

# **Are You Walking in the Light?**

## **Blessed Assurance**

**1 John 1:5-10**

If you have your Bibles, you can go to 1 John. For all of you holding babies, I am not offending at all when they cry. I have four kids, so I get it. So if you need to get up, move around, whatever you need to do, we are all celebrating with you. So nobody is looking at you, especially not me. So I just want to get that out of the way. We are really excited that you guys are here, grandparents, and all the people who have kind of came as well. I just want to say thank you for visiting with us. We have in 1 John a series called Blessed Assurance. The idea of how do you know that you know Him. What is the evidence that you can have in your life that you are a true believer? How do you know that? So John is taking us through, really a test, to try to figure out do you really know the Lord. Because what we hope is that you have assurance of your salvation, that you know that you know Him. But for some of you, you might not know, so what does real assurance look like?

You know, it was several years ago, I took a group of youth students to a concert at the CFSB center. I think it was the RSEC then, that's how kind of far back it was. But a big group came in, a big Christian group, really excited to take some kids to go see it. So we are watching the concert, everything went well, and then, at sort of half-time, an evangelist comes up. An evangelist, well-known guy, I'm not going to say who it was, but he comes out and gives his gospel presentation. And it wasn't a horrible presentation, but it wasn't a very good one either. It was sort of more cute than actually clear, so it was kind of confusing on what exactly he was saying. But at the end of his three-minute gospel presentation, he wanted a response, so he offered it up to anybody who wanted to become a Christian that they could repeat this prayer after him. So he said a prayer,

and if you wanted to become a believer, you could repeat that prayer after him. And then he said, "Alright, that's exciting. We know a lot of you prayed that prayer, but there is one more step in salvation. Now you need to stand up, because Jesus said if you deny Him before men, He will deny you before the Father." So you had sort of hundreds of people kind of standing up all over this auditorium. Everybody is excited, everybody's cheering, and he said, "Well, that's cool, but there's one more step when it comes to salvation. You actually have to walk down your aisle, because you have to get a response card and I want you to take the pencil that my guys are going to give you, and I want you to write your name, check whatever you did, rededicate your life, or if you came to Christ, then drop that card in the bucket. That is going to let us know how many of you made a decision at this time." So you have some of the people kind of sit back down, thinking I don't really know if this is part of the deal. The others went to the edge of the aisle, filled it out, and put the card in. Then they went back and sort of sat down, and the evangelist kept going. He said, "Here's the deal, a lot of you made decisions, you became believers just now, but here's what I want you to know. There may be a time in the future where Satan will try to convince you that what you did today was not real. So there might be sometimes in your life that you are going to question whether or not this prayer that I said after me was genuine salvation. If that ever happens in your whole life, I want you to keep that pen that I gave you." The pen actually had his name, and .com; it was his website on it. He said, "I want you to take this pen, and I want you to raise it up and I want you to shake it at Satan and tell him, no, I'm a believer because I repeated the prayer after that guy, here is his name, you just shake it at him." Now here I am, I'm a youth pastor, with my kids at this concert, and I'm just bubbling up with anger because I don't think this guy did a good job of sharing the gospel, and a really bad job of trying to say what real assurance looks like. So I look over at my students, and they are all like playing on their phones, and kind of talking. I'm like yes! They are not paying attention, for the first time that is good. Alright, let's go. But as I left that, I was processing why that person felt the need to write everybody's name down. Well, I went to his website and he keeps up with every person. So it's like this many thousand, this many thousand; so that

was the point of the card. But why the pencil, why the shaking the pencil at Satan if you ever feel like you may not be a Christian? It's because he wanted these people to have assurance. He wanted them to have assurance of their salvation. Because I could imagine that probably years later, this guy deals with people who said something at his concert who were living a complete reckless life, who were not loving Jesus, they were in all sorts of sin, but he wants to make sure they know, if that's the case, you are fine because you did this one thing, one time, and you've got the pen to prove. So if that ever happens, just shake it at Satan; you're ok. So this was this guy's version of assurance. If there's ever been a time where you've ever said something, no matter what your life looks like, no matter what everybody says about you, whether you're in church, out of church, wherever you're at, if there was ever a moment where you did something, then you're good forever and don't ever worry about it.

