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Sermon Delivered by: Pastor Jesse Harden

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 **Sermon Recording:**

<https://thefoothills.church/sermon/walking-in-the-light-letting-god-heal-what-sin-has-fractured/>

As you read through this sermon, may the words of Scripture and the reflections that follow draw you deeper into the love of Christ. Feel free to print this message, share it with others, and return to it often as you meditate on God's truth.

Walking in the Light: Letting God Heal What Sin Has Fractured



**DO YOU SEE AND CONFESS THE WAYS SIN IS
FRACTURING FELLOWSHIP?**

Summary:

In 1 John 1:5–2:2, John calls us to walk in the light by honestly facing the reality of sin and the ways it fractures fellowship with God and one another. Sin is fundamentally a failure and distortion of love, and walking in the light means refusing to minimize or deny it. Instead, we bring it honestly before Jesus, trusting that his light exposes what is harming us, heals what has been broken, and restores us to the shared life of love we were made for.

Main Scripture Referenced: [1 John 1:5-2:2](#)

Full Transcript:

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 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.

God, would you open our minds and our eyes and our hearts to your word? Lord, I pray that you would just be seen for all that you are, and that we would willingly step into the fullness of your light and your love and the life that you provide.

In Jesus' name, amen.

We have a couple of people in our church at New Creation that have a pretty high mold sensitivity. You know, black mold is supposed to be real bad for you. For some people, it's deadly. And we have a couple of people in our congregation that are really sensitive to mold, and they had horrible mold problems.

Now, I've never been one to take mold seriously, I'll be honest, because you open it up and you're like, "Oh, there's mold. Spray some bleach on it, paint over it, cover it up." But apparently that doesn't do anything. And it still festers. It still lives. It still releases all these horrible spores into the air.

And it can cause really, really bad, damaging health problems for people, especially when you have a sensitivity to it.

And so we had a roof leak at our building earlier this year, and it's dripping. And I took out the drywall and everything like that, and it was this persistent thing that we couldn't figure out. And the people with our mold problems and trauma around this are like, "Jesse, you gotta take care of this."

Well, it was only leaking for a couple days, right? I was like, "I don't see anything." And so my tendency was to want to ignore it. Let's just close it up. We put some new drywall on there, you can't see it, and ignorance is bliss.

I wanted to hide it. But the way to really kill mold is actually—there's a lot of stuff to really kill mold—but one is light. You have to take it out of its darkness, out of its environment. It grows in the darkness and in the moisture, and you have to expose it, and the light has to shine on it.

Ultraviolet light is one treatment that they give to it, and it will kill that which kills us when it's brought into the light.

Light is interesting. Light kills and consumes the things that are harmful to us. Light is really good. To be in the light—you can't survive. Things can't survive. Sunlight will actually disinfect. It has a bleaching power. It kills that which is killing us.

Also, though, light is necessary for life, isn't it? A plant can't live in the dark, and humans can't live in the dark. You can't do it. You will suffer tremendously. You will become sick. You need the light. Living organisms need the light. It's called photosynthesis, I think I remember from my homeschool days.

Right? So light also restores and flourishes. It brings what is necessary to life to the surface and creates an environment of flourishing. It also kills that which kills us and is harmful. It's powerful.

And here John says, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all."

Now, this isn't a new idea that John invents. He is pulling from a long tradition and standing in a history of the Hebrew Scriptures teaching God is light.

David sings—the Lord, David says, "is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

You know, when kids are afraid, what do they want you to do? Turn the light on. It banishes the darkness. God is our light.

James names God's light as the unchanging center of who God is: "Every generous act of giving, every perfect gift is from above,

coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

The character of God is light.

Now God is light. In the beginning, what does he do on the first day of creation? In the beginning God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. He’s the source of light. He is light. He’s the source of light and life.

And so then he has a people, the people of Israel.

He makes a covenant with Abraham and Moses and David, Isaac, and the people of Israel are not just to be receivers of the light. They’re to walk in the light. They’re to be bearers of the light. Right? They carry this light into the world. He calls the people to carry it. And in their shared life together, they are to visibly display the God who is light and life and love.

Isaiah 42 says, “I am the Lord. I have called you”—speaking to the nation of Israel—“I have called you in righteousness. I have taken you by the hand and kept you. I have given you a covenant to the people, a light to the nations.”

And then he says in Isaiah 49, “I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

So that was the calling of the people of God: to be light bearers.

