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I would like to invite you to look with me in 1 John chapter one and verses five through 10 is my text. And I want to speak with you just simply on the message. What is the message of Scripture as we read it from beginning to end? Is there one uniting Word that we find or is it just a compilation of, like you might find in a literary work of short stories, nothing really combining them other than that they are in the same book.

Well, we know better. We know as we study the Scriptures there is a common thread that runs from Genesis all the way to Revelation. It is a scarlet thread. It has to do with the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ and that blood shed for sinners such as we are.

And I hope that is how we have come to listen to this Word as needy sinners and I truly believe the more the Lord deals in our hearts by his Spirit, the more we sense our need, see our need.

As one preachers said, "The closer you get to the light the more you see the false, you see your need."

But let's read this in 1 John chapter one beginning with verse five and look how definitive it is.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that 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 that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.¹

¹ 1 John 1:5-10.

So that is what I want us to consider, the message. This is the message. A message is a body of truth that is declared and, in this case, particularly on behalf of the king by a messenger. That is what the word “messenger” means.

Now there are various titles that men like to take to themselves as preachers, but I find none better than the servant of the Lord. He is a bond servant. Imagine back in the day when a ruler or a king or a prince had a message to carry, it was a courier. He would run with the Word of the king, of the authority. And certainly that is the sense of this word “message” that we see here.

To me in these few verses that I have read, if the Lord will be our teacher, I believe you will see the essential of the gospel. Notice it is here put the apostle John:

“... the message which we have heard of him.”²

Now when he says, “of him,” we have got to go back to the context and see of whom he is speaking? Well, it is none other than the Son Jesus Christ back up in verse three. Do you see the connection?

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.”³

We get in trouble whenever we try to add to or take from what we have heard and been taught and has been declared through these apostles that the Lord revealed himself in and gave them the commission to go and preach it unto the world.

You say, “Why would someone add to?”

Well, many times we think that by our adding to, that men can understand it better. That is a fault. And here is the Word. Declare it. Many times our own interpretations and explanations get in the way. Many times the simple Word is fuzzied when we try to put our human perspective on it.

You say, “Well, why would some take it away?”

Well, the plainness of it offends. And in so doing out of fear of man, many times there are preachers who will just try to take the edge off of it a little bit. We dare not. We can see how John felt the urgency here of just delivering the message.

Notice.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.”⁴

² 1 John 1:5.

³ 1 John 1:3.

⁴ Ibid.

And certainly that word “declare” is an important word. We are not about begging sinners to do this or that, to negotiate with God or to plead with God as you hear so many different preachers stating. It is not an invitation. Won’t you please consider this message? No. It is a declaration. Much as you would have a herald back in the day who would ride into a village on a horse and unroll the scroll and sound the trumpet and make a declaration with all the authority of the king and then ride on.

It is just that simple. The message and the mission that is given to the Lord’s servants.

So what is it? I can sum it up in these verses under four headings. And notice the very first, which I believe is always the foundation of the message and that is God’s holiness. That is the starting point. For many preaching today they make holiness the end of their preaching. In other words, let’s start with God’s love. Let’s get sinners loving God or at least the god that they are declaring. And then let’s try to get them living holy. It is all put upon man to do something.

That is not the message. The message here as received of Christ and declared straight forwardly is what? That God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. Now those two aspects are important in declaring the holiness of God. God is light as opposed to all darkness. Here we have God’s character as holy set in opposition to all that man is. We have got it backward today. We have got men trying to lower God’s standard and try to mix the message of holiness with that of love, to lower his standard and then try to bring man up to it somewhat to meet in the middle. It can’t be. The two are juxtaposed. He is light. Do you see that? And in him is no darkness at all. So there is darkness and there is light. All that God is, is light. There is no darkness at all in him.

I think that many people in trying to weigh this out in their heart and mind and listening to works type religion, they make God to have some darkness in him. In other words, that because of his love, he will lower his standard somehow. You know, you can’t meet it. That is what they say, so he will meet you. You take the first step and he will do the rest.

