

FELLOWSHIP IN THE LIGHT

1 John 1:1-10

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

Fellowship with Him and One Another

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say that 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 that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

The beginning of this epistle, or letter, by the Apostle John starts out very similarly to the gospel of John. The gospel of John, being the fourth book in the New Testament, is recommended by many, whether they are pastors, teachers of the Word of God (the Bible), or lay folks, as a first read for anyone that wants to get an understanding of what is the gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ. The book of John starts by saying, "In the beginning was the Word [speaking of Jesus, the Son of God], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (**John 1:1-5**) Pretty similar to how 1st John starts, right? That is one of many clues we have as to who wrote the 1st epistle of John since he doesn't come out and say that he is the author. But then, after speaking of John the Baptist, John continues by saying, "But as many as received Him [that's Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory,

the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (**John 1:12-14**) What that should reveal to each of us is that we cannot save ourselves. Only Jesus can save us from our sins against God and give us the right standing before God to be in His eternal kingdom.

Just in the first five verses in the book of John we find the gospel of Jesus Christ. One must believe on Christ and then receive Him, that is, the Holy Spirit, which is being born of the Spirit, or born-again. Similarly also, John speaks in both the book of John and the first epistle of John as Jesus being the light, of which we are being called into His light, to dwell in His light, to have His light working in us. That is then, what Jesus was referring when He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (**Matthew 5:16**) We are all hopefully getting very familiar with **Ephesians 2:8-9** by now. "For by grace you have been saved through faith [that is, believing on Jesus as the Christ, our Savior], and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Where does the light of Jesus fit in? **Ephesians 2:10** continues by saying, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." The Holy Spirit, that is the light of Christ begins cleaning us up, from the inside out, and His light should be evident to those around us as we begin to take on the Spirit of Christ, who is living in us.

That is God's redemptive plan for mankind, explained as concisely as possible. Yes, God's redemptive plan for our salvation can be found throughout the Old and New Testament books of the Bible, but the book of John gets to the heart of the matter. We are believing on Christ Jesus, including His teachings, His commandments, and we are receiving Him, by His Holy Spirit. The Old Testament gives us the history of mankind, prior to the time of Jesus and it shows the progression of how God gave the people of earth all kinds of ways for God to be their God, through judges and prophets and kings and even directly so that His creation, that is, His people of the earth, can have a blessed life within His creation, with Him as being their God.

Sadly, we find out, in reading the stories in the Old Testament, and even in the New Testament, that most people, if given a choice, would rather live unto themselves, even though one could not be anymore blessed than having Him as our God. King David recognized the many benefits of being on the right side with God when he wrote, "I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies." (**Psalms 18:1-3**)

Starting in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis, after God was finished with His creation, we have Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, to where God would come to them at times and have a time of fellowship with them. After Adam and Eve had sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God sent them out of the garden of Eden. We know from the story of when Cain killed his brother Abel, that God still had been having interaction with His people, since He asked Cain where his brother was. What was Cain's response? "Am I my brother's keeper." That is a key element to recognize as being contrary to God's redemptive plan as He is bringing us ALL into His fellowship and in fellowship with one another. We were never intended to be separate from one another. You may be thinking of examples that oppose that idea, such as His leading the people of Israel vs. any of the other nations, or the time God scattered the people from Babylon. I'll address that shortly.

In our passage of Scripture today though, John says, "**But if we walk in the light** as He is in the light, **we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Did you catch the part that I emphasized? I'll say it again, "**But if we walk in the light** as He is in the light, we have **fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." That is the same thing that Paul said in **Ephesians 2:10**. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that **we should walk in them**." We first are led by the Holy Spirit to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of mankind, who took our sins upon Himself, dying on a cross, and then was raised from the dead on the third day, conquering death, so that we too, that is, all who will put their trust in Him, will also overcome the sting of death, and live forever in His eternal kingdom. We then receive His Holy Spirit as we are led to repentance, having a change of mind, from living in our old ways of sin and ignoring God's will for our lives, and then walking in the ways, as He is leading us.

An absolute indicator as to how well we are obeying God and following His leading and His working in us is summed up in what Jesus said was the greatest commandment and the second which is like it. "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.**' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-32)

So let's look back at when God first created man in His own image. First though, to clarify, when I say man, I am speaking of men and women. As **Genesis 1:27** states, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

That right there gives us to much debated answer as to how many genders there are. Two, male and female. It also gets us to realize right away, that if we were first created in God's image then we were initially created perfectly, as God is perfect in all His ways. (Psalm 18:30) It also reveals to us of how catastophic and tragic sin is, to who and what we were created and intended to be. Prior to the great flood, it is written, in **Genesis 4:26**, "Then men began to call on the name of the Lord." That doesn't mean that man was perfect, just that they were still looking to God and honoring God for who He is. That unfortunately didn't last for long since the next story in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis, is the story of the great flood. Even after God had created man, in His own image, gave them the whole earth to roam around on and to enjoy and to have families and fellowship with Him and with other people, it just got worse and worse. We continue reading, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (**Genesis 6:5**)