What is our vision statement, our mission statement? Right? Pursuing God. We pursue God and reflect the light of Jesus. We stand on good, solid, biblical ground. The people of God are to be light bearers. We're to walk in the light, reflect the light, so the world can actually see what God is actually like.

So how did Israel do as light bearers? Pretty good? Scale of one to ten, how well? Five? Six? That's a pretty good score. And C's get degrees, right? C's get degrees. I don't know.

No. They fall short. They slip into darkness, dimmer and dimmer, failing to reflect the beauty and the light that God meant. They distorted God's love.

They were intended to, they're invited to share life in God's love: loving God, loving others, loving creation, receiving love and giving love and bearing this light of a shared life and love. And so they become buried under darkness.

But then who comes along? The true representative of Israel, the servant prophet the prophets prophesied. His name is Jesus.

Jesus, right? The light in the Gospel of John. Right in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. The Word was God. Then it says, verse five, he was the light, light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it. He says the true light was Jesus, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

So here comes God's light into our darkness once again. And Jesus himself calls himself—he says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

All right, so here's this biblical picture of light that John is also using. And he's saying God is light. And then he's inviting us to walk in the light, just as God had invited the people of Israel to walk in the light, just as Jesus walks in the light and invites his disciples to walk in the light.

And then Jesus, of course, in the Sermon on the Mount says—he's speaking to Israel. That's why it's important to have Israel in mind as we think about the gospel and the good news. Jesus is retelling the story of Israel. He's kind of gathering a people to be what he always intended them to be: bearers of light, a community of love in which all the nations could find their home and rest and healing.

And so in Matthew 5:14 he says, “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.” And then, of course, he has that whole thing, “Let your light shine,” right? “Don't put it under a bushel,” that you make a cute little children's song.

But this is about the desire. This is about the vocation of the human race to be bearers of light and not let it be hid.

All right, so John opens this letter with, “God is light.” He’s not just handing us a nice poetic metaphor. He’s telling us who God is, and he’s telling us our vocation as humanity, what we are called to do and to be. And he’s reminding us of what Jesus has made possible for us once again: to actually have fellowship with the light, to walk in the light, to bear witness to the light.

And so let’s go back to last week. Remember, we looked at the kind of beginning of the letter. First John says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, which our hands have touched, we proclaim this word of life,” and it goes on. It’s talking about Jesus.

And in Jesus, what do we have?

We have koinonia. Remember fellowship, fellowship with God and with one another. And he says, “I share this with you, that your joy might be complete.”

So then John says, “This is the message we have heard: that God is light.”

So these concepts are related: this community of people walking in the light of God. They share koinonia. They share fellowship. They walk in relationship with God and with one another.

And this shared life of love, this koinonia, this fellowship, is light, walking in the light. It is the light that we bear.

So koinonia. This brings us to all this talk about sin.

All right. I think First John—I said last week—you remember how many times First John uses the word love? Yeah, like 51 times. The word for sin, I don't remember exactly, but the word for sin is used over 20 times. I think it's like 21 times. So it's half the references for love, is sin. And in these verses it's used about nine times. All right? Just in these short verses. So we're talking a lot about sin.

All right. Sin in this context—it's important I set that whole context there—because what is sin?

I think oftentimes we think of sin as breaking rules, as a personal kind of a checklist. And I did this. I didn't do this. I said I was supposed to do this, I didn't do this.

What is sin in this concept of God and the world is made, and this koinonia, this fellowship?

Let me just tell you: sin is the fracture of koinonia, of fellowship. Sin is whatever distorts love and fractures the life we were meant to share with God, with each other, and with creation.

Sin is a relational problem. It's what breaks fellowship. It's what betrays the love we're supposed to share with one another.

Righteousness, which will be used here, this word is—you can break it down—it means right relationship, to be in right relationship. So to be unrighteous is to be in a broken relationship.

It is to have betrayed a commitment you were to make to your fellow human being or to God. It is to break the relationship, betray love.

This book, as I said, uses the word love 51 times, and it's all about the joy that we experience in a common life together. And so sin is that which fractures relationship.

Now, you gotta listen here. Here's a quote. Okay, I'm sorry, but here's a quote from theologian Nancy Meyers. She says, "I have come to apprehend sin as the state into which I am thrown whenever I choose, consciously or not, to act in a manner that impairs or severs the bonds of love between me and my fellow creatures, between me and the God present to me through those creatures."

