

The Lord's Message: Live In the Light

Date: October 20, 2024

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: 1 John 1:5-10

You probably have heard the old story about a man that was searching for something that he lost under a streetlight. Another man approached him and said to him, "What did you lose?" The man said, "I lost my watch?" "Where did you lose it," the other man replied. The man said to him matter of factly, "Over there," pointing into the dark. Incredulously the other man replied, "Then why are we looking for your watch here." The reply came back, "Because the lighting is better."

We are starting a new Sermon Series: The Gospel Makes All the Difference: Live in the Light. We will be studying the Book of 1 John. The books of 1, 2, and 3 John were written by the Apostle John, who also wrote the books of John and Revelation. We learned last week that John was one of four disciples that Jesus first called to "Follow Me." On the banks of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus called 4 fishermen that day, Peter, his brother Andrew, John, and his brother James. We know from church history that all the disciples except John died in spreading the Gospel. John was placed in a burning caldron full of hot oil and he preached the Gospel in that caldron. Just as God saved Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace of King Nebuchadnezzar; God saved John from this burning caldron of hot oil. Another time John was made to drink poison, God saved him again. As a matter of fact, the Romans got so tired of trying to kill John and God saving him that they finally exiled him onto the Island of Patmos, figuring that John would die on that island. He did not. God even gave him visions, like those God had given Daniel, of what would occur at the end of times. John recorded all of this in the Book of Revelation. John lived out his remaining years serving the church in Ephesus.

Let us pray.

John wrote the Book of 1 John to all the churches dealing with a problem. Is the Gospel all I need for Salvation? Did God in heaven send his Son to be born as one of us, to teach us about the kingdom of God, to heal us from our diseases, including our disease of sin, to bodily die on the cross in which His Father placed all our sins, past, present and future to pay the penalty that we all would have to pay? Did Jesus die on that cross? Was Jesus placed in a borrowed man's grave? After three days did God resurrect Jesus from the grave? Was Mary Magdalene the first person to see the resurrected Jesus? For forty days after that the rest of the disciples, except for Judas Iscariot? Did Jesus also appear to approximately 500 before He ascended into heaven? Is Jesus coming back in the very near future? By believing all of this you and I will be saved from our sins. Friends of Tilghman Methodist Church do you believe this, and only this, is necessary for your salvation? Yes! Praise the Lord!

The Jewish people had a hard time believing this. They thought that they needed to obey the 613 laws found in the Torah. The Gentiles thought that they needed to pay honor and tribute to idols in order for them to receive a blessing from the idols. Even today, people have a hard time thinking that all they need to do is to believe that Jesus is their Lord and Savior. This takes us past the idea that “we can know Jesus.” That is what the Apostle John says in **1 John 1:1-4** (page 1898 in your pew Bible). Many people claim that they know Jesus, but do they have fellowship with Him, do they have a relationship with Him?

How can one have a relationship with God? How can the unholy have a relationship with God? In **1 John 1:5**, God is light. There are two concepts that come out of this verse: the holiness of God and the revealing of God.

The first concept, the holiness of God, means that God is pure, perfect, and righteous. God is always good, and God is always right in all that He does. This we all know, but the holiness of God prevents us from having a relationship with Him. God cannot be with the unholy because God will destroy the unholy. For example, when God descended from heaven to the top of Mt. Sinai, God told Moses to put limits so that the people would not go up the mountain, **Exodus 19:23**. Even Aaron, the High Priest, could not go in the Holy of Holy area of the Tabernacle anytime he pleased, **Leviticus 16:2**. He could only go in this area during the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. Even then, he had to go through ritual bathing, wear clothing that had been ceremonial cleaned, and tie a sash around his foot in case God killed him they could drag out his body. In **Exodus 28:33-35**, the clothing had bells sewed onto them, so that “the sound of bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he comes out.” If after a while, the bells stopped ringing, then they knew to pull on the rope to pull the High Priest out.

The next concept of God is light is God’s revealing sin, the darkness that is in all of us. Did anyone see the Sun rise early Tuesday morning? It came up and the darkness quickly disappeared. “in Him there is no darkness.” Jesus declared in **John 12:46** that He came to expose the darkness.

Now, we are still left with the problem of having a relationship with a Holy God. How do we solve this? We don’t. God has done that for us. Look at verse 7. John teaches us that when we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. There is the solution for us to have a relationship with God. It is called Grace – God’s Redemption at Christ Expense. We cannot do anything to deserve this Grace. God has done all the work through His Son Jesus on the cross. We can only accept it. We are still sinners, but as Paul says when we accept what Jesus has done this changes us to become a new creation in Christ, **2 Corinthians 5:17**. I saw a YouTube video of a man being baptized. The preacher asked him why he wanted to be

baptized. He said one of the most profound theological statements that I have ever heard, “I am shit and I do not want to be shit anymore.”

I just said that we are still sinners. A group called the Gnostics believe that their higher knowledge could lift them to a level where they did not sin anymore. That is why John wrote in verse 8, that if we claim that we are not sinners then we deceive ourselves. Jude wrote in **Jude 4**, warning about the Gnostics belief. Paul also wrote about Christians thinking that since Jesus saved them then they could continue in their sin, **1 Corinthians 6:12-13**.

A Christian should realize that they are sinners and should confess those sins to the Lord. John says this in verse 9. We should be specific in our confession of sins. We should come before Almighty God with sorrow for what we have done and confess specific sins to God. We just sang “Lord, I want to be a Christian,” this is what a Christian does on a daily basis. What if we do not know that we have committed a sin? Those are sins of omission. The other sins are sins of commission. We should make our confession of sins that we have committed and for those that we unknowingly committed. This does not affect our salvation but brings us closer to God.

The worst thing that we can do is in verse 10. “Claim that we have not sinned, because we make God out to be a liar.” Jesus says that I have come to save sinners. Now, there are still some people who are looking for salvation under the world’s streetlights by doing good for others, by being a kind person, by making sure to read their Bibles, praying to God and going to church. They think by being good persons or following rules that they can work out their salvation. The bottom line is that we cannot do enough good things for us to achieve salvation. What is impossible for us is possible for God. By believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will be forgiven for all our sins. This is the Gospel message, the light shining in our darkness that frees us from our sins. By living in the light, the Gospel makes a difference in all our lives. That is how we grow together in Faith. Amen.