

*1 John 1:1-2:2*  
*"Light in Darkness"*  
*Second Sunday of Easter*

*April 8, 2018*  
*First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.*  
*Pastor Peter Adelsen*

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! {He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!}

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

*[Don't Look at Me, God]*

A little girl discovered the secret to making mud one day, which she called "warm chocolate."

After her grandmother cleaned up the mess, she told her granddaughter not to make any more chocolate.

The little girl soon resumed making her chocolate, saying sweetly, "Don't look at me, Nana. Ok?"

Nana agreed.

So, she continued to work the mud, but three times she said, "Don't look at me, Nana. Ok?"

Thus the tender soul of a little child shows us how necessary it is that we be unobserved in our wrong.

You see, anytime we choose to do wrong or to withhold doing right, we choose hiding as well. It may be that our most common prayer is simply this: Don't look at me, God. Ok?

This was the very first prayer spoken after The Fall. God came to walk in the Garden to be with Adam and Eve and said, "Where are you?"

Adam answered, "I heard you in the Garden, and I was afraid, so I hid."

Whenever we know we are doing something wrong, we do like to hide. We don't want to be seen. Yet, God always knows.

***[Walking in the Darkness]***

In today's epistle, John the Evangelist – with the help of the Holy Spirit – wrote about walking in the darkness and walking in the light.

John wrote: ***“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth”*** (1 John 1:6).

Now, we've all heard the sayings: Talk the talk, walk the walk, and practice what you preach.

This is what John is writing about. You see, the “walk” reveals the truthfulness of one's claims and confession.

To walk in darkness is to live in sin and death. This is choosing death rather than life.

So, are you walking in darkness?

We are living in a world full of darkness: Shootings, stabbings, rape, stealing, and this list goes on. This is exactly what the Prince of Darkness likes. He is in favor of conflict, doubt, fear and quick response. He doesn't want us to have rational thoughts. He doesn't want us to think. All he wants is a reaction that causes more conflict.

So, could we have fellowship with Jesus while we walk in darkness?

No! But, we see this all the time. This is a problem that most of us have and it's called hypocrisy. This is most easily seen in public life – such as politicians, who claim to be Christians, yet they vote or speak against Biblical truth.

So, if we say that we have fellowship with Jesus, yet walk in darkness, we are the living-dead in this sin-sick world and the consequences of this are dire indeed – eternal damnation in the darkness of hell.

And yes, Hell – is – real. If you aren't aware of what I am referring to – it was reported last week that Pope Francis said that hell “does not exist.”<sup>1</sup> Now, the Vatican quickly rebutted this. Frankly, I don't care what the pope says, but his words do have influence – even if he said it or not.

In fact, our Lord Jesus Christ is quite clear – hell exists for those who have turned against God.

The world of darkness is focused today on catchphrases, such as “Co-exist” and “being inclusive.” Sadly, this has even found inroads within many Christian church bodies.

For thousands of years, the entire Christian Church was in full agreement on morality – knowing right from wrong – but in the past 30 years, there has been a shift toward the darkness. But, why? – To be liked by the world – darkness, itself.

These denominations have changed morality without any evidence from God's Written Word found in the Scriptures. Many denominations have fallen into the darkness of the world by saying that homosexual marriage is God pleasing, changing one's gender is God pleasing, saying that murdering a child in the womb is God pleasing, assisted suicide is God pleasing, and cohabitation is God pleasing.

The thing is – they never consulted God with these changes. Instead, they are following the darkness of the world. They think they are eliminating sin, but God is quite clear on what is sin and His Word never changes, even if in our sinful minds we believe it has.

So they are saying: Don't look at me, God. Ok?

*[Walking in the Light]*

***“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).***

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/03/29/did-pope-francis-say-there-no-hell-not-quite-vatican-insists/470442002/>

Every time we confess the one true Christian faith in the Nicene Creed, we confess that, “I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God...”

You see, God is light. In John’s day, light was associated with excellence, purity, integrity, happiness, holiness, and wisdom. This is Jesus Christ.

- He is excellent.
- He is pure.
- He is trustworthy.
- He is happiness.
- He is holiness.
- He is wisdom.

Within all the darkness of the world, Jesus is the light shining in the darkness.

When we walk in the light, we live openly and honestly, without covering up our behavior. Now, it is impossible to become perfectionists when it comes to avoiding sin. We have a sinful condition –we are all by nature sinful and unclean – so we confess our sins to God our Father and ask Him for forgiveness.

You see, as children of the light, we live according to Jesus. We know that in this dark world, there is light by grace through faith in Jesus Christ – our Lord and Savior.

As Christians, we know that God is the only authentic and reliable source of life, hope and blessing – and not just for a select few – but for all people!

The promise of the gospel is for all people! Therefore, Christ commanded preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sins in His name to all nations, because the Lord does not want any to perish but all to come to repentance. Our Triune God is calling to all walking in darkness to repent and walk in the light of Christ.

As walkers of the light, we have fellowship with one another and we know that the blood of Jesus – shed on the cross – cleanses us from our sin, because Christ is Risen! {He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!}

As sinners in need of a savior, Jesus suffered, died and rose to grant us forgiveness. For it is only His blood,

only His offering of Himself on the cross,

only His suffering and death that has the power to save –

- the power to cover
- the power to cleanse
- the power to blot out every sin.

To sustain faith, Jesus instituted “the new testament in His blood,” given and shed for the forgiveness of sins. In the Sacrament of the Altar, He grants us to drink His blood, which redeems, purchases, and wins from all sins, from death, and from the power of the Prince of Darkness himself – the devil. This Sacrament strengthens and preserves all believers in both body and soul to life everlasting.

All of this was accomplished not with silver or gold, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. And how do we know this to be true? Because Christ did not remain in the grave! Alleluia! Christ is Risen! {He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!}

As John writes in his gospel, *“These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”* (John 20:31). Amen!

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