

THE SERMON NOTEBOOK

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SUBJECT: WALKING IN THE LIGHT

TITLE: HEAVENLY SON LIGHT

TEXT: 1 JOHN 2:6-9

INTRODUCTION. Jesus came to seek and save the Lost. Paul was inspired to write: “That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19).

As I walked into the health club, I interrupted what must have been a very intense argument. As I approached the group one man glanced up and immediately exclaimed, “Here’s a preacher, ask him.” Just what I needed! Before I could think of a way out, the same man insisted, “Go ahead and ask him!” I had walked in as the same person was using profanity in defending the Bible, so I was really hoping his adversary would let it pass. Wishful thinking! This was way back during the hostage crisis situation in Iran. What had upset the local insurance salesman was the statement made by the head of the history department at a nearby university: “You can’t blame those Iranians. They have no way of knowing that Christ ever lived. Name one First Century historian who mentioned Christ!” He then demanded the same of me: “Can you name one historian who mentioned Christ? I said, “Yes, I can.”

“Name him, then!”, he demanded in a loud and arrogantly entertaining voice. He was enjoying it.

I had an answer, but I suppose his arrogance stimulated a natural stubborn streak in me: “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.”

His volume in his New York accent coupled with his intensity had drawn a crowd and he was enjoying it. “Those were not historians, they were gospel writers. Can you name one historian who ever mentioned Christ?”

“Yes.”

“Name him.”

“Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.”

We went through three rounds of this before I assured him that I was not about to concede the point. For example, the Gospel According to Luke and the Book of Acts have been irrefutably established to be an accurate, though not exhaustive record of the life of Christ and the spread of the Gospel in the first decades following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I assured him that,

though I was not about to reject the historical validity of the four Gospels, I could give him the names of First Century historians who mentioned Christ. There was the Jewish historian Josephus, and two Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius.

I wished later that I had thought to remind the department head, who later expressed a preference for Communism over Capitalism, that no informed Muslim doubts that Jesus lived. They accept Him as a prophet like Mohammed.

The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke provide us with an accurate account of the birth, life, teachings, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The word “synoptic” means seeing alike, and any good harmony of the Gospels will illustrate the point. The Gospel According to John - it is the Gospel “of” Jesus Christ, “According” to John - was written later convince people that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and to persuade them to trust Him for eternal life. It is answered the Gnostic heresy of that day, just as it provides answers to heresies today.

The First Epistle of John refutes the Gnostic claim that Jesus only seemed to be human (1:1-4). In this little epistle answers that heresy and all similar heresies. It also reveals how we may know that we know Jesus Christ (2:3-5). This is amplified In verses 6-9.

I. ALL BELIEVERS SHOULD WALK AS JESUS WALKED, 2:6.

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (NKJV).

A. “He Who Says He Abides in Him” Ought to Live as Jesus Lived.

1. All true believers abide in Christ.

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed” (John 8:31).

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

2. No unbeliever abides in Him.

“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:6).

3. If you abide in Christ, the Holy Spirit abides in you.

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide

with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

4. To abide in Christ is to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
5. If you abide in Christ you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
6. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you will walk in the Spirit.

B. If You Abide in Christ You Ought to Walk as He Walked.

1. The words, “as He walked,” refutes false doctrine.

Jesus really was human. He was flesh and blood. John and his fellow disciples touched him, saw Him, heard Him speak, ate with Him, and walked with Him. Jesus literally walked the dusty streets of Nazareth, waded the waters of the Sea of Galilee, and climbed the hill of Judea. He worked with His hands. He experienced hunger and thirst. And He had an incredible sense humor!

2. As Jesus walked among them He manifested His heavenly Father.
3. Jesus walked in the power of the Holy Spirit.

“The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Is. 11:2).

“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16-17).

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18-19).

4. Only on the Cross was Jesus forsaken by the Father and the Holy Spirit.

5. On earth, Jesus was the head of His Church.
6. During the Church age the Holy Spirit empowers the church.

“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39).

