

April 8, 2018  
Second Sunday After Easter  
1 John 1:1-2:2

Our epistle lesson today from First John is loaded with Gospel good news. John starts out speaking all about proclaiming the life which is Jesus. *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of **life**— the **life** was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal **life**, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.”* And John quickly makes the point that the reason we have life in Jesus is because in Christ we have fellowship with the divine. *“...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”*

But there is a shadow in the midst of this good news—darkness. One cannot walk in darkness and be in fellowship with a holy God of light. *“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.”*

If we willingly are walking in the darkness of sin, we willingly break the fellowship with the crucified Christ who is life! The good news of Jesus is light and it is there for all, but as Jesus said in chapter three of John’s Gospel account, *“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.”*

So what is that darkness? Well obviously we equate it with evil sin—blasphemy, immorality, murder, hatred, violence, covetousness, just being an all-around nasty kind of person. As followers of Jesus we shun such lascivious and abhorrent behavior.

But there's another way of understanding the darkness and it is just as damning, and it's more subtle in the way it presents itself. It is keeping ourselves in the dark or maybe thinking we're keeping God in the dark about our sin.

Quite a few years ago my brother in law John had a nearly fatal brain aneurism. Brain surgery saved his life and I flew down to Tennessee to help out when he was being released from the hospital. The brain doctor shows up for a visit just as we're about to leave. He says a few things and is almost out the door when I stop him and say, "Hey doc. John's is a smoker. Is that going to be okay?" The doctor responded. "Oh. Oh no. Having a cigarette would be like putting a loaded gun to his head and pulling the trigger."

John was in the dark about his smoking being a factor. The doctor was in the dark about John's smoking. Unaddressed, this state of affairs might have killed him.

We live in a culture that more and more and more considers sinful behaviors moral and acceptable, in some cases even virtuous! Whether it's because we're just ignorant of what God's Word says, or more likely because our sinful nature wants to make sin okay, we often accept the culture's definition of sin over and above that of God! We keep ourselves in the dark!

Sexual sin is an easy example. Lewd video and books, an increasing variety of sexual orientations, living together, premarital and extra-marital relations, all deemed valid and good lifestyle choices by the culture, and increasingly deemed acceptable by Christians. Why? Well, God is in the dark about how life really is, so He's got to bend. Or folks choose not to ponder God's design revealed in the Word lest their guilt be made plain. Either way, the sinner is walking in the dark, not in fellowship with the light of Christ!

Here is a darkness Cajuns especially seem to love—grudges. Everybody is guilty of holding grudges, but man, I've met a few Cajuns who seem righteously proud of it! That's

standing in the dark because you've been wronged and the perpetrator isn't worthy of mercy. The light that is life is forgiveness in Christ! You can't hold grudges and be in fellowship with mercy made manifest! But people think they're being righteous!

Cheating on or not paying taxes, being lazy at work or stealing there, disdain for people of other races, political bent or social class, hatred for enemies, cheating on homework, illegally downloading stuff, disobeying authorities, being ugly on social media, carelessly using God's name and, of course, gossiping, gossiping, gossip—works of darkness that Christians keep themselves in the dark about, as if they aren't really that bad.

They are that bad. They are really dangerous.

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

Did you hear that? If we allow ourselves to be in the dark and believe sins aren't sins, isn't that just saying we have no sin, deceiving ourselves, not having the truth in us? That is holding sins in the darkness, not bringing them to light. We need to bring them to light!

Why? If I hadn't brought John's smoking to light, that “sin” may have killed him years ago. But today He enjoys life! Enjoys life????!! He's 74 and has a 5 handicap in golf! That's awesome.

Likewise, bringing our sins to the light is not a bad thing—it's a Gospel thing! What happens when in repentance we bring our sins into the light of Jesus? *“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.”*

The Christian life is a struggle against sin. It is not a life of being without sin and it most certainly not a life of thinking that somehow Jesus makes your sins okay before God! It is a life of walking in the light of Christ, exposing your awful sin to His wonderful forgiveness and having it removed from you before God as far as the east is from the west.

Jesus is the Savior. You want to find your sins and bring them to Him. Not cover them over and pretend they aren't there. He is the healer of your sin and death problem. Bring Him your disease.

*“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

This is a life and death matter—but the word of life made manifest is our advocate before the judgment of God! He brings your sins to nothing. Seek out your sins that they be brought to nothing! This is light and life! This is faith in Jesus, running to Him with your sins in repentance knowing without a doubt that they are paid for by His cross.

Don't abide any darkness. Baptized into Christ, bring all of yourself, sins included, into His marvelous light. The sins? He brings them to nothing. You? He brings you in His glory to the Father forever.

Amen.