Did you hear that? I know it's hard to follow a quote like that, but love, she says, is whatever impairs or severs that relational connection that we have with God and with other people.

So it's not a checklist. It's not a private ledger of rules. It's a break in the bond that was supposed to hold us together, that bond of love.

It's missing the mark of what we were made for, was a life of love. When we miss that mark, when we miss the intention of our life, the vocation of our life, we sin. We miss the mark. We go the wrong way.

It's a distortion of love. It's a betrayal of love. It's choosing self-preservation, self-promotion, pride, rather than connection with God. It insists on being served rather than serving and living in a life of interdependent love.

So John here is naming the tendency in us to sin. And he's going to answer some objections here, because do we sin? We sin.

Now, apparently, people in John's day were denying that sin was a very big deal, that they sinned, and that sin was even a thing. Right? And there's people in our midst that believe the same thing.

And so John's going to kind of address this. He's got six if statements. All right? Six if statements. Three if statements that have to do with denying sin and three if statements that actually provide the solution for sin.

All right. So chapter one, verse six. And you can actually—I should remind you—you can get your own Bibles out too. But we will go back here.

Here's the text, verse six: "If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness," what do we do? "We lie and do not do what is true."

So the first claim is—the first tendency is that we want to minimize our sin and say that it doesn't impact our relationship with God and with others.

We want to believe that I can still have fellowship with God. I can have this intimate, shared life, this koinonia life with God and with other people, and it doesn't really impact my relationships. It doesn't fracture. It doesn't contribute to the pain and suffering in the world.

All right? So that's claim number one. We want to minimize sin and say it doesn't impact our relationship with God or with others.

I find Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, said this. She said, "You love God as much as the person you love the least."

Think about that for a minute. You love God as much as the person you love the least.

Because sin is a relational fracturing of relationship, and the fellowship we share with God is the fellowship we share with one another. To love God is to love your neighbor. To love your neighbor is to love God.

So if we claim we are followers of Jesus and that we walk with God and we do not love, we lie.

That's next week. John ties darkness to hatred of a brother. He'll make that direct connection. To walk in darkness is to hate a brother or sister. To walk in light is to love a brother or sister. That's later in verses seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven.

All right. Second, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

So the second claim is that a person can be entirely sinless. Like, we just—sin isn't anything. I don't have sin. I don't know what you're talking about. It's not just that my sin doesn't impact other people. It's that it doesn't exist.

What sin? I don't know. I've got nothing to apologize for. It's just me. It's just who I am. Just the way I am. It doesn't matter. I don't have to apologize.

So it's a self-deception that the world's condition and our behavior have no inherent link. All right? There's no—I don't have any part to play in the mess that's all around us. There's no connection between my behavior and the problems of this world, the suffering of my family, or anything like that.

All right, the third one, verse ten: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us."

This one just takes it a step further and says, not only do I not sin, I have never sinned.

There is a teaching out there, even still prevalent today, that once you become saved, you don't sin anymore. You might have sinned before, but you don't actually—you can't sin as a Christian. I hope that's not true because I sinned already a few times today.

So this is saying, I have no sin now. I have never sinned, ever.

And again, this is all denial. So basically all of these if statements, there are three ways of doing the same thing. They're hiding. They're hiding from the reality of brokenness, sin, and our contribution to the suffering in the world.

They're ignoring. They're denying. They're dismissing. They're hiding. They're managing the distortion rather than being honest about what is happening.

It's hiding from God. And that's what the first human beings did in the garden, right? They hide, and that's a break in relationship because what does God do? He goes looking for them. Right? This is a relational break.

And then what happens? "Well, it wasn't me. It was my wife. She did it. She made me do it. I didn't sin. What sin?"

You know, we hide, we manage, we project, we scapegoat.

But when we hide, it goes back to that mold, right? When we hide that sin, when we're not honest about it, when we think, "Oh, it's not that big a deal. I don't want to deal with it. It's expensive. It

costs too much to deal with that mold,” it actually festers. It multiplies. It kills.

It destroys not only us, but everyone around us. It impacts us. It breaks koinonia down. It breaks love down. It breaks the world apart.

And we shrink. We isolate. And the very sin we deny exists begins to kill us and harm us.

So what’s the solution?

This is beautiful because I always like to say this: I’ll be honest with you, I don’t like to talk about sin too much because I think it gets—here’s the deal. When we talk about sin, sometimes we make God obsessed with sin.