That is mixing darkness and light. He is pure and holy. That is fundamentally who God is in his attributes. He is righteousness and truth. He is just and exact in his judgments. There is no room for negotiating with God as far as the sinner is concerned.

And when it says in here that in him there is no darkness at all, there is no alloy, like you have in mixed metals. And there is no compromise. There is no compromise.

He requires absolute perfection and so if you are going to set about to please him in your flesh, that is the standard, absolute perfection. He can accept no less than pure holiness.

So there is the dilemma. And it is the age old question that Job asked back in his day. How can God be just and declare just or righteous sinners such as we are? He can’t lower his standard. He cannot bend his law to accommodate any sinner. And I will tell you. You wouldn’t want it that way. If you had to... had a case that was being brought before a judge and you knew up front that here was a judge that bent the law, would you

go into that courtroom with some confidence or concern? I think you would go in with concern, because you don't know how he is going to act. He is arbitrary. There is no standard. You would have reason to fear such a judge who just arbitrarily decides this way or decides that without any basis.

And so the standard of the message is that God is just. God is holy. He can in no wise clear the guilty. Well you know, then, what that requires. We need a mediator. Because he does not bend the standard, we need somebody that can identify with our sin and yet be sinless and be able to satisfy this holy and just and righteous God and there be no compromise.

Well, that is what the rest of this message is about as we read it early on, that there is one and that would really be the second point of this message. God is holy. And God is just. He is righteousness and he is truth. No mercy can be shown to any sinner unless that righteousness and that justice be satisfied. And so that brings us to the very foundation and heart of this message of the gospel and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, our righteousness, our redemption, our reconciliation, our satisfaction, our perfection. And that is what we read here as John wrote this in verses six and seven.

He said:

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness.”⁵

Now it is important for us to keep these verses in context. It doesn't... to walk in darkness doesn't mean to walk necessarily in sin. If that were the case then none of us could satisfy. But to walk in darkness in the context is to walk in compromise. It is to walk in that which opposes God's holiness, righteousness and justice. And it could be something as simple as someone saying, “Well, we can still by our will get him to agree with us.”

That is walking in darkness. For man to add any work of his own in opposition to the truth that God is holy, is to walk in darkness. Anything that opposes the absolute satisfaction of God's holiness and righteousness is to walk in darkness. That is what Paul said of the Jews. His prayer for them was that they might be saved.

Why? Because they went about to establish their own righteousness and would not submit to the righteousness of God. That is walking in darkness.

And notice here it is speaking to professors.

“If we say that we have fellowship with him...”⁶

There are so many people in Christendom today that say they have fellowship with God. That is what they say. That is their profession. But when you get down to questioning them on what basis, you find a lot of darkness. You find a lot of compromise. You find a

⁵ 1 John 1:6.

⁶ Ibid.

lot of leaven. It is not based uniquely, solely absolutely upon the work of a mediator of the Lord Jesus Christ. Somewhere, somehow in their testimony they are going to credence to some work of their own, some work of their flesh. It is the voice of Cain.

You know, how clear and distinct was our Lord with Cain and Abel? Abel was accepted because of his sacrifice. In other words, what it represented, the blood shed. Cain was not. There wasn't any middle ground. The Lord told Cain, you know, do right is what he was saying. In other words, get rid of these vegetables. I don't care how much you have cleaned them up, get rid of them. Get rid of them. They cannot represent my Son. There is no blood in turnips. There is no blood in tomatoes. There is no blood in eggplant. Whatever he brought was the works of his hands and God despised it. And so he does.

There, again, you see the difference between light and dark. There is a clear distinction.

But in men's minds if they belittle it, they walk in darkness. If they loathe it, they walk in darkness. All of this is what John is speaking of here. Darkness is that of sin and unbelief and I will put in there even ignorance. See, some make excuses. They say, "Well, they are ignorant." No, it is still darkness. And anybody that denies that darkness, you see that?

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."⁷

See that is where it gets difficult here. Where men will defend themselves, they prefer to justify themselves rather than justify God. That is what the sin nature does. It takes sides against God rather than taking sides with God against themselves. That takes a work of the Spirit to bring a man or a woman to bow and to acknowledge that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ I have no fellowship with God.

