

Easter 2 Year B

The Epistle 1 John 1:1-2:2

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us-- we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but 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 that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and 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.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, and create in each of us a courageous heart, to renew, revive and restore your holy Creation.

-Amen

Sermon:

On the first day of creation, God spoke light into existence,
And proclaimed that the light is good,
And must be separated from darkness. ⁱ

St. John wrote that:

“God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.”

St. Paul told the church in Ephesus:

“For you were once darkness,
but now you are light in the Lord.
Live as children of light.” ⁱⁱ

When God judged ancient Egypt, He covered it with darkness. ⁱⁱⁱ

But gave His people a pillar of fire,
so they'd have light, even at night. ^{iv}

God has always called His people to live in the light.

He has called each one of us to shine the Lord's bright light,
into this often dark and frightening world

When I was a younger man,

I strayed from the light, even if I never embraced darkness.

I saw. I studied. I learned. I experienced.

I stayed safe, even if just barely.

The Lord kept an eye on me.

I knew that I was never called to live in the darkness.^v

I kept in mind a rule that I learned as a kid:

Everything goes in its place.

"Every thing goes in its place."

It's a rule about things. And it works really well for things. For stuff.

But when we apply it to people, it doesn't work so well.

No one kept me in my place. Yaay, for America!

"Every thing goes in its place." It's a good rule.

I'm not a neat freak. But I hate losing stuff.

When we live in Chaos, Order feels like a good thing.

Out of chaos, comes loss.

Today, so many of us already have too little.

Today, too many can't afford to lose anything.

So they tie onto whatever looks like a *safe harbor*.

But appearances are deceiving.

When he wrote his epistle,^{vi} St. John had seen a lot.

He was one of Jesus first followers.

He'd seen the darkness. He'd seen Jesus die.

But John had seen a lot of light, too,

He'd seen Jesus' miracles,

Healing, feeding thousands and resurrecting Lazarus.^{vii}

He'd seen the risen Lord.

St. John was a survivor. He was busy!

Even as an older man,

he led some of the churches founded by St. Paul.

As John's grew older, false teachers began to pop up.

They preached all kinds of stuff.

Some teachers said that Jesus wasn't a real live person.

Or wasn't really God,

because God could only exist as a Spirit.^{viii}

Or that a true follower of Jesus had to participate

in arcane rituals, and have secret knowledge.

Or that, the problem of sin was wrong *thinking*,
and not wrong *doing*.^{ix}

And by the time John wrote his Epistle,
Christianity was on the verge of becoming a religious club,
For the chattering class,
for the elite ...
for the well-educated, and well-heeled few.

To get in the Jesus club, you had to have secret information.
To be worthy of that secret information,
you had to be an insider.

It was a dark time. *Jesus was only for Insiders.*

No welcome mat for the common folk that Jesus
prayed over and healed and loved.
You little people? Don't bother applying.

So, John wrote:

"God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all."

When we walk with the Lord, the Lord walks with us.

When we walk with Jesus, we walk in the light.

When we walk with Jesus, we share his love and his light,
with everyone we meet.

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”^x

Light and Darkness are metaphors.

Good and evil, order and chaos, security and danger,
joy and sorrow, truth and lies, food and hunger,
life and death — salvation and loss. ^{xi}

When we choose to follow Jesus, We choose Light.
And we leave Darkness behind.

St. John wrote that a life with Jesus
is a life of love, rather than loneliness,
order, health, and peace.
A life of sharing and giving,
Instead of receiving and hoarding. ^{xii}

When we look at our lives,
Do we see the presence of Christ? Do we seek Him or the World?
Do we see Light, or Darkness? Order or Confusion?
Love or loneliness? Gain or loss?

Big questions! Big choices.
Jesus is the only answer and the only choice.

“ ... the light has come into the world, [but] people loved the darkness rather than the light ... But he who does the truth comes to the light....”^{xiii}

When we walk in the light, *we are one people.*

When we walk in the darkness, we are all alone.

Let's hold hands, and walk together.

-AMEN

ⁱ Genesis 1:3-5.

ⁱⁱ Ephesians 5:8

ⁱⁱⁱ Exodus 10:21-22.

^{iv} Ibid., 13:21.

^v And now I'm a too well fed grown-up. Well educated. I've a fine wife and a fine family.

^{vi} Much younger when he wrote his Gospel, it seems like he wrote his Epistle, as an older man.

^{vii} John 11:1-44

^{viii} Gnosticism.

^{ix} See, <https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/1-john-11-22/> and <https://pastorsings.com/2015/04/12/living-in-the-light-sermon-on-1-john-11-22/>

^x 1 John 1:5.

^{xi} See, Isaiah 5:20; John 3:19-21; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:17-18.

^{xii} If we chose to live without Jesus, life may seem nasty, brutish and short... lost, lonely and confused ...

Thomas Hobbes described humanity in its natural state, without well founded central government, where life is a "warre of every man against every man".

"Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."

"No arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Leviathan (1651) by Thomas Hobbes.

^{xiii} See, John 3:19-21.