

February 16, 2018

I. My Notes - Walk Worthy Church

- a. Series: Live, Learn, Love
- b. Title: Live Genuine
- c. Text: 1 John 1: 5-10 CSB
- d. Quote: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." -Martin Luther King Jr

II. Intro

There is a story of a young surfer who gave his life to Christ during the Jesus Movement (later 60's to mid-70's). After his conversion he decided to go to church one Sunday morning. He walked into a Sunday Service not knowing that the church was one of the "upper class" churches in the area. He had arrived late, and the pastor was about to begin the message. As he walked in, he saw that the sanctuary was completely full and there was no place to sit. So, not knowing any better, he sat down on the floor in front of the platform where the pastor was standing.

Well, you can guess what kind of reaction he caused, although people were quiet about it. Everyone was wondering how the pastor was going to handle the situation, and how they were going to get rid of this unmannered young man.

After what seemed like an eternity, an elderly gentleman rose from his seat and headed down the aisle toward the young man. "Finally, we'll get some action. He'll tell this guy what's what, and we'll be done with him." Everyone held their breath as they waited to hear how the old man would tell the hippie to leave.

The old man bent over as if to talk to the young man, then bent his knees, and sat down next to the young man, worshipping with him for the rest of the service.

This act of grace, this genuine demonstration of compassion, broke the Pastor. Through his tears, the Pastor said, "What I'm about to say you probably won't remember. What you have seen you will never forget..."

"Honesty is the best policy" ... it is attributed to Benjamin Franklin. As for me, I learned it at home - at a young age. I did my best to instill the same ideal into my kids. The challenge becomes, sometimes the truth hurts. Now, if you want to run

around getting hurt you will likely demand others be honest with you. That doesn't work. It only promotes hard feelings for everyone involved. As believers, our choice should be to live genuine (open, sincere) - real love understands and can look past the hurt to see the need. As believers, our opportunity is to live authentic in a culture that doesn't hold to those values.

I recently read a survey titled Honesty And Trust In America (Lichtman, Jim, August 2006). One question he sought information on was, is "America, as a whole, is becoming less ethical?" One conclusion he arrived at was, "The good news is that the survey indicates that Americans, as a whole, demonstrate honesty and integrity in their lives." (pg. 6). Just a bit later in the survey, when seeing how people felt about the government, leaders, and institutions this result came to light. "Most Americans have moved beyond thinking of violations of honesty and trust as the problem of a few rotten apples, but instead view our major institutions as a rotten barrel problem... [and] ...feel that core values are being threatened by the very institutions and leadership that are supposed to serve and reinforce them." (pg. 7). So, we know what honesty and integrity are, but we don't see those actions in leaders or institutions in our country.

It's time to live the example of the elderly gentleman in the "upper class" church. It's time to follow what we have learned... that God loves us and wants a relationship with us. It is time to be real.

III. Text

1. John 1:5-10 (CSB)

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. If we say, "We have fellowship with him," and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. If we walk in the light as he himself 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 are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous 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. John deals in extremes; there is no middle ground, there are no

shades of grey, only black and white. It is light and darkness, no twilight, no dawn, no shades of evening.

Definitions:

| Light | Darkness |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Truth, Glory | Kingdom of Darkness |
| Self-Revelation | Hostility (to light) |
| Righteousness | Deceit, Lies |
| Holiness (Absolute Light) | Corruption, Depravity |
| Authority | Separation from God |

Living as a believer is being willing to live radical, to be different. It is necessary to understand who we are in Christ. By understanding that, the steps we need to take, our behaviors - our lifestyle - our actions, manners, and activities can better reflect our faith. No matter how culture acts and behaves today - truth is not something that is convenient, something that can be molded to any or every circumstance. Situational ethics, moral relativism are methods to avoid taking responsibility. They are about passing blame.

Being children of the Light means we own our stuff and are willing to seek forgiveness

IV. Our Example

God is authentic- no tricks, dishonesty, or deception

- Mal. 1:11 - God's name will be great, everywhere
- Is. 44:24 - the Lord is the Maker of everything... On His own, stretching out the heavens, spreading the earth
- Is. 45:19 - the Lord speaks truth, declares what is right (just, correct)
- John 4:24, 9:5 - God deserves real worship; He is the light of the world

His character, essence, nature, all aspects of Him are consistent. John stated here that this is what they saw in their relationship with the Lord. His actions were in line with who He said- genuine behaviors, consistent with Scripture, were evident/observable.

That is a big challenge for many believers. We may see the expectation of holiness and we understand the other side of the coin - sin. While our standard is holiness - it's a process and the only way we can get there is by God's grace and kindness. We do our best not to sin, but we do fall short.

