

WE SHARE LIFE IN THE LIGHT
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

1 JOHN 1:1-2:2
APR 12, 2015

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—²the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But 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 cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{2:1}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. ²He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

For while, church & school had internet connection problems.

I thought at first, what is the matter with service provider?

But, it turns out, problem was with our network equipment.

We would try to send a message or get information
or be in the middle of doing something
and all of a sudden, there was no connection.

The solution was not just to wait until it just came back
but to turn things off and restart again.

sometimes one computer could connect, others couldn't,
but once that one did, then others did again.

I don't understand it all and I am glad someone who did
was able to fix things so that it is better.

Not that we never have problems any more,
but the problems are taken care of.

This could be a parable of another problem we have,
not just connection with internet service provider
but with provider of all things, God.

This problem is not on his end but on ours.

We malfunction, we sin, we break connection.

Solution is not just to ignore it, wait for it to get better,
but to do something, to repent, to restart.
Good news of Easter is Jesus has come to fix connection,
to reconnect us to God, with the result
that we can also connect to each others.

GOD GIVES LIFE TO SHARE IN THE LIGHT
SIN'S LIES LEAVE US ALONE IN THE DARK
JESUS RETURNS TO FORGIVE AND GIVE JOY

GOD GIVES LIFE TO SHARE IN THE LIGHT
³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that
you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is
with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
⁷ ... if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship
with one another,

We are created to be connected.
Great art is meant to be seen, great music to be heard.
Great literature is meant to be read.
God is by nature creative. He is by nature loving.
The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
is by nature in intimate relationship with each other
And this loving relationship of persons of the one living God
expresses itself by sharing life in order to share love.
We are created to be in loving relationship with him
and also with each other.
When God created, he said, "It is not good for man to be alone."
So God created marriage. He said "be fruitful and multiply"
God created families, communities, the church.
Our relationship with God is designed to be connected
to our relationships with each other.
When God planned to save us by sending his own son
as a descendant of Adam and of Abraham,
he didn't give them just a single line of heirs.
That could theoretically have done the job.
But he gave huge families that became great nations.
When Jesus came, he gathered disciples,
not just so someone was around to tell story when he left
but to be group in relationship with each other,
to witness by being a picture of our relationship with God,
caring, sharing, supporting, forgiving.

We learn how to have a relationship with God
by our relationships with each other and vice versa.
No wonder John says later in this letter,
if someone says he loves God but does not love brother
he is a liar: doesn't know what he is talking about.
When God brings people to faith, he does it by his word
but he doesn't ordinarily choose to do it
by a voice from heaven or appearance of an angel
but by people who have a relationship with God
going to other people and sharing what they know.
No wonder, when people come to faith & join a church,
unless they have several friends in that church within year,
they tend to drop out again,
John says we (plural) have seen and touched and heard,
& as result we have testified, proclaimed & declared to you.
So that, by v. 6, his readers are part of the "we".
When we have faith in God, we need to share it with others,
not just because others need to hear it,
but because it is part of nature of faith that it is shared.
This is why we come together to worship, share in Bible study
because the Christian faith is not a solitary thing
but is sustained & strengthened by being shared.
John says this means walking together, not alone in dark,
but in light, where we can see and be seen. But, he warns...

SIN'S LIES LEAVE US ALONE IN THE DARK

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{2:1} My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

One of worst punishments is solitary confinement.

One of worst things that can happen to young person today
is losing phone/device by which they connect to others.