As we look at blessed assurance from 1 John that is not what John is going to say. He's not going to say, "You want assurance? Has there ever been a time where you said something, then you are good forever? Don't ever worry about it." No, what John is going to say is if you want blessed assurance, if you really want to know that you know Him, and then take a look at your life. Because what your life is going to do, it is going to back up that confession that you make. See, if you truly, when you confess Jesus is Lord and Savior, when you said that, did He really become Lord and Savior? Because if He's Lord, He's ruling over you, and if He's Savior, He's saving you from your sins. So if right now, twenty years later, if you are your own Lord, and you love and live in sin, then it's obvious that Jesus is not your Lord and He's not your Savior, no matter what happened in VBS, or youth camp, or the revival, or that moment that you had. See, what true faith is; it's a moment that leads to a lifestyle. It's a moment where when God saves you, He changes you. That's what salvation is. It's the supernatural work of God, where we repent and believe, and God gives us a new heart. He changes us; He makes us new. So what John's going to say is here is how you can know that you know Him; He's done a work in your life. And that work is increasing, that work is changing you. So John's not going to say in your assurance, remember back then. He's going to say take a look at right now. What does your life say about your relationship

with Jesus right now, today? Does it say I'm walking in light because God is light, and I'm repenting of sin because He is light? Or does it say you are walking in darkness and ignoring or denying your own sin? That's what John is going to do with us this morning.

So if you have your bibles, go to 1 John 1, and we are going to look first in verse 5 and read through verse 10. If you have your bibles, or if you don't, the words are going to be on the screen. But if all of us would stand out of reverence for the Word of God, unless you've got a little baby that you're dealing with, then you can do whatever, but for those of us who can, we're going to stand out of reverence for the Word of God. Here's what John says:

### **Scripture**

***"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say 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 we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."***

(Prayer)

Father God, I pray that you help us as we walk through 1 John, that we would evaluate our lives, evaluate the lifestyle that we live, the desires, the passions that we have, what we value most. God, I pray that we would look at those things and ask the question, does this show that I have a relationship with God, or I do not have a relationship with God? So help us to work this out in our own lives, and if we don't know Christ, help us to repent and believe. If we do know Christ, let that lead to a blessed assurance that causes us to live, even more, for His honor, and His glory. We pray this in Jesus' good name. Amen.

So here John, he starts with God. So he's going to give kind of a series of tests throughout 1 John. The ones we're going to look at this morning are going to be a walking test, and then a sin test. So what John does first is he actually starts with God. He says, "This is the message we've heard from Him and proclaim to you that God is light and in Him there is not darkness at all." So first, John shows up and he says we've got a message from Jesus. Remember when he talked about before. We've seen Him, we've know Him, we've held Him, and we've seen He is Jesus, and He is eternal life. So when you think about salvation, are you a Christian, do you have salvation, the question is do you have Jesus? Because Jesus is salvation, He is eternal life, what we saw in the first four verses. John says we know Him, we saw Him, and we hung out with Him, and here is what Jesus said, He gave a message that I want to deliver to you. And here is the message that Jesus gave us: God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all. So he starts with God. Here is who God is, here is His nature; here is His character. He is light. That means He is completely true. There is no hiding, there's no deceit, and there's no corner of God that He would be ashamed for us to see. No, He is light; He is fully true and always true. And not only that, but His light speaks of His moral purity. He is pure; He is holy, holy, holy. That's who God is. So John's trying to describe who God is and he gives a positive, He is light; and then a negative, there is no darkness at all whatsoever in Him. None, zero...so he uses a positive and a negative, kind of like when you try to describe somebody. You might say she's a sweetheart; there's not a negative bone in her body. The positive is she is sweet, and negative, there is not a negative bone in her body, not a mean bone in her body. We're trying to tell the whole story that she is sweet, but she is also the opposite of not sweet. That is what John is saying about God. He is light, and in Him, there is no darkness whatsoever. Darkness, there's no sin, no deceit, no untruth in Him. He is absolutely, morally pure. That is who God is.