Sound familiar? Two things are mentioned in Scripture as taking place in the last of days. First, the good news. In **Acts 2:17-21**, Peter quotes from the book of Joel saying, "'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. **And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**'" I guess that's actually good news mixed in with some bad news, but hopefully for all of us, we can rejoice in calling on the Lord Jesus and being saved! Hopefully what that is saying to us is that "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." God is and has been pleading with His people to come back to Him for forgiveness of sins and to be cleansed of unrighteousness. He is longing to gather us up into His brood as a hen gather her chicks. As Jesus looked out over Jerusalem He lamented, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (**Matthew 23:37**)

While God IS pouring out His Spirit the bad news is spoken of most directly by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy saying, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving,

unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:1-5) The sad fact of the matter is that some people, no matter how much they hear the gospel, no matter how much the Holy Spirit calls them, they will not repent, and turn to Jesus for the saving of their souls.

Back to the book of Genesis, after Adam and Eve, and after the time when man was still looking to God, the narration continues by saying, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5) God waited and waited and waited until the right time to call Noah to start building the ark. The question to us is, if by appearances it seems as though you're the only one still in fellowship with God and spending time in His Word and in prayer, will you remain in His light? Will you continue loving God and others (yes, even your enemies)? Will you continue in sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ until He takes you home? It's easy to get caught up in the affairs of this life, taking care of one's self, your family, your job, and even getting caught up in ministry. God is love! Right? (1 John 4:7-8) Without love our actions and accomplishments mean a whole lot of nothing. A good reminder is to rehearse daily the fruit of the Spirit. You don't get to pick and choose what fruit of the Spirit to let work in you. You either allow the fruit of the Spirit to work in you or you don't. The fruit of the Spirit is, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

The progression of the ways of man, given to themselves, will only lead to godlessness and evil thoughts and intents of the heart. For example, after the flood, what is the next main story in Genesis? Man, getting together and saying, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) They were not wanting to honor God or even acknowledge Him. They were wanting to be their own gods and have their own kingdom. What did God have to do, and then what did He do? He confounded their languages so that everyone was speaking in a different language and then He scattered them over the earth so that they wouldn't try that again.

When I spoke earlier about God wanting us to be in fellowship together and not be separated, that truly is the will of God. Because of man's sin He had to separate His people. By His people I am referring to all of mankind. "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1) We are all God's creation. We are all His people. The choice though becomes

ours as to whether we want to accept Him as our God, our Lord, and our Savior. The next plan of God's was to establish a nation through the seed of Abraham. That plan was two-fold. 1. To have a nation of people that He could lead and be their God 2. That Jesus, the Christ, would come from that seed, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and then Judah.

Through Moses and then Joshua, God led the Israelites out of slavery to Egypt. Then God established judges to rule over His people. Then the people cried for a king because all of the other nations had kings. They had God Almighty as their King and they ultimately rejected God for a human king. As one reads through the time of the kings and the prophets, it just gets progressively worse to where God eventually gives them up to their worshipping false gods and godless living. That should certainly be teaching us and tell us something about who we should put our trust in. **Psalm 146:3-4** says, "Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish." The problems that our society suffers from as well as for our nation, is not a problem that bureaucrats or politicians can fix or solve. What we have is a spiritual problem. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (**Ephesians 6:12**) Only Jesus can help us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light. To those who are in Christ Jesus, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (**1 Peter 2:9**) Each of us who have the light of Jesus in us are one spark of many that needs to shine in the darkness while sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ!

We have the first-hand testimony of the apostles, and we also have the many testimonies that have proclaimed the good news after them. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have **fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.** And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." In the book of John, John gives the purpose of His writing that book to be the following, "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (**John 20:31**)

We are believing on Christ Jesus to have died for our sins, we receive Him so that we can bear witness to His light and we can overcome sin and the evil in this world. God hasn't given up on us, and we cannot give up our hope for others either. We are being called into following with God and His people to help encourage and edify one another in the faith and hope that we have in Christ Jesus!

Heavenly Father,
I confess that I have sinned against You.
I ask that You forgive me of my sins.
I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins,
I confess with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord,
and I believe in my heart that You raised Jesus from the dead,
so that I can have forgiveness of sins,
and be reconciled to You, God, My Father.
I now commit to You, that I will repent of my sins,
and live in the newness of life,
being led by Your Holy Spirit,
all this I pray, in Christ Jesus, my Savior and Lord. Thank You Lord!