



Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



HG170 *Walking In The Light* True Light

1 John 1:1-10

Home Group Study Notes

9 September 2018 - Revd Paul A. Carr



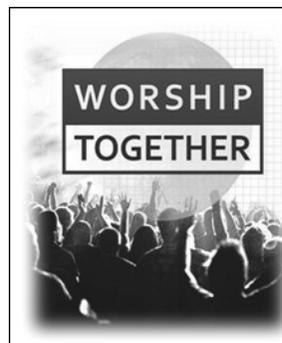
PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION BEFORE THE MEETING!

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful for your discussions.



Welcome (10 mins) Ice Breaker

Share one experience and/or event (whether on holiday; at home; or in a newspaper, magazine, book or on TV) which has had an impact on your Christian life over the summer.



Looking Upwards (10 mins) Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...

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Part of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry



HG170 *Walking In The Light*
True Light
 1 John 1:1-10
 Home Group Sermon
 9 September 2018 - Revd Paul A. Carr

Introduction

Set against a climate of disunity and doctrinal deviation, John called his readers to walk in the light and truth of God. The parallels between what John saw taking place in the first century, and what’s happening in much of the world today, are uncomfortably close. In the midst of ever-increasing controversies/divisions within the Anglican Communion, John’s letter is a vital and powerful word to us to hold fast to what the Bible teaches and to avoid falling prey to the false ideologies of our day. This series will, I hope, enable us to understand how we can best respond to the times in which we live and, more importantly, grow in our passion for the gospel and the glory of God as revealed in His word.

John sets out his stance vs1-3. When John wants to cultivate fellowship with a group of people, he writes them a letter filled with theology. When Paul wanted to prepare a missionary fellowship to support him, he wrote a theological book called Romans. ***The deeper and stronger you want your fellowship to be, the more theology must be shared.*** In other words, there is no significant fellowship among people who do not share the same view of Jesus. ***Shared doctrine is the basis of Christian fellowship.*** That’s quite a profound thought isn’t it?

The great danger of current Christian thinking is that people often attempt to preserve fellowship among believers on the basis of shared experience rather than on the basis of shared theology. Many people argue that current controversies are simple disagreements on issues of human sexuality and argue: “As society changes so must the church” but it’s important to clarify that human sexuality in itself is not the ‘big issue’. Rather, it’s the tip of the iceberg. Because beneath this there is something much bigger/deeper going on and that is the fundamental issue of Scripture, it’s authority, its sufficiency and its clarity. When the fundamental truths of Scripture are denied, another gospel is being proclaimed and that is very dangerous territory indeed.

It might be worth reading through the CoFE website to learn about the decisions made by the House of Bishops and General Synod and then read the GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference) *Jerusalem Statement* to understand the international concerns within the Anglican Communion www.gafcon.org/resources/the-complete-jerusalem-statement As well as revisiting the 39 Articles. Both of which you can download from website.

In order to create, and nurture, Christian fellowship you have to talk about who Jesus is and what he taught. That’s what John begins to do.

4. Why is repentance such an important part of the Christian life? What are the consequences if we are unwilling to repent (See 1 John 1:6–10)?

5. How does “walking in the light” encourage you to live your life before God and others (See John 3:19–21)?

6. One of the reasons John wrote this letter was to promote joy (1 John 1:4). What are some ways we can sustain our joy in God and others?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. What are your thoughts, if any, on some of the current disagreements within the Anglican Communion worldwide? How might these affect us here in Billerica, if at all?

2. Why is it important that John, and others heard, saw, and touched Jesus, and didn't just relate a story someone else told?

3. Is it possible to have faith in God and continue living in sin? Why or why not?

God Is Light

Vs5: *"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."* What does John mean when he says that God is light? One answer would be that God is truth. We see this in vs6: *"If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth."* He might have said, "When we walk in darkness, we do not live according to the light." But he puts truth in the place of light, suggesting that truth is virtually the same as light (1 John 5:20)

In other words, God is light means that God is the source and measure of all that is true. Another way to put it would be that nothing is truly understood until it is understood in the light of God. This is why Proverbs 1:7 says: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."*

I think John also chose the word light and not truth in vs5 because it carries a positive connotation that the word truth may not always carry. For some, the word truth may leave open the possibility that the truth of God is a dark truth — a foreboding truth, a truth that is not inviting. John chooses the word light because it promises that the truth of God is a truth full of joy and hope.

In John's Gospel he said of Jesus: *"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1:4–5). Matthew, writing about Jesus, says: *'The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned'* (Matthew 4:16). And Jesus said of himself: *'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness'* (John 8:12). This is the message that John heard from Jesus and that Jesus came into the world to reveal. It's the foundational message of this book.

Walking in Darkness

Vs6: *"If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth."* What does it mean to walk in the darkness? Walking in darkness means being controlled by desires for this world instead of desires for God. John 3:19: *"The light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."*

When you walk in darkness, you live a life full of self-indulgence rather than a living to please God. When you walk in darkness, you are controlled by the desires for prestige and power (see James 4:14). When you walk in darkness, lying becomes 'being economical with the truth'; adultery becomes 'extra marital relations' and cheating becomes 'creative accounting.' And on and on it goes. This is the very opposite of what it means to have fellowship with God. Fellowship with God means that you see things the way he sees them and have the same desires he has. If we are controlled by desires for the world instead of desires for God, it doesn't matter whether we say we have fellowship with God or not; we don't have it. We walk in darkness.