You know, sort of in a natural world, we tend to love light and run from darkness. I mean, if you like walk in the woods when it's daylight, everything is great. We've got a house, we've got four little acres, and we've got woods. I love walking through the woods during the day. I just love it. I look at the trees. But then at nighttime, like if I have to take the

scraps out, I'm like walking to the edge of the woods afraid. I've got me iPhone flashlight on. I'm like get away darkness! What's out there? I put it in and run back in because it's natural I'm fearful of darkness, but I love to hang out in light. That's in the natural world. In the spiritual world, the opposite is true. In the spiritual world, we love darkness. We like hanging out in darkness. We feel good in darkness. Yet when the lights come on, when God's revelation hits us, when we see God's truth, and God's holiness, and God's perfection, we actually run from that. We're actually afraid of God, who is light. We hate light, and instead, we love darkness. This is exactly what, of course, Jesus told us in John 3, "This is the judgment, the light has come into the world, and people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come into the light less his works are exposed." So natural man, before the gospel, we run from the light because we love darkness; we live in darkness, we enjoy darkness. But something happens when we meet Christ. He shines the light in our heart. Here is what 2 Corinthians says, "For God, who said let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What happens at salvation is God turns the lights on in you, so now, you hate darkness, and you love light. There's a new reaction. Now all of a sudden, you get God who is light. And instead of running from Him and hating Him, you run to Him and love Him. That's what happens when you become a believer. Now, your relationship to light changes. Before, you ran away from light, and now, you run to light. That's what it looks like to be a believer in Christ. You're not running from light, but you're running to the light.

## **Walking Test**

So if that's who God is, then what about our walk with Him. Here is where John, he's just a blunt, old guy. This is like later in his years. And if you've been around older people, they sort of lose their filter and they just tell you exactly how it is. I'm a young guy and I tend to have filters when I talk to people. Like if I know something needs to be said, I'm like, "Well, maybe it's not exactly..." I try to mince my words a little bit to make you feel better about yourself, even though you need hard truth. John doesn't do

that. He cuts straight through it. He says, look, here's the deal. So it's a little hard for me to preach what I'm about to preach this morning because this is not how I usually deal with others, but we're going to let John speak. So John has just told us here is God, now he's going to say what about you. So here is what John says in verse 6, "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." Period. That's basically easy. That's what John says. For some of you are trying really hard to figure all of this out, here is an easy test. What does your life look like? Are you living in darkness? If that's the truth, then you don't know God. You just don't know Him. You might say you do. Notice the little phrase, "If we say..." What does John say? If you say that but you live something else, you are actually lying in what you say. You're not telling the truth, because if you said I have fellowship with God, who is God? He is the light; so if you're running to light, what's the light do? It's exposing the darkness in you and you're walking in light, so you're becoming more and more light, and fleeing more and more darkness in your life. So your lifestyle looks more like light, and like God if you know Him. Because why? God is light.

So I think what John's trying to get us to see if just saying something doesn't make it so. I can stand up here and say that I'm a college basketball player. Alright. That didn't really change anything, did it? In our house, we love March Madness. Our boys are watching it. I put together a new goal yesterday, and I'm up there shooting. I could tell Crider that I'm a college basketball player too. He would say, "No you're not. I know you're saying that Dad, but I've seen how many shots you miss. I've seen how slow you are. You don't wear a jersey, you don't go to practice, and I don't see you on TV. You're not a college basketball player." "Yeah, I am, I said it!" But saying it doesn't always make it so.

I think that's what John is trying to get. If you say, "I am a Christian. I go to church. I'm a believer." Well, does your life back it up? Is there evidence in your life that would actually say that statement is true about you? I think for John, there are people that are professing Christ in John's day that don't actually possess Christ. I think for us; that is in our culture. We live in the Bible belt. Probably everybody you talk to around you is going to say,

"Yeah, I'm a Christian. Yeah, I believe in God." But do they really possess the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you in a relationship with Jesus? Do they have a relationship with the Lord Jesus? If so, what is going to happen? Things will be changing in their life, which is exactly what he says in the next verse.