7. If you walk as Jesus walked, you will walk in the Spirit.

“That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4-5).

“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom. 8:9-10).

8. Both worship and ministry depend upon our being filled with the Spirit, Eph. 5:18f.
9. We become witnesses for Christ when we are filled with The Holy Spirit, Acts. 1:8.
10. The Holy Spirit empowers us to put on Christ (see Romans 13:14).

C. Let Us Look at the Principles of Putting on Christ.

1. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ before the world.
2. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ within believers.

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

- a. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces the character of Christ.
- b. The presence of the Holy Spirit produces an understanding of Christ.
- c. The Holy Spirit writes God's Word in the Heart (not on stone).
- d. Christ is at home in the believer if he is filled with the Spirit, Eph. 3:16-17.
- e. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit Christ is glorified in the human body.

f. The Holy Spirit sanctifies Christians.

I was showing Scotty around the plant. He had been recommended to us as a custodian and we were enjoying our visit as we looked over the buildings. While we were walking through the sanctuary he suddenly stopped and turning to me he asked, “Rev. Sanders, is this a Baptist church, or is it sanctified?” I don’t know how successful I was in my effort to convince him that being the former did not preclude the latter, but then there may be a lot of Baptists who are confused about the same thing!

Let me offer two verses for your consideration when thinking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. The first is Phil. 2:5: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” When the Holy Spirit so guides you that you not only know the mind of Christ, but also begin to think like Christ, you are in the process of Sanctification.

The second verse is Romans 8:29: “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Whatever your position is on the doctrine of election, may we agree on this one thing? It is God’s desire for every believer to be conformed to the image of His Son. I believe we can also agree on another point: you cannot conform yourself to the image of Jesus Christ. That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. How well do you conform to the image of Jesus?

Both the thinking and the conforming imply progress. We should often stop to consider our progress in the Lord. David D. Glass was the chief executive officer of the Wal-Mart stores when he asked whom he most admired, responded: Sam Walton (Wal-Mart founder). He went on to note, “There’s never been a day in his life, since I’ve known him, that he didn’t improve in some way” (-- Forbes Magazine, Spring, 1988). This should be our goal in the Lord.

II. THE NEW COMMANDMENT IS NOT NEW AT ALL, 2:7-8.

“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.” (2:7-8).

A. The Greatest Commandment Is Not a New Commandment, (2:7).

1. Though not stated here, the commandment denotes the two greatest commandments.
 - a. We must love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
 - b. We must love our neighbor.

2. The repetition here is not without purpose.
 - a. There are no wasted words in the Bible.
 - b. Repetition is important to piano students.
 - c. A football coach has the team to run plays in practice until they run them instinctively.
 - d. A woman puts on make-up each morning.
 - e. For a man, shaving is rather repetitive.

B. The Command Is an Old Commandment.

1. His commandment is not new “in kind.”
2. “Not old” means not old “in kind.”
3. They had always had the command to love one another.
4. It was old before John wrote these words.

C. On the Other Hand, He is Giving Them a New Commandment, 2:8-9.

1. The darkness of the old life of sin is passing away.
2. The true light was already shining in, and through their lives.
3. The darkness of the world has been invaded by the “true light” of Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus is the Light of the world.

CONCLUSION. Jesus promised that He would sent the Holy Spirit when He returned to Heaven. The Holy Spirit would convict lost people of their sin and the judgment to come. He would seek to convince them of the righteousness available to them in Jesus Christ.

Once the individual receives Jesus Christ as Savior, the Lord places the Holy Spirit in his heart nurture and develop him, to conform him to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). In the Holy Spirit, the believer is filled with power to be a witness Christ, to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, to understand and apply the Word of God, and the power to walk in the light - that is, to walk as Jesus walked. He is the one who enables us to love one another as God loves us. This is the Christ life, and it is available to those who come to Jesus for His great salvation.

INVITATION