It's true that our eyes adjust to the absence of light and we can become accustomed to darkness - and that's as true spiritually as it is physically. The Bible teaches that if we choose to push God out of our lives, light becomes absent and we're left with darkness (Romans 1:21). It's true that our eyes adjust to the absence of light and we can become accustomed to darkness - and that's as true physically as it is spiritually.

Have you, I wonder, become accustomed to living in darkness? Have you become accustomed to loving darkness rather than light? *“If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.”*

Walking in the Light

Without light in the physical world we find ourselves in trouble. We’ve probably all had the experience of wandering around the house in pitch darkness, perhaps as a result of a power cut, or walking up the stairs without switching on the light - accumulating bruises and scrapes as we trip or collide with furniture. The presence of light allows us to see more than hazards or problems: it allows us to see both the beautiful and the ugly. Conversely, light can also allow us to see things that are wrong or dangerous and, whilst some people prefer darkness, light allows us to avoid danger.

Vs7: *“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, purifies us from all sin.”* Walking in the light is the opposite of walking in darkness. It means seeing reality for what it is and being controlled by desires that accord with God’s light. If God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, then he is the bright pathway to the fulfilment of all our deepest longings.

Light Reveals Darkness

Vs8: *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* Now sin isn’t a very PC word in our society, is it and the idea of ‘sin’ can be very uncomfortable for us. To even suggest to someone that they may have done something wrong is nothing short of an insult. “I’ve not broken the law. I’m not a criminal.” Are responses I’ve heard over the years. The Apostle Paul, picking up on this theme, wrote: *All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). Whilst we might concede that *some* people are sinners, you know, the really evil people – the murderers, rapists, the paedophiles, drug traffickers.

But that doesn’t include us and certainly not our family and friends. We’re basically good people with a few faults here and there. We’re confident that our good points outweigh the bad. And if we compare ourselves to criminals we may think we come off quite well. But when we compare ourselves to Jesus, we see how far short we fall. Sin effects everyone in our world.

Many people today have little concept of what sin is and even if they consider that they may be sinners, it’s considered to be a minor and private matter. And because it’s so trivial, in their eyes, they think it must also be trivial to God. This overlooks the fact that our sinfulness is a very serious condition. Vs10: *“If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”* The claim to sinlessness is not only self-deception, but blasphemy. It amounts to calling God a liar.

The Bible gives examples of every kind of sin from which we need forgiveness: from the rejection of God’s plan for their lives by Adam and Eve in the Garden; to the sins of greed; lust; adultery; murder; as well as the more subtle sins of: envy; betrayal; dishonour; hypocrisy; self-interest; arrogance; cowardice; possessions.

Despite the distance of time and culture that separates the world of the Bible from our own; we catch an unflattering glimpse of ourselves don’t we? We are no different and suffer from many of the same symptoms.

The Bible says that the reason *the world* is not the way it’s supposed to be is because we are not the way *we’re* supposed to be. Jesus taught that the greatest problem we have is the human heart: *“What comes out of you is what makes you “unclean”. For from within, out of your hearts, come evil thoughts ...* (Mark 7:20-23).

There’s no doubt that sin that has worked its way into every aspect of being human. Sin has enslaved us (Romans 7:14,23), pushed our lives off course (Isaiah 53:6) and made us unclean (Psalm 51:1-2) and will, if untreated, ultimately and eternally destroy us for, as Paul reminds us in Romans 6:23: *the wages of sin is death.*

Light Disperses Darkness

Thankfully, God’s cure to our sin is forgiveness. Vs9: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* The mark of the saint is not sinlessness but sin-consciousness! Confession doesn’t mean that we are perfect people. The battle against ‘sin, the world and the devil’ is a battle that lasts a lifetime. What John says is that when the truth enters in, its light reveals sin and through our confession light disperses the darkness.

However, the ultimate goal of confession is God’s forgiveness, A complete restoration of our relationship with Him. The OT talks about God’s relationship with his people as that of a loving father with a child (Deuteronomy 1:31) or even as a spouse with an adulterous partner (as in Hosea). In the NT, particularly the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), we have the image of God as a loving and welcoming Father. Perhaps the strongest images of the restoration of the relationship are found in Revelation 21&22, when we read about the new heaven and the new earth, how God lives amid his people; how the relationship that was broken in the Garden of Eden has been restored. This is the theology of what John is writing about here and you start to get a glimpse as to why theology and doctrine really matters in our faith, in our relationship with God and in our relationships with others.

Conclusion

Sometimes the image of Christianity is terribly killjoy, severe, interested primarily in divesting you of your happiness and spoiling your fun. John argues in this passage that Jesus came for your joy. Vs4: *“And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.”* The Gospel is for your joy. Even the painful task of confessing sin is for your joy. *Our* joy in God’s fellowship is made complete in the joy that we share with others in God’s fellowship.

Emmanuel Church Text for 2018

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship.

And by him we cry ‘Abba Father.’

Romans 8:15