He says in verse 7, "But...", so the first one is "if we say" something. This one is, "But if we walk..." Notice the difference. The first one is we say something, just with our lips. The next one is we walk. We are backing it up with how we actually live our lives. What does he say? "But if we walk in the light..." So it's different than just saying it. It is actually doing it; you are walking in the light, "...as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."

So how do you know that you know Him? It's not just what you say; it is what does your life say about you. What does your practice say about you? Does it say darkness, or light? Because we can say anything, but when you really look at your life, when you look at how you interact with people, when you look at how you live before God, that is the true story of what your confession really says. It either says yes, Jesus is Lord, or I am my own Lord. When you think about this idea of darkness and light, it's sort of hard to know whether you're walking in darkness or light because sometimes darkness can be misleading. Sometimes darkness actually looks like light. I'll explain what I mean by this. Jesus, when He was walking on earth, told this parable to the scribes and the Pharisees. It was the parable of the prodigal son. Do you remember that story? Here you have a son who asks for all the father's inheritance and then he goes into a far country and he squanders it. He spends it in reckless living. He's living it up, goes to Vegas, and plays all the tables, just a total lifestyle of whatever he wants. He gets all the girls he can and he is just going for it. Then all of a sudden, he is broke. He has no money and he ends up being in a pigpen to try to figure out how just to eat. Then he comes to his senses, he repents, and he goes back home to the father. We usually tell that story, and a lot of times, we stop at that story. It's a good illustration of God's love for rebels, for those who absolutely wreck their lives. When you come home, God is there to greet you and He will put His arms around you. But in that



parable, there is also an older son who doesn't get as much talking points maybe, but he is actually the main point of the story. Because what happened is, when this younger son comes home and there is a big feast that the father throws, there is an older son who stands outside of the feast angry, and judges what the father does. What do we know about this older son? Well the Bible tells us that instead of running away, he was in the field. He was working. He was a hard worker. He was doing everything his father wanted him to do, and when he talks to his father, he says, "Father, for all these years I've slaved for you. For all these years, I've done exactly what you said. I've never disobeyed you one single time, yet you never threw a party for me. You never gave me the fattened calf." He is yelling at his father, he's angry at his father, "How dare you give a rebel this party in grace and mercy, and not give it to me!"

What we see in this story is what Jesus is trying to do. He is trying to show the scribes and the Pharisees, who by the way, are mad at Jesus. They are angry at Jesus because sinners, tax collectors, and prostitutes are repenting, and Jesus is welcoming them into His fellowship. The scribes and the Pharisees are angry, mad, and cursing Jesus. They are not happy at all. What does Jesus tell this parable to show? The Pharisees were actually in darkness, just like these tax collectors, sinners, and prostitutes were in darkness. Their darkness just looked different. You see, the older son, he was in just as much darkness as the prodigal son. Not through breaking all the rules, but by keeping all the rules. See, he stayed home, he obeyed, he always did what was right. Why? Because he wanted the father's stuff, he wanted the calf; he wanted the party. He didn't love his father and want his father; he wanted what his father had. That is exactly what the scribes and the Pharisees did. They kept all the commandments and they tried to make sure they were doing everything right, so they could get something from God. God, if I obey you, then you owe me heaven, you owe me a good life, you owe me money; you owe me stuff. So we see that sometimes, darkness can manifest itself in self-righteous religion. We come to church, we always obey, we always do what's right, but it's not because we love God. It is because we are trying to get something from God. We have wrong motivations. Our motivation is not love, but leverage, and that Jesus calls darkness.