Life, for us, often is lived in shades of gray... seeking forgiveness and to understand and grow past the short-comings we battle. Our focus must be on the LIGHT. Vs. 5 - "And this is the message [the message of promise] which we have heard from Him and now are reporting to you: God is Light, and there is no darkness in Him at all [no, not in any way]." (AMP). It's a high standard. And if we aren't careful we can fool ourselves into believing that we have arrived... religiosity is a trap characterized by effort.

It seems that there are way too many people today who confess with their lips that they are born again (saved), while proving with their life that they are lost

- John 8:12 (NCV)

Later, Jesus talked to the people again, saying, "I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness but will have the light that gives life."

- Coming to Christ for salvation results in a different kind of life. A believer will never walk in darkness, that is, he will not live in it (cf. 12:46; 1 John 1:6-7). He does not remain in the realm of evil and ignorance (John 12:46) for he has Christ as his Light and salvation (cf. Ps. 36:9).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

If being genuine is our priority, then we will understand and follow the example we have been given.

V. Living Authentic

We talked last week about fellowship (koinonia) with the Father and the Son... and getting to live that out, do life, with one another.

- 1 John 1:3 (CSB)

What we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

This point is reinforced. 1 John 1:6-7 (CSB)

If we say, "We have fellowship with him," and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. I said before that fellowship is an act of love. Fellowship with the Lord cleanses us... because of grace and forgiveness.

Companionship (fellowship), doing life, helps and encourages us.

- Amos 3:3 (NCV)

Two people will not walk together unless they have agreed to do so.

- Love shared creates a bond, it builds unity. Agreement brings strength and encouragement.

Fellowship is about practicing (and living) authenticity (vs. 6)

- Honest relationships support, encourage, and love others... A real demonstration of grace. Tangible, practical, relatable (vs.7)

We can help one another on their journey. Real love isn't about judgement or criticism. It is being willing to get down in someone else's mess and sit there with them - just listening and loving them, right where they are. Larry Crabb wrote in his book *Connecting*, "We have made a terrible mistake! For most of this century we have wrongly defined soul wounds as psychological disorders and delegated their treatment to trained specialists. Damaged psyches aren't the problem. The problem is disconnected souls. What we need is connection. What we need is a healing community." (Crabb, Larry, *Connecting: Healing Ourselves and Our Relationships*, Thomas Nelson Publishers 2005)

Genuine love creates a place where community happens, healing occurs, and transformation results.

VI. How is it done?

Honesty, responsibility, accountability

1 John 1:8 (MSG)

"If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense."

Being honest in life begins with being honest with self. If you are unwilling to admit your flaws to yourself, there is little chance that you will ever grow past

them. The way to get there begins with an accurate view of you... accept, admit, take responsibility for you. (vs. 8)

- Trust what you know... that God loves and accepts you just as you are
- Talk about it - with the Lord and a trusted source
- Accept the grace before you - Mercy and Forgiveness are free gifts. You can't earn them, you are unable to do anything keep them (vs. 9)

Confession, repentance - this is understanding your need and the willingness to accept help as you work to change your path.

- Matthew 5:3 (NASB)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- "poor in spirit" - humble, broken, understanding there is a need that must be met

- Matthew 5:4 (NASB)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

- Mourning and comfort come from acknowledging there is a need (confession)

Confession results in forgiveness. There is a real encounter with grace.

Understand that after any encounter with the Lord God - we are changed, we aren't the same. Our past has no hold on us - so we don't have to be ashamed, it's ok to talk about. (vs. 10)

VII. A story

I have told this story before. It applies here.

A Water Bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and one-half pots of water in his master's house.

The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the Water

Bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The Water Bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion, he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

God knows we have flaws. It doesn't change who He is. He is Light, Truth, Hope, Holiness. We must continue to yield our will, our desires, so that we can bring an accurate view of Him to the world.

He works through our flaws to reveal His beauty.

VIII. Final Words

Listen to St. Augustine's declaration about God:

You are ever active, yet always at rest. You gather all things to yourself, though you suffer no need. . . You grieve for wrong but suffer no pain. You can be angry and yet serene. Your works are varied, but your purpose is one and the same. . . You welcome those who come to you, though you never lost them. You are never in need yet are glad to gain, never covetous yet you exact a return for your gifts . . . You release us from our debts, but you lose nothing thereby. You are my God, my Life, my holy Delight, but is this enough to say of you? Can any

man say enough when he speaks of you? Yet woe betide those who are silent about you. [Confessions p. 21]

What do you say about God? What is it you know? He is Light (purity, holiness, truth) and we will see that He is Love. Once we know who we are in Him we can help (encourage, support) others to come to know Him.

Are you ready and willing?

May the light that comes from the Lord shine for all to see. May the Holy Spirit fill and guide you as you grow in grace. And may the steps you take, the words you speak, and opportunities each day reveal your faith and love to those around you.