Look in John chapter 12. The same writer that wrote 1 John wrote the gospel according to John. And verse 35 and 36. And he is answering here questions concerning the death that he should die, so very specifically centered upon his death.

In John chapter 12 and verse 30 he says:

This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?⁸

It is not enough just to believe that he is Christ, but it is to see his death, you see, that is what is vital. What did his death accomplish? And Christ, verse 35 says:

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John 12:30-34.

“...unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.”⁹

What darkness is he talking about? He is not talking about sin as a depravity. That happened when Adam fell. We all fell in him. But here it is in the sense of total blindness. Whatever light you thought you had, by looking away from Christ there is nothing but total darkness.

“...for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”¹⁰

Same word that is used over here by John where he said:

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness...”¹¹

That is that unbelief, that is that ignorance. It is the darkness of a blinded heart, judicially blinded. God is right in leaving men to themselves. This isn't something they feel their way through and figure out, you see. And so we see the importance and the vitalness of Christ as that righteousness, because coming back here to 1 John, oh, well, sum it up in verse 36.

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”¹²

You see, it is the Spirit that causes that darkness to dissipate. He said, “While ye have light.” Well, we have the light of his Word. We have the light of the revelation of this message concerning God and his holiness and concerning Christ, you know, as the justifier. Christ as the redeemer. But that is the only place there is life. You turn from that there is nothing but darkness.

Coming back to 1 John chapter one we see then the third aspect of this message that is vital. There is God's holiness. There is Christ who is that righteousness. Verse seven reveals that.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.”¹³

In other words, the Spirit of God enlightens with that true light of Christ, who God is, who Christ is. Sinners that he has redeemed and they have fellowship then with him. And they have fellowship one with another. That is their fellowship. This isn't something we organize or try to work out or get people to get along. If the Spirit of God has taught your heart and your eyes have been turned to him and you have nothing to boast of but Christ and his righteousness, you will get along. You will get along with

⁹ John 12:35.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 1 John 1:6.

¹² John 12:36.

¹³ 1 John 1:7.

those that the Lord has so taught. There is not going to be that spirit of antichrist in the heart that contests and goes against.

And notice verse seven.

“... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son [continues to cleanse] from all sin.”¹⁴

It is the present tense. It is:

“...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”¹⁵

It indicates there that this one time death of the Lord Jesus Christ once for all justifies those for whom Christ died when upon completion of his work, when he laid down his life, God accepted his sacrifice and declared once for all righteous every one for whom he died. And that blood continues, like the song says, avails for me. It continues to avail for those sinners for whom he died.

That is an obvious indication of the work of the Spirit in the heart, giving true sight and that sense of sin to know that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ there is no hope. It is the way of salvation is by his obedience and his sacrifice, not ours. It is by his.

Can you imagine if it depended upon your obedience? There would be no fellowship. Again, God is light and in him is no darkness. There is no room for anything less than absolute holiness. So none other but Christ will do. And as the Spirit gives the knowledge of him, that fellowship with God is there, because that is what we are brought to see. It is not when you see it that that fellowship has been established. It was established when Christ died. That reconciliation took place and as he gives you eyes to see you are brought to bow and believe it and receive it.

See, the blood of Christ is our complete justification, our complete pardon and our complete deliverance from all sin.

And notice, as I said, the present tense. It is perpetual. It is forever. You can never change that language of Scripture. Blessed be God that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son continues to cleans from all sin. That is what gives us hope in our sin. I won't even say when we sin because we are sinners by nature, but in our sin, to know that, you know, he is the advocate and he is the propitiation for our sins which we will look at next time.

So we have got God's holiness, Christ's righteousness and blood, but we have also got as part of this message, man's depravity, man's sin, our sin. There never can be or will ever be a time when we won't need the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, some people have a notion that somehow you get to a point where you are sinning less. That is what is being preached and they give you methods and ways of working on this to somehow sin less.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Our nature is what it is. It is depraved and it is ugly and it is opposed even now it is opposed in this flesh to these very ... this very truth of God's holiness. Somehow to try to find a way around it or Christ and his righteousness.