So sometimes darkness looks like breaking all of the rules. That's easy to see. Oh yeah, those people; they are in darkness. But sometimes darkness is actually keeping all the rules, and that darkness is much harder to see. Some of us might be in that kind of a darkness, and we don't even realize it. So for us, John is going to say look at your life. What does it say about you? Does it say darkness, or does it say light? Light is loving God and pursuing God, and repenting of your sins because you love God, and He is your highest value. Darkness, it's all about you. Every motivation is ultimately rooted in self and it manifests itself in sin. That is darkness.

When John uses the term walk, he is not saying is there a moment in your life where you sin, and is there a moment in your life where you do what's right. Judge yourself on the moments, judge yourself on the snapshots, no, he is not talking about that. Instead, he is saying judge yourself on the reel of your life, the movie of your life. What does the movie version of you tell everybody? What does it tell God? What does it tell you? That's what he's trying to get you to look at, in other words, not the Facebook you or the Instagram you. Those are snapshots. You post them, edit them, everybody can see them, and you can tell a lie or the truth. But what is the movie, what if we were with you all of the time? I don't know if you saw that movie, The Truman Show, but it's a story of this little baby where they film him all the time, and now he is like forty. There are camera crews that chase him his entire life. His whole life is a movie and he doesn't even know it. Imagine if that was you, if your life was the Truman show where everybody is watching 24/7 in your life. Some of you are like, that would be bad! Yeah, it would because all of us have some junk, all of us have some messiness, all of us have some really, really bad moments. John is acknowledging that. We all have bad moments. We all have good moments. Don't judge your life on the snapshots or the moments. Judge it in the movie reel. What does the dominant of your life say about yourself? Does it say I love God and I'm pursuing light? Yes, I blow it, yes, I'm messy sometimes, but I always get back up and I chase after Christ because I love Him the most. Or does the movie say your life is all about you? There are moments of Christ, moments of church, moments of giving, moments of this, but your life says it is not about the kingdom. I'm not about light, I'm not about Christ; I'm really just about me. That is what

John wants us to look at. If God is light, then you're going to be walking in light and loving light, not walking in darkness. So that is the first test for you to look at. What is your lifestyle? Is it light or is it darkness. If it's darkness, repent of the darkness and come to the light because Jesus is your salvation.

## **Sin Test**

The second test that he is going to give us is going to be the sin test. So we've had this walking test. And if we are walking with God, we have fellowship with one another, we are in the gospel, it is going to manifest as a life filled with light. Now he is going to give a sin test. How do you deal with sin in your life? So I want to read these two verses together and then we are going to pick them apart. There are three different categories that John talks about when it comes to sin. Here is what it says in verse 8-10, "If we say 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 we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." Now what is John doing? We see again that phrase, "If we say." Right, John is pulling that apart. Well if you say this, it might not actually be true. The 'if we say crew' vs the 'do crew.' There is a difference here in just saying something and actually living out the gospel.

So I think what John gives us is three different reactions to sin. So the first reaction that I'm going to argue is this first group, they ignore sin generally. The second group ignores sin particularly, in other words, in their own personal life. The third group actually confesses sin and embraces the gospel. So we are going to see both of the first two groups would be people who don't know God. They aren't walking in light. But the third group who confesses sin and embraces the gospel, those would be the true believers. So let's deal with the first group first.

## **General Ignorance of Sin**

John says in verse 8, "If we say (again, here is a claim) we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." I think this first group that John is dealing with is those who either deny or ignore sin in general,

