

## **1 John 1.1-2.2 God is Light**

### **1 John 1**

#### **The Word of Life**

<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We write this to make our<sup>[a]</sup> joy complete.

#### **Walking in the light**

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup>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<sup>[b]</sup> sin.

<sup>8</sup>If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>1</sup>My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for<sup>[c]</sup> the sins of the whole world.

Well, Easter seems over. Like so many festivals it all seems to come down to chocolate. If I am going to cheat on my diet and eat chocolate I only eat the best German chocolate. Of Easter does not have the afterglow of Christmas with its presents: I always thought someone should do something about that.

For the first Christians, the resurrection of Jesus was a huge celebration. Easter is a season which will go on for seven Sundays. It is that important to the Church. This year the lectionary gives us readings from 1 John which I want to look at as a series of sermons to help us think about the power of Easter in our lives. The resurrection of Jesus is so momentous: It is much more than just going to heaven when we die. The resurrection of Jesus opens up for us a relationship with God which enfolds us now and turns us inside out and upside down.

This passage gives us a picture of the importance of Easter to our lives. It speaks of a **relationship** with two important **implications** for us.

#### The Relationship 1.1-4

The key here is verse 3: **We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son.**

We notice two things here; first that John is speaking from personal experience about Jesus; the purpose of his proclamation is that they and we might have fellowship with God.

We proclaim to you *what we have seen and heard*. He is not talking about a set of ideas or a philosophy but a person whom he knew. Verse

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**<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim.... <sup>2</sup>The life *appeared*; we have seen it**

He is talking about Jesus: John has had a very real, tangible experience of Christ, we heard him, we saw him with our eyes, we beheld him and we touched him.

You can see the problem John is dealing with. There is a Gnostic teaching going around that Jesus did not really become human but rather seemed to appear in human form. John is having none of it: Jesus the word of life entered fully and truly into time and into human existence. I think this should encourage all of us for whom Jesus can sometimes retreat into the realm of story or myth, can seem distant from us.

Right from the beginning there were doubts about Jesus which is why the apostles taught the church what they experienced. That means for us today as much as for them then that our faith in Christ is not a subjective matter. **We** do not interpret who Christ is **Christ** has revealed himself to us;

Why is John proclaiming this? Look at the result clause: **so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son.** That is why God sent his Son; that is why Easter. It is so that we might have fellowship with God.

The words he uses for fellowship speaks of the union between husband and wife: the highest possible connection. It might be helpful for some here to quietly pray: Lord I desire that deeper fellowship with you; I want to know that.

If we are in fellowship with God this impacts our lives; in the passage this happens in two ways: the first has to do with who God is; the second has to do with what Christ has done

**Who God is;** vs. 5-7

**<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him (Jesus) and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.**

This is a powerful statement about God.

John speaks of a message or teaching he received from Christ and which he is now passing onto the Church.

**God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.**

Much has been written about these few words;—we get the word phosphorescence from it. What he is saying is that God is revealing himself; God is expressing himself constantly. Just as light radiates from the Sun so self-expression emanates from God. God is completely to be trusted. It is not for the initiated ones. There is no secret code, password or liturgy you need to learn. You do not rise up through levels of enlightenment for God has come down and revealed himself. He is fully known there is no darkness in God. His nature is wholly good.

If we live in relationship with this God, then who He is must surely have a massive impact upon our lives. You cannot encounter the Living God who Created Heaven and Earth and go away unchanged. We need to live out the reality of our relationship with God. Our communion with God needs to inform the people that we are and the things that we do.

The problem they were having then is verse 6 **if we claim to have fellowship with him (God) yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.**

People were using the faith as a pretext for immoral living. Saying that it was only the spirit that matters, the body didn't count, so what you do with the body doesn't matter. We sense that some Christians were not living out their fellowship with God. They had come to Christ and received the light of salvation, they were still living in the darkness of sin.

As Christians, we have to live in the light. The words we say, the things we think about, our actions, the way we conduct our relationships, the very people that we are. All may be brought into our relationship with the God who is light. He has revealed himself to us; we bring ourselves to him.

The question is: how is your walk going?

Does it look like verse 6 walking in darkness or verse 7: vs. **<sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as Christ is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all<sup>[a]</sup> sin.**

What a wonderful verse. As we live out our Christian lives, we will find that God works in us to purify us; to perfect us. One thing I have noticed over the years both in myself and in others is that God has this way of getting to us; sometimes difficult or sinful parts of our lives get stirred up; sometimes you find as you come face to face with the gospel and as God's word begins to touch your life this sense of conflict emerges because God's word challenges us and disturbs us. Or we find areas of our lives, attitudes, habits, beliefs that are not in line with God's word and we throw up the barriers.

Let this passage encourage you; for God wants all of us to walk in the light of his presence and to know the fullness of that fellowship. And yes that will involve you and me being touched to the core sometimes. But God can take care of that; you just have to consent; this may be for someone here today: let barriers down; and let the graciousness of God's word work in you.

**2<sup>nd</sup> implication** has to do with what Christ has done for us.

Key verse 2.2 **(Christ) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for<sup>[a]</sup> the sins of the whole world.**

This verse is meant to be a great encouragement. The problem they had then was of people calling themselves Christian yet denying sin:

**<sup>8</sup>If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...and <sup>10</sup>If we claim we have not sinned, we make him (God) out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.**

Strong words from John. God sent his Son to deal with the problem of sin. This is what God defines as the central problem facing the world. It weighs us down with guilt, it distorts our relationships, it disfigures our human nature and if unresolved makes it impossible for us to have any kind of fellowship with God in this life or in the next. You cannot read the Scriptures and avoid seeing just how seriously God regards the issue of sin.

The problem then was that people were denying sin. Some in the church were downplaying sin, denying the seriousness of sin. It is the siren call of the ages that lulls us into sin with soothing words: it is not so bad; don't worry about it; it's not your fault." It takes us back to the Garden of Eden, when Satan spoke to Eve: "did God tell you not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil". Surely God didn't mean it. Far better is the true comfort that Jesus offers in verse 9 **<sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** Now that is one of the most comforting verses in the whole of Scripture. That is why Christ came. That is why the events of Holy Week and Easter are so momentous. It is a glorious, gracious and loving thing God did when he sent his Son.

Freedom from sin is the most precious thing we can offer. For far from denying the problem of sin, Christ defeats it. Notice the character of God: he is **faithful** and **just**; that is to say faithful to his promises and just in all he does. You can completely trust him. God is light, in him there is no darkness at all.

And there are two things he will do: he will forgive our sins; and purify us from all unrighteousness. Forgiveness: when we sin we may not realize it but we are offending against God. He promises to forgive our offences. But second and I think this is important for us, he will purify us from all unrighteousness. It is not just about being forgiven it is about being restored. God wants to restore us, you and me and make us completely clean inside and out.

Why? Because 2.2 **(Christ) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.** Because he paid the price. Because of what Christ has done we can be free from sin. All we need to do is vs. 9 confess our sin. Christ has paid the price.

This is meant to be a great comfort to us. Especially in those hard times and hard places in our lives. Sometimes the hardest thing for us to do is really the easiest: to confess our problems and our sin and our struggles to God. But be encouraged by this. If Easter has

any meaning your life it is here. We all struggle at times with ourselves. God knows, and he cares. And if you come to him in repentance he will work with you and in you to purify you. Sometimes that purifying is a real struggle. But God is faithful and just.

Easter is about whole lot more than chocolate bunnies. And it is about much more than going to heaven when we die. Easter is the highest celebration because in the events of that terrible, wonderful time God worked salvation in Christ. That salvation is ours to live.