

The First Test  
1 John 1:5-2:2

January 21, 2006

A. Introduction

1. Colossians 1:18-20; What was the Father's purpose in the cross?
2. How important is fellowship to God? ... how do you know?
3. How important is it to you? ... how do you know?

B. 1 John 1:5-7

1. this part of the test is, "In my life do I \_\_\_\_\_?"
2. three points in these verses:
  - a. God is
  - b. If we walk in darkness
  - c. If we walk in the light
3. what is it to walk in the light (references: Psalm 31:5, Isaiah 5:20, John 3:19, Hebrews 12:14)

C. 1 John 1:8-10

1. this part of the test is, "In my life do I \_\_\_\_\_?"
2. What was the Nicolaitan heresy (cf Romans 6:1, named in Rev 2)?
3. In what ways do people (unsaved and saved) deny sin?

4. What does sin not do to you if you are a Christian?

- a. 2 Timothy 2:13: You are not
- b. John 10:28: you are not
- c. John 5:24: you are not
- d. What does it do?

5. whom does verse 9 address? is it alright to use it more widely? why?

D. 1 John 2:1a

1. this part of the test is, "In my life do I \_\_\_\_\_?"
2. what thoughts are we tempted to have about sin?
3. Hebrews 12:1-4; what should we do about sin?

E. 1 John 2:1b

1. this part of the test is, "In my life do I \_\_\_\_\_?"
2. "Paraclete" means (reference: John 14:16)
3. respecting our sin, the Paraclete is our
4. what do we here learn about propitiation, Christ's sacrifice?

F. What is interfering with my fellowship with my Saviour God? ... what am I going to do about it?

A. Introduction

1. C. S. Lewis has said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” —{2}.
  - a. now Christianity is founded first and foremost on the fact
    - (A) that the Almighty Creator God
    - (B) stooped down in the Person of God the Son
    - (C) in order to restore the peace of God with mankind
    - (D) that peace which is part and parcel of fellowship
  - b. This is stated in no uncertain terms in Colossians 1:18–20, “He (the Lord Jesus Christ) is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” (NAS)
  - c. so, if Christianity be true, then the reconciliation brought about by the infinite price of the death of God the Son on the cross of calvary must be of infinite importance; let’s see
2. how important is this fellowship of the believer with God?
  - a. we can test how important God considers it ...
    - (A) by what He has done to restore this fellowship
    - (B) by the reconciliation price paid by God – the sacrifice of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ
    - (C) by His spiritual gifts to enrich this fellowship
      - (1) “every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies” (Eph 1:3)
      - (2) the abiding Holy Spirit in believers (John 14:7)
      - (3) the abiding Son ever with believers (Matt 28:20)
    - (D) this tells us how important this fellowship is to God
  - b. But, how important do we consider this fellowship to be?
    - (A) Do our words, thoughts and deeds strengthen or do they weaken our fellowship with God?
    - (B) answering that question helps us answer this question:

(C) "Are we truly in fellowship with God?"

c. In this epistle, John gives to us a number of tests

(A) these are tests to answer that same question:

(B) "Are we truly in fellowship with God?"

(C) these tests are based

(1) not upon how we feel ... our emotions

(2) nor upon what we think ... our ideas and opinions

(3) but upon concrete facts

d. we find in 1 John 1:5– 2:2 the first of these tests

(A) to answer for us the question

(B) "Am I truly in fellowship with God?"

(C) or "Am I deceiving myself?"

(D) this first test is very simple

(E) "How do I deal with sin?"

3. To examine this first test, let us break it down into four parts:

a. "In my life do I align myself with God?"

b. "In my life do I acknowledge my sin?"

c. "In my life do I attack my sin?"

d. "In my life do I accept my Saviour's work for sin?"

B. "In my life do I align myself with God?"

1:5–7

1. **5** And this is the message which we heard from Him and are announcing to you: that God is light and in Him there is not any darkness at all. **6** If we should say that we are having fellowship with Him and yet we are walking in the darkness, we are lying and we are not doing the truth; **7** But if we should walk in the light even as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus His Son makes us clean from all sin.

2. in these verses, John makes three points:

a. God is light, and absolutely so

- b. if we walk in darkness, we must then, necessarily, be out of fellowship with God
- c. if we walk in the light, then fellowship is possible, not only with God, but with God's people

3. what is it, then, to walk in the light?