probably more so just ignore it. They aren't worried about it; they don't care about it. 'Oh John, talking about sin, yeah, um, we're not worried about that. There is no real concept of sin. That's not really something that anyone needs to be worried about. God is not angry. There is no judgment. Everyone is ok, just live your life and at the end of the day everything is going to work out.' I think this would primarily be the culture that we are increasingly living in. I mean there was a time, even in our culture, where even non-Christians sort of had some fear of God. They had some belief that the Bible was true, that truth was true and this idea that there is wrong and right. Maybe there was disagreement on what was wrong and what is right, but we are increasingly post-Christian. We are moving past that into more secularism, which sort of dethrones God. So we don't worry about God, and if you don't worry about God, you don't worry about sin, because sin is a theological concept. If there is no God, there is no sin, no falling short of God's glory, not judgement, no absolute right and absolute wrong that God defines. So this is increasingly the culture that we find ourselves in, a culture that believes there is no sin, everyone determines their own truth. If you live that out, you do whatever you want. There is no right, there is no wrong, and you just do whatever you feel you need to do. Of course, there are still things that are messed up. Our culture acknowledges that. There is still a lot of brokenness around us, but instead of it being sin needing to be repented of, we try to fix it through education, different worldviews, equality, tolerance, love, or unity. Those are kind of the buzz words used today. This is how we fix the problem because obviously there is a problem, so we still have to fix it somehow. It's just not dealing with this idea that we are sinners and we need to repent. No, it is there is no sin. Really now in our culture, the only thing that is sin is actually calling something sin. Because if you call something sin, that is the only thing now that is abhorrent. That is the only thing that is really sinful. So the thing you need to do is just say no, everything's ok, God's not angry, God loves everybody, and at the end of the day, everything is just going to work out. Just do what you want to do. That is the culture that we live in.

Now some of you are saying, "But I don't believe that." I still believe the Bible, I still believe absolute truth, I still believe there is sin, and I still

believe this. We say that, but what does your practical life look like? Because I would argue that probably, more of us act more like our culture's view of sin than really a theological view of sin. Culture is ignoring sin, and in a lot of ways in our personal lives, we do the same. We just ignore it. We don't think about it, we don't care about it, and we don't have on our radar the things that we are doing that is not aligned with the gospel. We are good, right? I mean, we said God saved us; I'm forgiven, so I can just live my own life with sin completely off my radar. So that is how it kind of filters into the church; might not outright saying, but doing the exact same thing. I don't have to worry about sin. Sin's not a big deal in your life or my life, let's just live, and come to church, and go and do whatever we want to do. So I think some of us, we might not say it, but we actually practice the very same thing. We ignore sin in our own mind; we ignore sin in general. It's just not a big deal to us. We don't think about it; we don't repent of it because it's just not a big deal.

Ultimately, what John is going to say about this group is they deceived themselves. You deceive yourself because the reality is sin is a big deal. Sin does deserve judgment. Sin is a category that we should think about and know that we are misaligned with the gospel in areas. So we deceive ourselves when we just ignore it, when we say we don't have sin and everything is good with me. We are in deception because the truth is not in us, because the truth reveals where we are wrong, where we need to repent, and how we need to get in line with the gospel. The first group just denies sin in general. Sin's not a big deal; don't worry about it, and everything's going to be ok.

### **Particular Ignorance of Sin**

The second group doesn't deny sin in general, but the second group denies sin personally. This is the group that says yes, sin is evil. Yes, sin is bad, and they are all sinners. It's the self-righteous group. It's the religious elite group. And here is what they say, "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us." It is not that there is no sin, but we haven't personally partaken in the sin that we believe so strongly against. This would be the Pharisees and the scribes. Remember in Luke 18 the Pharisee got up and actually prayed this, "God I thank you that I'm not like

other men." That was his prayer. God I'm so glad I am not like those tax collectors, I'm not like those tax collectors who are greedy and are stealing everybody's money. Thank you for not making me like them. And yet, the same Pharisee or the same scribes were overseeing the selling of sacrifices in the temple so they could make money and fill their pockets. They were saying 'how dare those tax collectors,' when they were just as greedy and doing the exact same things. See this group would always see sin as it's the other people. It's those people. Yes, sin is real and it's them. It's never myself. This was Jonah! Nineveh, they are sinners! The Ninevites are sinners, not me! But the whole book of Jonah exposes that Jonah is just as wicked as the Ninevites. He needs just as much repentance. This was the scribes and the Pharisees! They are sinners, not us. This can also be Bible belt culture. They are sinners out there, the culture. They are sinners. This would be us railing against the LGBT while we are scrolling through pornography on our cellphones. It's, oh, we believe in sin, but it's them, not us. This would be us railing against the transgender movement when you as a man are using your masculinity to domineer and bully people around you. It's the same distortion of God's good gift to gender. You just can't see it in yourself. It's them, those people. They are wrong, not us. We see this all throughout our culture. That's why politics are so divided. Why are politics so divided? It's because it's always those guys, always those people are ruining our country. We are right, and they need to be more like us. It's never anything to do with you. It's always somebody else. We live in a social media culture that promotes that. Now, you can follow all the people you want to on Twitter, all the people you want to on Facebook, and never have to encounter an opinion that is other than yours. So everybody is saying the same thing. Everybody is yelling the same truth you are believing. I'm right; they're all wrong. That is what John is getting at. This is a group that always believes that yes, sin is bad, and it is always the other guy. It is never me.

