Someone we love and have fellowship with begins to grow distant; they are drawn to things of the world. Their focus is drawn away from God by career or desire for material wealth. Talk of God and desiring the things of God no longer take place. Prayer is missing from their daily routine. There are no comments of the wonderful insights God has given them from prayer and meditating upon His Word. They no longer have a zeal for battle to share the gospel of Christ. They are becoming “me centered” instead of thinking of others as more worthy than themselves. At this point, fellowship is over and it will only be restored once again by their walking in the light of Christ.

Verse 7 concludes with, the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **S** When we walk in the light of Christ, we are in fellowship with Christ and through this relationship one's sins are cleansed. We are fallen people who God has saved and so we will remain while we live in these mortal bodies. Having fellowship with Christ we sin less. **B** Jesus came not merely to cover our sin, but to conquer sin and this is why He gives every believer the gift of God the Holy Spirit to dwell in them. This is the process we call sanctification; as we grow in fellowship with Christ we sin less and less and become more like Christ. This process is completed when we die and receive our glorified bodies and are in the direct presence of God forever.

As a believer, do not lose hope when you sin, but know our hope is in Christ who forgives our sins and gives us strength to overcome sin. In Hebrews it is written, “... the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” (Hebrews 9:14) **S** Sanctification is the process in which the Word of God changes us and enables fellowship Jesus Christ; it is a progressive work the Holy Spirit does in one's heart. **B** Paul wanted new believers to understand this process, writing to the believers in Philippi, “I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” He completes his thought concerning fellowship saying, **7** “It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. **9** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and

blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:6-11) Even prison and absence did not dampen the fellowship Paul had with those who also believed in Christ. The path for these believers to walk was made clear and by walking in the Light of Christ they had true life and peace and hope. Walking in the Light would not only bring grace, peace and love into their lives, but also to the lives of those whom they had fellowship with and it will even bring the Light of God to those living in darkness.

### **S** Confess in the Light

John clarifies what it means to have our sins forgiven at the end of verse 7, “the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” beginning in verse 8 John says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” After all did not John just say in verse 7 that Jesus cleans a believer from “all” sin, so how then if we have no sin is the truth not in us? **B** There are those in John’s time and in our time that misuse verse 7 and teach that Christians are capable of living sinless lives. In verse 7 and 8 John is clarifying two problems at once that existed then and today. First, there are those who teach, as the Gnostics did, that our behavior has nothing to with salvation. The body and spirit are separate. From the Scriptures we know this is not true. Secondly, that after conversion a believer must be perfect. For example, the Wesleyan Church believes you are not filled with the Holy Spirit until you reach sanctification and once you do and you are filled with the Holy Spirit and can be sinless. John dealt with the first error in verses 6 and 7 and he deals with the second error in verses 8 to 10.

Reading beginning in verse 8, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

To assert we can be without sin is self-deception. We can only claim to have no sin if the light of truth is not found in us. When a person’s soul is regenerated by God truth and light takes up residence in their heart. John is making clear that when a person is born again they are not immediately free from sin. But that the Light of God pulls back the layers of sin like removing the layers of an onion until you reach the center. Letting God’s light penetrate and expose the darkness of sin and our turning to Christ to give us the power over sin is a lifelong battle. When light enters into our lives sin is revealed. **S** The mark of a true believer is not sinlessness but sin consciousness and repentance. A believer is mortified by their sin and seeks Christ to expose and give power over our sin. In this mortal life we are made aware of our sin and we conquer many sins, but sin remains. We have hope because of Christ and know our battle with sin will be victorious through Christ when we are glorified. While we live and do battle with sin, we should have great joy and profound peace because we are forgiven in Christ. **B**

Verse 9 says, “If we confess our sins, he (*Jesus*) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Denying our sin means to walk in darkness and confessing our sins is to walk in the Light of God, Jesus.

I have heard it said that Christians should never ask for forgiveness of their sins as they pray. Our justification was finished with Jesus dying on the cross and rising

from the dead to live eternally. This is true, but I think it lacks humility. To go before the Most Holy God in prayer and say from the depth of our heart, “Father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be called Your child. Thank you for Jesus! Thank you for His blood shed to cover my sins that You see me as Your child.” Or, to go to Matthew and use the words given to us by Christ, **“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts (our debts or trespasses to God is sin), as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** (Matthew 6-13) Amen! Christ makes us aware that God is hallowed or holy. God’s kingdom will be complete when eternity begins, but it is also found here and now on earth among Christians. We need to have faith and trust God to provide. Knowing we are secure in Christ and because of Christ God forgives us of our sins. This also enables us to model forgiveness to others. Keeping our focus on God will keep us from temptation and Jesus will deliver us from the evil one who for a time has power of this world.

The final point John puts forth is found in verse 10, **“If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”** Verse 10 repeats the warning given in verse 8 and adds a warning to be taken most seriously. **S** If we say we have not sinned, as much of the unsaved world believes, then we call the Most Holy God a liar and that is blasphemy! For believers, God is saying we were evil and He cleansed us by the blood of His Son. The light of God exposes the evil in us and His Spirit and His Word changes us, driving evil from us. Do you see the world is fallen, corrupt and evil, but for the grace of God we would still belong to the world. By His grace we are no longer of this world. Praise Him!

**B** John is saying in these verses, the only thing that keeps us from being blown to and for by the winds of fads, teachings of false prophets and succumbing to our sin nature is three things. First, God had a plan for our salvation before the beginning of time and that was for His Son, Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. Secondly, God brought life into our souls and gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to bring His light into our lives. Thirdly, it is the power of the Scriptures that transforms our mind and soul enabling us to live holy in the midst of an evil and sinful world. This is why we come together and study God's Word and hear the preaching of His Word. This brings understanding of what Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, **S** "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2) It is this daily sanctification of confessing our sins, repenting before our holy God, meditating upon His Word and fellowship with other saints is what grows us in Christ's image.

By the power of Jesus Christ we, together, can work towards fulfillment of Jesus great commands found in the gospel accounts. I have chosen to use Mark's. **S** "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31) My beloved this is our prayer and ambition. Our life's journey is bound to Christ and each other in His name.