I don’t think God is obsessed with sin. I think he’s obsessed with life. And sin is a barrier to life, and so he addresses it.

But he’s obsessed that you would walk in the light and that the darkness that is killing you would be removed.

So we’re not to be sin-obsessed people. We’re to be life-obsessed people, love-obsessed people.

The kindness of God is what leads us to repentance. He says, “I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.”

And so he’s always bringing forward this life that we can have.

And I love that part with Jesus as he looks on Jerusalem, and he grieves and laments and breaks down weeping, and he says, "How long have I longed to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you refuse."

He's obsessed with life. He's inviting us out of the darkness, out of that which is killing us, into his light.

So he never leaves us alone. For every if denial of sin, there is an if statement proclaiming the goodness of God in meeting us in our sin and in our hiding and in our darkness.

That light refuses to let us stay in the darkness, inviting us out.

So verse seven: "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."

Verse nine: "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Chapter two, verses one and two: "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."

This isn't just a select few that get this. This is for everyone. God to be a light to the nations. God is a light that shines on every corner of the world, of the planet, of the cosmos.

So here is the invitation. Here is the good news. We all have sinned. We've all contributed to the suffering and the pain and the disruption and the disconnection in the world.

You can bring that sin into the light. Right? He says, "Walk in the light."

You bring that sin into the light and you will be met not with shame, not with "I told you so," not with "Do better," not with "Try harder." You will be met with the light that consumes all that is killing you and nurtures all that is necessary for flourishing. Right? That double-sided nature of light is true of God.

It kills what's killing you. It will melt away and banish the sin that is killing you and killing your relationships. And it will also breathe life, photosynthesis of your soul. It will bring to life all that needs to flourish in you.

Cleansed. Forgiven. Advocated for.

Verse two: Jesus. Jesus is the solution. Jesus. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Now this echoes something specific. You go back to Leviticus 16 in the Old Testament. This is the Day of Atonement, and this word that is used, "atoning sacrifice," translators have a hard time translating it.

There's atoning sacrifice, there's propitiation, there's expiation. I'm not going to get into all of that.

The big fundamental proclamation here is that Jesus is a solution to your sins. Right? He is the atoning—and that word is not a biblical word. It's a word that tries to translate what's happening here.

Atonement is at-one-ment. It's an at-one-ment. It's a reconciling of God and humanity. It's a dealing with that which has ruptured that relationship, that is fractured, all of that. And so it's the healing.

So this word, actually, in the Day of Atonement, there was the mercy seat, a physical thing on which the blood of the sacrifice would be placed.

This is saying Jesus—one way to read this—is that Jesus is our mercy seat. He is the mercy seat. He is the place where God's provision and our sin meet.

And we are made one with God and one with one another. He is the place where our sins are expunged. They are cleansed. We are made clean, and we are restored and healed back into this koinonia, this fellowship which we were designed for in the Garden of Eden, to enjoy life with God, one another, and all of creation.

So Jesus is the love of the Father made present to our sin. He is the light that is the solution and brings us wholeness.

I've got a really long quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer here, but I'm not going to read it because I don't think it's probably the thing.

But here's what he says. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*—it's a wonderful little teeny book—but he talks about the danger of keeping sin in the dark.

He says, "In the darkness of the unexpressed, it poisons the whole being of the person. This can happen even in the midst of a pious community."

Some of us are sitting here today and we're in community, but we're not in koinonia. We're not in fellowship because we're holding on to something. We're allowing it to fester in the dark.

And it's poisoning not only you, it's poisoning us. It breaks down fellowship. It breaks down koinonia.

And he says, in confession—this is the beautiful—it's a terrifying thing because we don't want that thing in the light, do you? Oh man, I want it in the dark. I don't want to talk about the mold. It's not real. It's too expensive.

But if I bring it out into the light, he says, in confession, this is saying the same thing as God about the impact of the sin, about the reality of our sin.

It's not hiding it. It's not managing it. It's not ignoring it. It's not dismissing it. It's not projecting it onto someone else.

It's saying, "I'm going to say the same thing. I'm going to bring it into the light."

"In confession, the light of the gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart. The sin must be brought into the light. The unexpressed must be openly spoken and acknowledged. All that is secret and hidden is made manifest. It is a struggle until the sin is openly admitted. But God breaks gates of brass and bars of iron."