- a. walking is a figure of speech for the way we conduct our lives: the way we act, speak, think
- b. and light: well, consider that God is light and we see

(A) first, that light is metaphoric for truth

- (1) in the verse 6 arraigns truth against darkness
- (2) light reveals, discovers, displays the truth
- (3) God is the God of truth, Psalm 31:5

(B) second, light is also moral purity

- (1) "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; ..." (Isaiah 5:20a NAS)
- (2) of Jesus Christ, John says, "... the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil." (3:19b NAS)

(C) third, light dispels fear

- (1) when I was a child, the light from across the street used to shine dimly through my window and make the things in the closet assume frightening shapes
- (2) Stephen King is the best selling author of many tales of horror. In the interview he talked about his daily writing routine. He said that he only writes in the morning. When he was asked whether he ever wrote at night, he replied, "Are you kidding? Not with the stuff I write." Even Stephen King knows the fearful power of the darkness. <sup>-{3}</sup>.

c. so to "walk in the light even as He Himself is in the light"

(A) is to align oneself with the will of God

- (1) walking in truth – did you notice that truth is not just something you know, but something you do?
- (2) seeking to be pure: Hebrews 12:14 instructs us to "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." (NAS)
- (3) proving it to be good, acceptable, perfect

(B) "as He Himself is" – aligned in direction, though not in degree – disciples; following Jesus Christ

4. this part of John's first test says, then, If you or I,
  - a. are aligned with the world
    - (A) following and seeking its pleasures
    - (B) living by its standards
    - (C) walking in darkness
  - b. how can we be walking in the light which dispels the dark?
  - c. how can we have fellowship with God's people, let alone with God?

C. "In my life do I acknowledge my sin?"

1:8–10

1. <sup>8</sup> If we should say that we have no sin, we cause ourselves to err and do not possess the truth. <sup>9</sup> If we should confess our sins, faithful is He and righteous, that He should forgive us the sins and should cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we should say that we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and we do not possess His word .
2. Some background to the time when John wrote, the second half of the first century
  - a. there were two heretical movements, and I only mention one of them now since the other will crop up later
  - b. the Nicolaitans, specifically addressed in Revelation 2, were antinomian ("against law"), denying that Christians had any moral obligations and living dissolute lives
  - c. contrary to Paul's teaching, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be!" (Romans 6:1 NAS)
  - d. these people denied that they were sinning
3. there are a number of ways that we can deny sin
  - a. our society, around the world, denies sin by making it to be legal – legalized euthanasia and other murder, legalized prostitution, legalized substance abuse, and so on
  - b. we can deny it as did the heretics of John's day by saying that our Christian life is spiritual, our spirit cannot sin and what our flesh does is of no consequence
  - c. we can deny it by redefining sin to be those practices we see in others but of which we ourselves are not

guilty

- d. we can deny it by using the arguments of the various ethical – I should say, “unethical” – systems in the world which justify sin by circumstance, situation, heredity, etc.
  - e. someone has said, “To err is human, to cover it up, too” <sup>–{4}</sup>.
  - f. but, says John, all such denials – no matter how politically correct they may be today – are a direct affront and an attack on the integrity and truthfulness of God – “we make Him out to be a liar”
4. What does sin not do to you if you are a Christian <sup>–{5}</sup>.
- a. You are not disowned, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13 NAS) – in salvation you are born by the Holy Spirit into the family of God, given eternal life: God does not change that (Mal 3:6)
  - b. You are not dead, “and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:28 NAS)
  - c. You are not condemned, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (John 5:24 NAS)
  - d. but sin does have consequences in a believer’s life: it brings guilt, remorse, defeat, lack of fellowship with God, lack of fellowship with God’s people, a cloud on our testimony – no wonder Satan’s snares are set to trap us this way; but ...
5. the God who brought us salvation from sin on the cross
- a. has provided a way of restoration for us He has saved
  - b. God does not condone sin, but God does forgive sin
  - c. He is both a faithful and a righteous God
  - d. “If we should confess our sins, faithful is He and righteous, that He should forgive us the sins and should cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
  - e. this verse is often used to bring the seeker to confession of sin – which is legitimate because it is based upon the work and character of Jesus Christ – but this book and passage is addressed to Christian believers

6. so, this part of the first test is
  - a. how do you deal with sin?
  - b. do you deny it? ... ignore it? ... excuse it? ... justify it?
  - c. keep short accounts with God ... confess it
  - d. and fellowship is restored