This flesh will... it is like a car that tie tires are out of alignment. If you take you hands off the wheel and it will go off the road.

I was driving down the road the other day and this car came just speeding by and then all of the sudden I noticed the front two wheels just started just bouncing away and the person had to just back down the speed until the wheels finally got to where they would stop shimmying a little bit and I was looking at it. I wasn't sure whether it was coming off. And then he gradually started picking up speed again. There was something wrong, you know? But he wasn't fixing it. He just was trying to drive at a speed where it wouldn't hold him back. And that is the way most people deal in their minds with sin. Just let's get through this. There is something wrong, but we can get through this.

But there are some that, you know, believe that somehow they are getting better. You know if they can just... if I can just work through certain problems. They never think about depravity being at the base of it all. But here is the clear testimony of Scriptures. No one is free from sin, not even one of us sitting here listening to this.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.”¹⁶

It is just point blank.

“...and the truth is not in us.”¹⁷

There is no way that one who has been taught of the Spirit of God can ever deny their sin or sinfulness before a holy God either from a sinful nature or from the sin that proceeds from that nature of evil. It is still sin.

If you look at Romans chapter three I remember back in the days when they would teach us to evangelize, is what they word they used, but it was really proselytize that we would read Romans three as part of the Romans road. And we would always read this as if it were something that only pertained to the person we were talking to. You know, you have got to understand that you are the sinner instead of we. You know? Instead of saying I am what you are even now as I talk to you. What a difference?

But here in Romans chapter three in verse nine what a question put here by the Spirit of God.

“What then? are we better than they?”¹⁸

¹⁶ 1 John 1:8.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Romans 3:9.

Anytime you look down your nose at somebody else for their sin, remember this word.

“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise.”¹⁹

How many times have you interrupted a conversation and asked somebody that is pointing a finger at the other, “Are you any better than them?” It kind of catches them off guard.

Well, you know, we are all... I guess you are right. We are all sinners.

Well, that is something you should have started with, because the way you are portraying yourself you are acting like this person has got something worse than you do. Are we not all lepers? Are we all not in our flesh crying out unclean, unclean?

No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.²⁰

That is true of our own flesh right now, even as the Lord’s, blood bought sinners, taught of the Spirit. We still have to say there is nothing in me that understands. There is nothing in me that causes me to seek after God. They are all gone out of the way.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.²¹

You know, if it ended there it would be despair, wouldn’t it?

No, we read here, you know, and don’t run to the law as being something that can help you.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”²²

That is what the law has to say.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Romans 3:9-12.

²¹ Romans 3:12-18.

²² Romans 3:19.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.”²³

If by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight, how on earth can any many look for justification apart from the Lord Jesus Christ?

It says:

“...for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”²⁴

A person who has truly known and understood the law is going to come out of that lesson with one conclusion. I am a sinner. You know, you are not going to come out of that test boasting. Ah, I got that one nailed. Really? You flunked, big F. Didn't get the first question right. You know, that is a hard test. Yeah, it is.

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.”²⁵

It doesn't say that God set the law apart in order to justify sinners, but without your keeping the law, without me keeping the law...

“...being witnessed by the law and the prophet.”²⁶

Don't look for consolation from the law. It can never... it can't do anything but condemn us.

“Even the righteousness of God...”²⁷

I like that. It is God's righteousness. He owns it. But what does he own? It says that:

“...which is by the faith [notice] of Jesus Christ.”²⁸

Not in Jesus Christ, but of Jesus Christ. That faith which is that body of truth concerning him and his death that he worked out, even the righteousness of God.

“...unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference.”²⁹

See our believing doesn't cause God to justify us. Our believing, as the Scriptures set it forth, is the evidence that God has justified us because every one for whom Christ died, he worked out this righteousness. He will cause them to believe.

“...for there is no difference.”³⁰

²³ Romans 3:20.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Romans 3:21.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Romans 3:22.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

As far as we are concerned, verse 23:

“All have sinned...”³¹

All did sin.