And then he talks about the beauty of it being brought into the light. There's nothing to hide, and it's brought before God and brought before brother and sister.

And now what is there to fear? It's been named. It's seen.

I see your sin. And I don't point at you particular, all of you. And you see my sin. And we just stand naked before God.

And then we realize, you know what? Yeah, it's the emperor without any clothes. Right?

And it's freeing to realize that none of us, none of us, are without sin. And all of us can live fully and freely in the light of God.

And what does that light do? Remember, that light kills what's killing us and enlivens what leads to our flourishing.

And so the last thing I want to say is, when we talk about confession of sin, I think sometimes we think very transactional.

Jesus is our sacrifice. I need the blood of Jesus to forgive my sin, so I sinned, I ask for forgiveness, he gives me forgiveness, we're done. It's transactional. My sin for your blood. Your blood for my sin. Done.

I think God is more relational than that. I think this imagery of "walk in the light as he is in the light" is a much more intimate, relational process.

Confession is a walking with the Lord in the light and sitting with Jesus. He doesn't want to just know what you did. He already knows, by the way. He doesn't want to know just what you did. He wants to get at what's going on beneath the surface.

Why did you lash out at your precious little girl right before bed? What was that?

Is it really that she got up and asked for a glass of water?

Or is there something deeper happening in your soul? Maybe it's something that happened with you and your parents 30 years ago.

I envision—I had this picture a few years ago, and if I would have thought about it before five minutes before here, I would have done it—but you grab a trash bag, right? Just think of gross trash, a diaper. I know the Youngs got diapers in their trash bag, all kinds of stuff.

You, I think of, bringing out our trash and Jesus, like, literally sitting with us, just sitting on the floor and just picking it out.

“Look at this thing.”

And Jesus isn't like, “Oh, gross, get that away from me.” He's like, “Where did this come from? How has this been impacting your life? How is this impacting those around you? What's going on here? What needs to be healed? What's the wound underneath this thing? What's the desire that you're looking for that can only be met in me? I want to meet that desire, but you pursue it on your own. It's got you this dirty diaper. Let's talk about it.”

This is Jesus. It's not a shame-filled, guilt-ridden kind of deal. It's a very relational, loving, “Let's talk about this. Let's get it into the light. Let's heal. Let's kill what's killing you, and let's heal what leads to life.”

So the invitation here is to step into the light. Don't let it fester. Don't let it grow.

Let God, the fullness of God's light, life, and love, meet the fullness of the ways you have failed to follow God, and let relationship be restored. Let life flood in.

So what might this be? I don't know what yours is. I don't know how you—and why you have failed to love.

It could be a grudge you're holding on to. It could be contempt for someone even in this room that feels very justified.

It could be a habit of just self-focus that quietly takes from people you claim to love and uses people for your own benefit. It could be words spoken in anger that harm and cut down. It could be envy, comparison.

I don't know. You know your list, and I would ask that you would just sit with Jesus and ask him, "Where is this coming from?" And let the light of God fully expose and heal what is keeping you from life.

So I want to give you just a moment to have that conversation with Jesus. Maybe something comes to mind right away. Maybe the Holy Spirit will bring something else to mind.

And again, God—I want you to envision him smiling with soft eyes, so glad you have come to deal with what is killing you. Because he is obsessed with life. He's obsessed with your life. He's obsessed that people would experience light, the light of fellowship.

And so he's so glad that you would bring this into the light with him.

So just be still for a moment.

Ephesians 2, I believe, says that in Christ's flesh, across the wall of hostility was broken, was torn down—the wall that divides us, the

wall that divides us vertically and horizontally from one another, the wall that breaks fellowship with God and with one another.

We have all been sinned against. We've been harmed and hurt, and we've also contributed to the harm and hurt that is experienced in the world.

We're both victims and perpetrators of it.

And Jesus, through his life, his death, his resurrection, has made a way for the full light of God to kill all that is killing us and to restore to life and quicken all that brings flourishing.

So this is a confession of sin before we come to the table that reminds us—and I love it—we come to this meal, the very body and blood of Jesus, symbolically, mysteriously, as one people we come every week.

It's an act of demonstration of that which was divided coming together at the mercy seat, the place of God's provision and love meeting our divided and distorted community.

We come together, and we are one in the one blood and one cup and the one bread, fed by his body.

So here is a confession of sin that the churches prayed over the years.

And so let's—would you stand? And let's pray it together.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Numbers 6:24-26

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