Worst thing that can ever happen to us is hell
which is simply being separated from God.
But this is what happens as a result of sin.
Luther describes sin as being curved in on self.
Instead of caring about relationships with others,
instead of loving God & neighbor, we care only for self.
This is what broken human nature is like.
Sin, selfishness, self pride, is poison that destroys relationships
with other people and with God.
It hurts others causes them to pull back.
Shame causes us to hide, blame pushes others away.
And part of nature of sin is that we want to keep it to ourselves.
We want to keep it a secret, not talk about it.
Our whole society wants to ignore sin,
Let's not say anything is wrong
because then it is easier to ignore how I do wrong.
The solution relationship problems is tolerance of everything.
But this only allows us to be close together without touching,
which is not the same as genuine relationships that risk
touching the sore spots of sin within each of us.
And unless we are willing to open up those sore spots,
to the light, to God, to each other, they cannot be healed.
Superficial relationships say, "How are you?" "Fine." "I'm good."
and if our sin, faults, brokenness, does happen to slip out
in a mistake or a failure, we say to each other,
"Forget it." "That's OK" "No problem."
But John says, that's not really true. That's a lie.
And the first person we lie to is ourselves.
If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not IN US, because we are in the dark,
where we hide, separated from others and from God.
Lies and darkness are not good for relationships.
The only way to take relationships and fellowship seriously
is to take sin seriously and to deal with it openly.
Trying to avoid sin avoids genuine relationships.
What is needed is truth and confession so there can be
forgiveness and genuine healing.
John says he writes this so that we don't sin.
But if we ever say we don't sin, we are lying.
So how can I keep from walking, continuing, in sin?
It is only by God taking away sin with forgiveness.

God is not just benignly benevolent or apathetically tolerant.
That would mean he doesn't really care much about us.
He is genuinely loving, which means he cares about us
and cares about our sin enough to deal with it.
If we say we have no sin, we are also calling God a liar
but God tells us the truth.
In common confession we say, "I a poor miserable sinner."
not just because I feel poor or I feel miserable
but because this is what God's word tells me.
It says I am poor, with nothing to offer to God
and miserable because I am under God's wrath.
But it also says that if I confess my sins, God forgives,
just like that! Because that is what he is waiting to do.
Forgiveness is not ignoring sin, saying it doesn't matter,
because that just leaves it there.
Forgiveness is taking away sin, paying the debt.
If sin doesn't matter much, then forgiveness doesn't matter,
and so Christ doesn't matter and is irrelevant.
But John says, Christ totally matters

JESUS RETURNS TO FORGIVE AND GIVE JOY

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—
⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
^{2:1} ...But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

John is referring back to what he experienced in today's Gospel.
Jesus comes back to his disciples with real life
that can be heard & seen & touched,
Not just alive in their memories or sensed spiritually.
First thing he says is "Peace be with you."
His resurrection means restoration of relationship
with those who abandoned and denied him.
Once he died on the cross, he had totally finished
saving us from sin, by paying for them all in our place.
Once he had descended to hell to announce his victory,
he had totally defeated the devil & his schemes.

Once he had risen from the dead, he had defeated death
and opened up the way to eternal life for us.
But he didn't just return to life, he returned to us.
instead of going straight back to heaven,
he comes back to his disciples, because purpose of all this
is restoring our relationship with God.
Result is also restoring relationship he gives us with each other.
Next thing he does is announce forgiveness of sins.
Not just that he forgives us, but we can forgive others.
This is his plan for how we receive his forgiveness,
through our relationship, sharing together in the church.
So, as we gather here, he comes to us again today
in a way that can be touched, with his body and blood.
He says here is forgiveness for you & to share with others.
And as often as you eat this bread & drink this cup
you are proclaiming Jesus death & resurrection.
So next thing in Gospel is sharing truth of resurrection.
At first Thomas fails to believe testimony of eyewitnesses,
but Jesus says blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have believed.
This is what John says in this letter. We heard, saw & touched.
This means Jesus is alive.
This means God gives us life together with him.
Because he is the propitiation for our sins.
Propitiation means appeasement, reconciliation,
he has restored the relationship with God.
And this, in turn, brings us into relationship with each other,
which is what makes our joy complete,
because joy is meant for sharing with others.

GOD GIVES LIFE TO SHARE IN THE LIGHT

John says he writes this so that we can have fellowship
with God and with each other
Because that is what the life God has given us
is designed to be like.

SIN'S LIES LEAVE US ALONE IN THE DARK

John says he writes this so that we do not sin
because sin destroys real relationships

JESUS RETURNS TO FORGIVE AND GIVE JOY

John says he writes this so that our joy may be complete
because it is in sharing together a relationship with Jesus
that there is true joy now and forever.