But the gospel does just the opposite. The gospel sees not that sin is those people or those groups. No, sin is my problem. I'm a sinner. I need to repent. It's not them it's us. It's together, collectively. What does John say about this group? They make God to be a liar. Why would this group make God to be a liar? It's because they are denying that all have sinned and

fallen short of the glory of God. No, we believe that those people have, but not ourselves. But what does God say? Everyone, including you, including churchgoers, including those who have grown up with the right morals, the right traditions, and the right family values, all those people have fallen short of the glory of God and need redemption because they are deeply sinful. Even though it might look like they've got it all together. So here's a group that says yes, sin is bad and there are the sinners, not me. I'm ok; I'm good. The problem with both of these groups, denying sin generally, or denying sin personally, both groups deny the gospel. Sin's not a big deal, or sin is not my problem, so they deny they need a Savior. They deny they ultimately need the gospel.

### **Confessors of Sin, Embracing the Gospel**

But sandwiched between both of these views is what we see true faith, true belief. Here is what John says in verse 9, "If we confess (It's no longer just saying stuff) our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is what true belief looks like. It doesn't ignore sin; it doesn't point fingers at everyone else's sin. No, it simply confesses your own sin. It acknowledges that as you walk with God, who is light, His light is revealing things in your life that you need to change. You don't ignore it, you don't deny it; you deal with it. You fight with it. You go to battle with it. That is what it looks like to be a believer. Your relationship with sin is not denial nor its battle. It is war. You go to war on your sin because the more you walk in light; the more you see there are things that God still needs to work out in me. The cleansing power of the gospel still needs to cleanse me from some of those old patterns, those old behaviors, because that's not who I am. I was a sinner, but I've been saved by grace, which makes me a saint of God. Those things that I still have tendency towards; those aren't my true identity, and those need cleansing. So what I'm going to do is when I find those, when I see those, when I'm convicted of those, I'm going to agree with God, which is what confession is. I'm going to say, yes God, this is wrong and I confess it, and I'm asking you to cleanse that from my life because I want to walk more like Jesus. That's what a believer does. That's what a life lived for God looks like. It's constantly looking more and more like Jesus by

seeing your sin and embracing the gospel. That is what true faith looks like.

So here are our two tests: the walking test, and the sin test. I just want to ask you, how is your walk? Is it light or is it darkness? Does your life show you know Jesus, or does it show you don't have a clue who He is? Then, what about sin, do you ignore it and not even worry about it? Do you deny it for yourself while pointing it out in everybody else? Or, do you have a gospel response, which is you see it, acknowledge it, and you embrace the gospel through confession and change? That's what John wants. Here is how you know that you know Him: your walk is light like God is light. Your relationship with sin is no longer complacency or love; it is hate and fighting. You are fighting the darkness because God is making you more and more like Jesus. That's what it looks like to know Him.

So what I want to do is encourage you to think about your life. Think about the movie. We are such a distracted people, so distracted by gadgets, toys, and things that we are so tempted to run out here and grab something to entertain ourselves the whole rest of the day, and not deeply think about our life before God. So I'm urging you to think, contemplate, how your life is before God. Do you know Him? Do you know Him? Does your life speak of life? Does your life speak of light? Is your relationship with sin one of confession and change?

(Closing prayer and altar call)