You say, “When did I sin?”

In Adam. We were born sinners.

“...and come short of the glory of God.”³²

But verse 24.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation...”³³

And there is where a comma should come. You know, it is not faith in his blood that is our propitiation. God set him forth to be a propitiation, comma...

“...through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness...”³⁴

That is the only ones who can truly declare his righteousness are those to whom he has given that faith in his blood.

It says:

“...for the remission of sins that are past...”³⁵

The passing over of sins that are past. That is what God did. He was forbearing with those sins in the Old Testament until Christ came and put them away. Do you see that?

“...through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, [notice] at this time...”³⁶

This side of the cross.

“...his righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”³⁷

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Romans 3:23.

³² Ibid.

³³ Romans 3:24-25.

³⁴ Romans 3:25.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Romans 3:25-26.

³⁷ Romans 3:26.

He doesn't justify them because of their faith, but him that believeth in Jesus believes because he was justified by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apart from that we have no hope. So you can see as part of this message essential to it is the continual acknowledging of who I am as a sinner before God which confesses them my complete need of the Lord Jesus Christ and his blood and righteousness every moment of every day, every time... even when you sleep you are not pure. What you are in your nature, you know, if you ever wake up out of a dream and just... thank... man, where did that come from? It is just an evidence of who we are as depraved creatures.

And to make any sort of claim of being less is to be deceived and to be filled with lies.

The fourth and final element I would bring out here then is the forgiveness of sins and it says here in verses nine and 10.

“If we confess our sins...”³⁸

In other words, confess our sinnerhood. It is not trying to remember each sin and confess it. In confessing that we are sinners... And that word “confess” is the word in the original that means to say the same thing as. So whatever God says about my sin, I agree. There is no self justifying. It... Lord, it is what you say and I own it. I own it.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just...”³⁹

Now who is he faithful and just to? Well, the one that died. Because Christ died, because Christ put away that sin, because upon completion of his death, God declared righteous those for whom he died, then there is therefore no now condemnation.

God, as we continue to confess who we are before him, God is faithful and just to his Son, to that work that he accomplished to forgive, to continue to forgive, just like in verse seven, to continue to cleanse. There is no law of the land, there is no accuser, there is no sin that is ever going to change God's mind with regard to one of his whom Christ redeemed and that blood bought.

You know, even some of your best friends can change their mind under certain circumstances, can't they? Well, I agree... I kind of agree with you there. You know, they shouldn't have done that.

The next thing you know they are siding with the accusers and going at you. You know, you think, man, that friendship didn't last long, you know. But not with God. Not with God.

³⁸ 1 John 1:9.

³⁹ Ibid.

I don't care what sin is thrown up before his face, that is my child. But it is not God looking the other way. It is God being faithful and just to the death of his Son. That is who he is honoring. He paid the debt. Even that and you find some pretty terrible sins, don't you, in Scripture? Look at David. And what does the Scripture say? He was a man after God's own heart. He owned it. Otherwise he said, "How can it be?"

All his life he said, "I know it is only one thing. It is because of the grace and mercy of God."

He has ordered all of that covered because of Christ ordered in all things and sure. I like that. I need it.

"...and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁴⁰

That is every day. That is every day. And:

"If we say that we have not sinned..."⁴¹

Boy, you talk about flying in the face of God, we say we have not sinned, you are as much as saying, "I don't need the blood of Christ right now. I am fine. I can get along."

You know, if we say that we have not sinned, that we are not sinners at any time, we make him a liar and his Word is not in us.

Oh, that the... you know, that the Word would not be choked out.

You have heard messages preached on the sower and the seed and, you know, you have heard some preachers try to profile different sinners almost like temperaments. There are some that are like this, some are like this, some are like this. Don't you see yourself as all of them but for the grace of God? I would be that one that the birds came and took the seed away. I would be that one that the thorns, you know, grew up and choked out. But for the grace of God, but for the Lord teaching me, but for him pointing me to his Son again and again and again and again.

All right. Let's take our hymn books and sing hymn number 272.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ 1 John 1:10.