

Walking in the Light - A Journey in the Epistles of John

A New Beginning in the Light

1 John 1

Welcome

Have you ever tried to do something in the dark which proved amusing or disastrous?

Worship

This is Jesus (The Saviour s Song) Kees Kraayenoord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbFiK3nSgRk>

Word

For an introduction to the series you may want to watch The Bible Project overview:

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/1-3-john/>

Read John 20:30-31 and then 1 John 5:13

Q. Why did John write his gospel? Why did he write the letter?

You may wish to pause at this point to pray for the impact of this series and that John s purpose for writing might be fulfilled.

It would seem one of John s main concerns was the falling away of some believers through a false teaching that denied Jesus could be fully human, and that inner (spiritual)

knowledge was all that mattered and that the material world (flesh) was of no consequence.

Read 1 John 1-4

Q. What evidence does John provide to refute the claims of the false teachers?

Q. Why is it important for us to know this?

Q. Fully human but unlike any other human – how does John show this in these verses?

Q. How do v3 and 4 suggest we might we see, hear and encounter Jesus today?

Read 1 John 1:5 - 2:2

Q. What do you think John means when he speaks of light and darkness in these verses?

Q. In vs. 6, 8 and 10 John suggests three things that people might claim regarding sin. What do they claim?

Q. What does each one look like in practice?

Q. What does John say we should do and what reassurance does he give?

Witness

- In the diocese of Goma and in Burundi (GLO) large numbers are coming to faith in Christ. Scripture resources and trained pastors are in short supply. Pray into these areas and against false teaching.

- We can make lots of claims about nature and impact of sin.
Ask God to shed his light on those areas we are walking in
darkness, knowing that if we do he is faithful and just and will
forgive us.

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The Marks of a Growing Christian

1 John 2:1-17

Welcome

Ask each person to write down one thing about themselves that others might not know (if you have a small number you may want to have a couple of red herrings to add to the mix). Randomly read these out asking others to guess who wrote it and why they came to that conclusion.

Worship

We are marching in the light of God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl24_27wW1E

Word

In the first study we saw that John wrote to reassure his readers of the full humanity of Jesus, the reality of sin and how easy it is to deny its presence in our lives but also the reassurance of sins forgiven. In this chapter John provides some checks that help us be confident that we are in Christ and growing as Christians.

Read 1 John 2 v 1,2

Q. How does John show that a sinless life is the aim but not a reality in this life? What reassurance do these verses give?

Q. Why is this important to grasp?

Read 1John 2:3-6

Q. From these verses how can we know that we know Jesus?

Q. How do we know his commands?

Q. What does it mean to walk as Jesus did?

Q. What steps are you taking at the start of this year to deepen your understanding of Jesus's commands and ways?

Read 1John 2:7-14

Note that hate and love are not used in an emotional sense but as moral qualities in these verses.

Q. What is the commandment that is both old and new?

Q. Why do you think John states that this is both a new and an old commandment?

Q. How can we tell whether we are walking in light or darkness according to these verses?

Q. How do these verses provide reassurance that you are growing in Christ?

Q. In v12-14 John addresses three categories of people. What are they and why do you think he did this?

Read 1John 2:15-17

Q. What is the third mark of a growing Christian according to these verses?

Q. What does John mean by 'the world'?

Q. When are we most tempted to love the world and what can we do about it?

Witness

This study can be both challenging and reassuring. Give thanks for those who are good role models. Pray for each other that we might be more obedient to his commands, love each other more deeply and love the world less.

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Standing Firm in a Confusing World

1 John 2:18-3:10

Welcome

What are you most looking forward to this year?

Worship

This is a song outlining some of the opinions some may hold about Jesus: The Outlaw - Larry Norman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ollHeYJBjng>

You may wish to choose an alternative such as Cornerstone

Word

Read v 18-27

Q What do you think John means by the last hour? What response does this stir up in you?

Antichrist(s) – against Christ. Those who oppose Jesus or deny his true nature and character as revealed in scripture.

Q. What do these verses teach us about antichrists and how to identify them?

Q. What do we need to do to protect us from false teaching?

Q. How do we respond to:

a) those within the church that have different opinions from us?

b) those who leave the church and go somewhere else (or not at all)?

c) those outside the church that have formed an opinion that Jesus was a good man and teacher but not God?

d) those that think that some teachings of the bible are out of date and need revising?

Read 1 John 2:28-3:10

Q. How can we be confident and unashamed when Jesus returns?

Q. How does John describe our present relationship with a) God and b) the world?; and what we will be like in the future?

Q. How should this knowledge encourage us and motivate us to be holy?

Q. How does this passage refute the idea that we can be a Christian without having to change our behaviour?

Q. What practical steps can we take to do what is right and oppose sin?

Witness

Re-read 3:1 and use it as a basis for prayers of praise and asking that we might grasp more fully the reality of our position as children of God. Pray that our lives may increasingly be characterised by doing what is right.

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United in Love and Test the Spirits

1 John 3:11 - 4:6

Welcome

What is your favourite TV advert? Did it convince you to buy what it was selling? Why/Why not?

Worship

Love divine all loves excelling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3h1GUkpkP2A>

Word

Read John 3:11-15 and Genesis 4:2-7

Q. Why do you think Abel's offering was acceptable (righteous) and Cain's was not (evil)?

Q. Does this challenge our motives for the work and actions (our offerings) we do for the Lord?

Q. Why should we not be surprised if the world hates us?

Q. Have you experienced this?

Q. Does John provide any consolation (see v14,15 and 3v1)?

Read John 3:16-24

Q. How does John define love?

Q. We are unlikely to have to do this so what does it mean to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in our culture?

Q. How can we know we belong to the truth?

Q. It is easy to feel condemned when reading the previous verses. How do verses 19-24 encourage us when we feel like that?

Read 1John 4:1-6

Q. Why do we need to test the spirits?

Q. What two things does John say need to be evident in the testimony of those who claim to speak God's words?

Q. How else can we test the spirits?

Q. What reassurance does John give to those who refuse to follow anyone who speak from a world viewpoint?

Witness

Please remember the need for confidentiality.

What are some of the needs of the churches that meet in our town? Pray for them.

What are some of the needs of those within our small group or church that could be met by an act of love? If we are unaware of a specific need then ask the Lord to reveal

opportunities to demonstrate his love to a brother/sister in
Christ this week.

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Perfect Love for an Anxious Heart

1 John 4:7 – 5:5

Welcome

Love is a theme in many artistic endeavours. What is your favourite depiction of love in a story, drama or song. In what way (if any) does it shadow what the love of God is like?

Worship

No Longer Slaves – Bethel Music

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulf1Ylei5_o

Word

Read 1 John 4: 7-21

Q. What does this passage tell us about

- a) The source of love (v7)
- b) Why we love (v19)
- c) How God revealed his love (v9)
- d) How should we respond (v7,11)
- e) What will this result in (v12)

Re-read verses 9 – 18

Q. What do these verses show us about the nature and effectiveness of God's love? You may want to make a list to use in the next question

(Possible answers include:

- it is not passive (He sent)
- it is costly (He gave)
- it takes the first step
- it brings life
- it atones for sin
- it removes fear of judgement)

Q. Read v16 and 17 again. If we are like Jesus in this world what will it look like for us to show his love?

Read 1John 5: 1-5

Q. How reason does John give here as to why we should love our fellow believers (v1)

Q. How will we know that we are acting in love?

Witness

Give thanks for to the Lord for his love. Pray for boldness in sharing Jesus with those who do not him – recognising that the response may not be the one we would like. Ask Jesus where we need to take the initiative to demonstrate God s love even where this might be costly.