

WALKING THE TALK_ The Promise

Last week we considered *the promise* of the theme, focusing on 1st John chapter 1. I'd like for us to read that text again before we discuss *the promise* attached to the promise. Then next week we'll deal with putting what we've learned into *practice*_ implementing the principles.

(Pg 1898) ¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make (y)our joy complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ 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, purifies us from all sin. ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives.

Notice again, the apostle's insistence that if we claim to have "fellowship" with Christ, but there is no "follow-ship" (i.e. we do not "walk with" Him) we lie and do not live by the truth. Having said that, if we do honestly live in relationship with Christ_ really and truly "walking the talk"_ then there are great blessings to be found.

We touched on this last week, but there is a great "JOY" that accompanies us when we walk hand in hand with Jesus. Listen again to **verse 4: We write this to make (y)our joy complete.** Interestingly enough, Jesus said a similar thing to His disciples in John 15: ¹⁰ **If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. / ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.** Now, I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I don't believe for a moment this is a coincidence. There is "joy" that comes from "walking with God." It is a satisfying and fulfilling joy that no one can take away. Why?

When Nina and I were first engaged, more than one person told us it wouldn't last. We were young (*she much more than me*) and naïve. She was still in school and my job didn't pay much. We were going to have to live on a very tight budget. But we wanted to live the rest of our lives together and were determined to make it work_ convinced our love for each other and our mutual commitment to Christ would be enough. We've been happily walking together for nearly 40 years now. It's not always been easy, but it's been a joy. I would not trade a single day of our time for all the money in the world. I've also learned like David did that this is true of my relationship with God. He wrote in **Psalm 84:10** that one day *dwelling with the Lord* was better than spending 10,000 elsewhere.

Just knowing the One who loves me and gave His life for me is with me and will never abandon me, gives me great joy. You may say that you don't see anybody with me. That it looks as if I'm on my own_ but 1st Peter 1:8 says **"Though (we) may not have seen Him, we love Him; and even though (we) do not see Him now, (we) believe in Him_ and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy..."** It gives me joy to know Jesus loved me first, and that He is faithful to me even when I am not worthy.

And my **joy** is increased when I know that my wife and my kids and my grandkids walk with Him, too_ which brings me to the 2nd promise.

When we walk in the Light, we have fellowship not only with God, but also **with one another**. From the very beginning, men and women who responded to the good news about Jesus entered into a community of faith. We see this in **Acts 2: ⁴¹ Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized, and about 3000 were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.** Though not every church has been the place of support and encouragement that God intended, when we **walk in the light** we are in good company. We find a family of believers upon whom we can rely and grow with. Paul says this about it in **Ephesians 4: ¹¹ It was He (Jesus) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.** It should be every believer's goal to become like Jesus_ and nothing should give us more **joy** than being in fellowship with people who have that as their goal as well_ as we help each other to reach our fullest potential.

The final promise we'll focus on this morning is **when we walk in the Light, we have access to a fountain of forgiveness**. Listen again to **verse 7: "...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, purifies us from all sin.** I am not saying that when we walk off into the darkness and cry out to God that He doesn't hear_ or that He will not reach out to rescue. But, if He does, He will bring us back into the light. Why? Because that's where forgiveness flows free. **Walking in the light** is like strolling under a waterfall of grace_ where we are constantly washed, continually cleansed, and perpetually purified. Paul writes this to the Christians in **Ephesus: "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that He lavishes on us with all wisdom and understanding."** (1:7-8) Knowing that, why would any of us choose to stray far from Christ's side?

Incredible joy. Loving fellowship. Free flowing forgiveness. Want it? It's available to all who walk in the light with Jesus. I'd say that it's well worth **walking the talk**....how about you?