

Today is Father's Day, so I would like to wish all Father's and Grandfather's a happy Father's Day. Like every holiday that falls on a Sunday, I still have to work. And I get paid the same, unlike my wife who gets time and a half on holidays. Maybe I should join a union.

We began our study of 1 John last week, where we saw a number of things, which I will review in a moment. After the service, one of the members said that they were really looking forward to the study in 1 John. I said that yes, it is great book – but also a very challenging one – in that it makes clear the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. It makes clear the difference between those living the Christian life and those who are not.

Last week we looked at the authorship of the book – that while John does not identify himself, the writer was certainly an eyewitness to the person and work of Christ and someone that was very close to him. In addition, many of the church fathers of the 1st three centuries attributed the letter to John – and quoted from it.

There was also the internal evidence – as I said the writer was an eyewitness and there is similarity between the letters of John and the Gospel of John. We noted that John used three of his senses to ascertain that Jesus was indeed the Christ – he heard him, he saw him and he touched him.

Again, remember that part of the reason that John writes this letter is to combat the heresy of Docetism – which said that Christ only appeared human – that he was not really flesh and blood – and so therefore, only appeared to die. In other words, he really did not shed his blood for our sins, and he was not God in the flesh. But John addresses this heresy by saying he heard, saw and touched him.

We also saw the other purpose of the letter – and that was that we might have fellowship with the Father and the Son and all the Apostles and Christians throughout the ages.

I have made copies of last weeks sermon for those who were not here and don't have access to a computer. I think it important that you have this, so that you know the foundation of our study. And if you would like of copy of this weeks sermon, please let me know, and I will make it available to you. Either that, you can all go out an get your own computers! I know, for some of you, the Pope will get married before that happens.

As we continue, I ask that your turn with me to 1 John 1:5-10 (READ). I read this passage, because my intent was to cover it all, but in preparation I realized that would not be possible, so today we will just be looking at verse 5 because there is a whole lot in there!

John has introduced Jesus as the Word of Life, so that his readers may have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and part of that fellowship, is as we have just read, living in the light and the truth, the difference which we will see more of next week. So mark your calendars and plan to be here!

As we begin in verse 5, we find John telling us again, to emphasize his point – “*This is the message ...*” The emphasis in the Greek is on the word we translate “*is*” – with the clear implication that this is the message that exists. One commentator says the English does not do it justice – it should be: “*There exists this message...*” – meaning that this is the message that has been there from the beginning.

Remember, as we began last week, the very first verse in 1 John, read: “*That which was from the beginning ...*”, which echoed John 1:1: “*In the beginning was the Word ...*” and even further back in Genesis 1:1: “*In the beginning God ...*”

The message was not new ... it was not something unique ... it was not something that had just come on the scene — NO, it has been there since God created the world ... from the beginning.

And that message was what they heard from the Lord Jesus Christ while he was here on earth – “*This is the message which we have heard from Him ...*”

The message that John is telling his readers – AND US – is that the message that he is about to tell them, he heard directly and personally from the Lord Jesus himself. It is interesting that this is the third time in just 5 short verses that he uses this same construction – “*we have heard ...*”

Again, notice that John uses the plural – “*we have heard ...*” – it was not only him, but all the Apostles and the other followers who surrounded Jesus heard the message from his own mouth.

In the Old Testament, we know that God revealed Himself through the Prophets and Saints in the Old Testament – such as Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the others. But, it was not a complete revelation – because they could only reveal what God had revealed to them.

But now we know that God has revealed Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ. As we read in Hebrews 1:1-2: “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*”

Now, as I said, while all the prophets and the saints in the Old Testament revealed God – they could only reveal that which had been revealed to them. But Jesus was different – he was the “*Word made flesh ...*” – he was God come to earth in the flesh and he revealed God.

Remember, John said: John 1:1: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” Only Jesus could reveal more of God because he was God!

And what Jesus revealed to John and all the other Apostles – the message that they heard from him personally – they “*declare to you ...*” In other words what they heard personally from the mouth of Jesus they now declare to you – to his readers ... and thankfully, that includes us!

What is that message: “*that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all ...*” This is John’s summary of the teaching of Jesus: “*that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all ...*”

By telling us this he is fulfilling what he had been commanded to declare by the Lord Jesus himself – “*that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all ...*”

John uses very short statements to describe some of the characteristics of God – for example: “*God is Spirit ...*”, and later on in this letter of 1 John 4:16 he says: “*God is love.*”

Here he states what he believes to be the primary characteristics of the essence of God – *God is light.*

We must understand that God is not a light among many lights ... He is not a light-bearer ... He does not have light as one of His many characteristics – but He *IS* light. Although He created light, He Himself is uncreated light.

Moreover, the light of God is visible in Jesus who said: “*I am the light of the Word.*” And what do we confess each week in the Nicene Creed: “*God of God. Light of Light.*”

And in Jesus we see God’s eternal light and he was the light of God that came into the world.

So we must ask what does it mean that “*God is Light?*” We see this in the whole phrase: “*that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all ...*” We see the comparison between light and darkness.

Light is positive ... darkness is negative. Darkness is the absence of light – and as we shall see next week, it refers to sin and walking in sin. There is a profound difference between darkness and light.

One commentator put it the best when he said and I quote – and I don’t usually quote long quotes, but the way that he describes it is much better than I could do. He said: “*This light is the source of wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness ; and in him is no darkness at all—no ignorance, no imperfection, no sinfulness, no misery. And from Him wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness are received by every believing Christian. This is the grand message of the Gospel, the great principle on which the happiness of man depends. Light implies every essential excellence, especially wisdom, holiness, and happiness. Light is the emblem of the purity, perfection, and goodness of the Divine nature.*

God is to the human soul, what the light is to the world; without the latter all would be dismal and uncomfortable, and terror and death would universally prevail: and without an indwelling God what is religion? Without His all-penetrating and diffusive light, what is the soul of man? Religion would be an empty science, a dead letter, a system unauthoritated and uninfluencing, and the soul a trackless wilderness, a howling waste, full of evil, of terror and dismay, and ever racked with realizing anticipations of future, successive, permanent, substantial, and endless misery. No wonder the apostle lays this down as a first and grand principle, stating it to be the essential message which he had received from Christ to deliver to the world.” (end quote)

We see clearly the difference between light and darkness – Darkness implies all imperfection, and principally ignorance, sinfulness, and misery. Look at the world that doesn’t know Christ as Savior – look at Muslim world ... the non-Christian world — and you see all the darkness – the sin, misery, terror and evil that exists.

But not so with the Christian – who has the light of God and Christ in their lives. Again, this is the message of the Gospel – God is light – and that Light has come into the world in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ – who revealed God to us. Remember, Jesus said: “*He who has seen me, has seen the Father.*” What an incredible thought.

We, as 21st century Christians have seen God through His written Word that has been preserved and passed down to us. For that, we should give continual thanks to God.

As we continue our study next week, we will see the clear difference between walking in the light and walking in darkness, and what it means to us in our Christian lives.