

WEEKEND Edition 08/09 October 2022

“Incompatibility & God” (1 John 1:5-9)

Good weekend to you my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

If you live in the northern hemisphere of our world, I'm sure you've noticed the dramatic change, since mid-summer, of the decreasing amount of daylight each day. When my family lived in North Dakota I remember tracking the daily change and there were times in the fall of the year daylight would be reduced by 4 minutes per day! Of course, in the spring there were also days we'd gain 4 minutes of daylight per day! Are you one of those people who cherishes daylight and struggles when days are shorter, and nights are longer?

Yesterday I left you with the apostle John, the very close friend of Jesus, as he is writing his little letter, we have toward the end of our New Testament titled '1st John'. Today John continues writing with these words: ***"This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with God yet we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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, His Son, purifies us from all sin."*** (1 John 1:5-7)

Of course, John is not writing about daylight nor the sun's rays. *John is talking about some of the greatest attributes of God... His holiness, His purity, and that He defines the TRUTH upon which life and our world functions.* John is making it clear that while he learned many things from Jesus, the centerpiece of all that Jesus taught was that God is holy, pure, all truth, and in HIM there is no unholiness, no evil, no impurity, no untruth, no distortion of truth, no deceit.

It's important we pause here to be sure we agree with this fundamental reality about Almighty, Holy, God the Creator of the universe and giver of life to each human being. **God cannot be true to Himself if there is even a hint of unholiness or untruthfulness in Him.**

Next John calls us to understand God, who is the source of all that exists and the creator of every life, is also a loving God who desires relationship with every human person He creates. But a relationship with holy, truthful God can only happen on HIS terms. That is why John's statement is so important and powerful: ***"If we claim to have fellowship with God yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth."*** (1 John 1:6) Right at the beginning of John's letter he lays down a line of demarcation. *With God there is no grey zone in relationship. Light and Dark are incompatible, they cannot coexist. Good and Evil are incompatible, they cannot coexist. Holy and Wicked are incompatible, they cannot coexist.*

This begins a theme John will weave through his letter and the theme is intended to call every reader of his letter to look deeply within themselves.

What are we to look at or look for? We are to look AT ourselves and our integrity, our truthfulness. *Are we attempting to live in the grey zone of incompatibility?* We are to look FOR Deceitfulness, Pretend, Hypocrisy, Artificial, Fake. Why? Because we live in a world of darkness, deceitfulness, untruth and *if we attempt to live in an authentic, Jesus-provided relationship with Holy God, we will find ourselves continually challenged by the incompatibilities of life all around us!*

Now ponder this a moment my 'Walking with Jesus' friends. You and I cannot truthfully walk through life in an authentic, genuine relationship with Jesus and NOT feel the pressure, the tensions of the incompatibilities of values and lifestyles and world view and truth distortions which our world celebrates but which are opposed to the Holiness of God! It's time for a straightforward question which applies John's powerful statement: *"Am I attempting to live in incompatibility? Do I claim a relationship with Holy God through Jesus Christ, yet do I live my life too often in the darkness of the things of my world which are opposed to God and His holiness?"*

Here's another important self-evaluation question: 'Do I know myself well enough that I can tell when I'm struggling to live in 'incompatibility'? Can I discern the internal friction in me when I am living in contradiction to what I claim to believe is God honoring or God truth or even God values? When I feel that internal friction, what is it and what do I do about it?' **The internal friction I'm talking about is the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian.** Jesus had said to His disciples, only hours before He went to the cross, and John recorded Jesus' words in his Gospel account: **"When the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment... the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth."** (John 16:8,13) *The friction or tension you and I feel when we are trying to balance living in 'incompatibility' is the Holy Spirit calling us to recognize the contrast between God's truth, God's holiness and the path of darkness we are walking.*

Now watch how John addresses this as he continues writing his little 1 John letter: **"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 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 1:8-10) These three 'if we' statements shine like a lighthouse beacon into the grey fog of the 'incompatibility' of God's people living in a dark world. The first is a shot across the bow for those people who claim to be perfect Christians. These people believe, or at least they claim to be living sinlessly, perfectly and often there is a pride, even an arrogance about them as they just can't seem to understand why other people keep sinning while they somehow have found the secret to living perfect lives. John says these dear folks are hallucinating and the truth is not in them. *Perfection is simply impossible as long as we have even a little of our sinful nature still alive within us!*

The claim to be **'without sin'** is delusional and calls into question everything else these people say for **'the truth is not in them'** John says.

The second 'If we' statement is one of the greatest statements of hope found anywhere in the Bible. In fact, it's one of the greatest statements of hope ever spoken or written down through human history and it applies to every living person! **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:9) The word **'confess'** means 'I agree with God's assessment'. In this case when I confess my sins, I am agreeing with God that I am a sinful person who has committed sin. *Sin is anything less than God's holy perfection, and my sin separates me from Holy God since Holy God and wickedness are incompatible.* As I confess my sin, I also am agreeing with God that **'the wages of sin is death'** (Rom. 6:23) and under God's holy justice, I therefore deserve to die for my sin!

In that place of honest confession, God promises His response will be FAITHFUL to His Holiness and His Holy Justice. Holy God promises He will accept the death payment of His Son Jesus, which Jesus offered to the Father when He died on the cross, as a sufficient death payment for the penalty of my sin. By accepting that death payment, Holy God is then able to declare my sin erased, pardoned, forgiven because the death penalty, paid by Jesus on the cross, is payment in full!

Now that would be enough wouldn't it my friends, but do you see John added yet another great work of God which God will accomplish in my life as I confess my sin to Him? **God will not only pardon/forgive me of my sin, but God will PURIFY me from all my unrighteousness!** That is beyond remarkable, it is almost unimaginable! Purify means God cleanses me and imputes or applies the Holiness of Jesus into my life replacing the ugliness, the darkness of my sin with the light and purity of God the Son's holiness! Now if you fully grasp the wonder of this it should nearly take your breath away my friends! It is another of the great, marvelous, uniquenesses of the Christian faith which we have in Christ Jesus, alone!

I think we need to pause right here and ponder all this. Yes, there is a third **'if we'** statement, and we'll look at that on Monday. For today, I urge you to take some time to express your thanks to God for these great truths and you might want to pray this verse of invitation to God: **"Search me oh God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts, see if there is any offensive way in me..."** (Psalm 139:23,24) And here's a song of worship for us my friends:

Today's Scripture is 1 John 1:5-9.