

I John 1:5-2:2 - Testing Our Attitudes to Sin

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 6-19-19

The Basis of John's Ethics

V. 5 - "God is light"

- Stott: "It is his nature to reveal himself as it is the property of light to shine; and the revelation is of perfect purity and unutterable majesty."
- "no" darkness, "none at all"
 - Gk. οὐκ οὐδεμία ("ook oudemia") - strong double negative
 - He is absolute _____ perfection
- Cannot claim fellowship while maintaining moral indifference

Addressing 3 Claims

Claim #1: v. 6 - "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness"

- Recall v. 4 - "fellowship" = relational and missional oneness
- You "lie and do not practice the truth"
 - Protognostics: You can "____" righteous without necessarily "_____" righteousness
- Guilty of 2 offenses:
 - _____ about their relationship with God (II Cor. 6:14)
 - Not "doing" the _____ - Living in its light/putting it into practice

Counterclaim #1: v. 7 - "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"

- John 3:19-21 - walking in the light = openness to God and allowing his light expose our darkness
- 2-fold consequences
 - "We have fellowship with one another"
 - Walking with God always involves fellowship with one another
 - "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin"
 - Our walking involves continual cleansing
 - Intimacy > exposing > transforming (cf. Eph. 5:8-14)
- In sum:
 - You cannot live in willful ignorance, rebellion, sin, (and isolation) and claim fellowship
 - Walking with God in his light means ongoing ethical transformation and fellowship with other believers

Claim #2: v. 8a - "If we say that we have no sin"

- Possibly sin "nature," but 4x in John (9:41; 15:22, 24; 19:11) refer to sins' _____
- John's rejection of "sinless perfection"
 - v. 8b - "deceiving (themselves) and the truth is not in (them)"
- How to reconcile with v. 6? **Wesley's articulation of sin:**
 - Legal vs. ethical
 - Legal: _____ that falls short of God's absolute glory
 - Ethical: deals with one's _____
 - A "willful transgression of a known law of God by a morally responsible agent."

- Commission vs. omission
 - Commission = actual, willful transgressions
 - Omission = the sins of _____ doing something one should have done
- Sanctification:
 - _____ result of perfect love for God and neighbor
 - _____ result of being cleansed of all ethical sin

Counterclaim #2: v. 9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- Gk. ὁμολογῶμεν ("homologōmen") - to speak the same thing, i.e. assent, agreement, confession
 - In NT: Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:15; James 5:16; Acts 19:18
 - Not general confession of "sin", but _____ confession of "our sins"
 - Not private (just between me/God), but _____ (one to another before God)
- God's 2-fold response:
 - Forgiveness: Cancellation of sins' _____ (Matt. 6:9-15; 18:21-35)
 - Cleansing: Removal of sin's _____
- In doing this, God is:
 - Faithful: true to his word by _____ his promises
 - Just: acts righteously due to the atoning work of Jesus
- In sum:
 - Walking in the light does not result in a sinless perfectionism
 - Walking in the light means being real about the condition of our hearts and allowing God to do what is needed to make us more like him

Claim #3: v. 10 - "If we say that we have not sinned"

- Protognostics: superior enlightenment rendered them _____ of sinning
- V. 8 → self-deception. V. 10 → "we make (God) a liar and His word is not in us."

Counterclaim #3: 2:1-2

- "If anyone sins" - the _____ of believers committing sin
- BUT, "I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin" - holy _____
 - Law: "Horror, hatred, fear, repudiation of sin pervade the whole Epistle."
 - Wesley: "he (guarding) them beforehand against abusing the doctrine of reconciliation"
 - God's grace/forgiveness ≠ license to think lightly of sin or live however you want.
 - See Romans 6:1-2; John 5:14
- "Advocate" - Gk. παράκλητος ("paraklaytos") - one called alongside, summoned to assist another
 - Jesus speaks on our behalf to the Father (see Rom. 8:34)
- "the propitiation for our sins" - Gk. ἱλασμός ("hilasmos") - an appeasing offering
 - 4:10 - God ≠ some reluctant deity that needs appeased, but the initiator out of love
- For the sons "of the whole world" (cf. John 1:29; I John 4:14)
 - Not universalism (5:11-13)

The 2 Advocates (cf. "two hands of God" in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 6)

1. **Jesus:** objective work; for all the world; advocate in heaven; humanity in God
2. **Holy Spirit:** subjective work; applies in me; advocate on earth; God in individual