D. "In my life do I attack my sin?"

2:1a

1. 1a My dear children, I am writing these things to you in order that you should not sin. ...
2. I intend, Lord willing, to look further at 1 John 2:1–2 in February when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, so I will limit myself to just a few points from them this morning
3. Clearly, part of this first test that John gives to us to see if we are indeed in fellowship with God has to do with our attitude
  - a. do we casually accept the sin in our lives?
    - (A) after all, it is so easily forgiven
    - (B) we have just been told that it is impossible not to sin
  - b. Hebrews 12:1b encourages us "... let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" and instruct us in verses 3 and 4, "For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin" (NAS)
4. part of John's first test of whether we really are in fellowship with God is in how we deal with sin: do we strive against it?

E. "In my life do I accept my Saviour's work for sin?"

2:1b-2

1. 1b ... Should anyone sin, we have a Paraclete in the presence of the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One.  
2 Now He Himself is a propitiation on behalf of our sins, and not on behalf of ours only, but also on behalf of those of the whole world.

2. The first is that they deal
  - a. not with something in the past
    - (A) at the cross
    - (B) or at our conversion
  - b. nor something that we look forward to in the future
  - c. but with the present time, today, now;
  - d. "... we have ... He Himself is ..."
  
3. "We have a Paraclete"
  - a. this is just the Greek word written as an English word
  - b. it is variously translated as comforter, helper, advocate
  - c. literally it is "one called to stand beside"
  - d. Jesus used it of the Holy Spirit when promised "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:16 NAS) ... so the second and third Persons of the Trinity bear this same name which again shows their essential unity
  - e. the context leads us to conclude that when we sin, we have this Paraclete, this Advocate, this Defender, standing up in our behalf to sweep away the charges on our behalf
  
4. "Now He Himself is a propitiation ..."
  - a. Greek is one of those languages where you do not have to use the verb 'to be' – as I am, you are, he is, ...
  - b. it is generally omitted
  - c. so, that when it is present, as here, I clarifies or emphasizes
  - d. here, the clarification is this:
    - (A) the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as punishment to turn away God's judicial wrath against the sinner
    - (B) is not only a historical fact
    - (C) but a present reality
  - e. so, when I mess up, sinning in thought, word or deed

- (A) I come, guilty and miserable, seeking forgiveness
- (B) yet by accepting my Saviour's work for sin
- (C) I can realize that that sin has been already punished
- (D) in Spafford's words, <sup>-(6)}</sup>.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

5. the last part of John's first test is this

- a. do I consciously recognize each day how God is dealing continually with my sin on account of Christ's sacrifice
- b. this thought of praise will keep bringing us back from our failures to reliance upon and fellowship with God.

## F. Conclusion

1. What destroys fellowship?

- a. A young lieutenant, graduate of West Point, was leading a group of new recruits in battle in Vietnam. One night his group was overtaken by a battalion of Viet Cong, yet he managed to get his men to safety; all but one who was wounded <sup>-(7)}</sup>.
- b. The crossfire between the lieutenant and the wounded soldier was deadly, but he and his men could hear the piteous cries for help. Leaving the safety of the trenches he inched his way to his fallen comrade and dragged him back to safety. But as he pushed the man into the trenches, he himself was hit and killed.
- c. Several months later that wounded man returned home and was invited by the lieutenant's parents for dinner, so they could know the man whose life was spared by their son's heroic actions.
- d. He arrived drunk. He was loud and boisterous. He told off-colour jokes. He showed no concern for the loss of his hosts. When their obscene guest had left, the mother collapsed in tears, crying, "To think that our precious son had to die for somebody like that."
- e. the tremendous potential for fellowship was ruined by the actions of the one who had been saved

2. What destroys my fellowship with my Saviour God?
  - a. sin
  - b. sin is an ungrateful response to God's saving work for us
  - c. How do I deal with my sin?
  - d. Today John has told us how

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. Kerux illustration #17254
3. From message “Walking in the Light” by Rev. J. David Hoke – Kerux sermons #2623
4. From message “What Do You Do With Sin?” by Rev. J. David Hoke – Kerux sermons #2624
5. From a message by Rev. Michael D. O’Neal, “What Happens When Christians Sin?” – Kerux sermons #13552
6. “It Is Well with My Soul”, Horatio Gates Spafford (1828-1888)
7. Adapted from “Our Precious Son Had To Die For Somebody Like That” by Tony Campola – Kerux illustration #757