



1 John

Lavish Love

Staying Friends with God

1 John 1:5-10

Message #2 of 10 – S706

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Staying Friends with God

1 John 1:5-10

Opening Comments

- Turn to **1 John 1**
- Today, we continue our series **Lavish Love**
- Have you ever thought of relating to God as your friend?
- That is how God related to Abraham **2 Chronicles 20:7**

Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

- James says that Abraham got that title because he believed God
- And then Jesus talking to His disciples said **John 15:12-14**

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

- There is an old hymn, "What a friend we have in Jesus"
- I don't know about you, but I love the idea that I can relate to Jesus as friend #BFF
- The best possible life you can live is in fellowship with the God who created you – as a friend of God
- But to live the best possible life, you need to live your life His way, not yours
- And we need to know what to do when we don't do that
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **1 John 1:5-10**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Staying Friends with God**
- I said in a previous message that every relationship is in one of two states
- It is either in a state of growth or it is in a state of decay
- John wrote in verse four that this letter was so that their joy would be full and I quoted **Psalm 16:11**

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence *is* fullness of joy; at Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

- So the key to being full of joy is proximity to God – you need to be close to God – and that is referring to our relationship with Him
- If you want to be full of joy, you need to be a friend of God
- And the first thing you need to understand is a little something about His nature
- **1 John 1:5**
- This really is huge – God is light – no darkness
- Light in the Bible is a symbol for holiness, perfect holiness
- Darkness is a symbol for sin and wickedness **John 3:19**
And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- John is telling us that God is perfectly holy, there is not even a tiny speck of darkness in Him
- Paul in Timothy says God lives in ‘unapproachable light’
- So, if we are going to be friends with God, then holiness is going to be a big deal to us
- God even told us that through **1 Peter 1:15-16**
...as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ **because it is written, “*Be holy, for I am holy.*”**
- If I am going to be a friend of God, then holiness, or moral perfection is going to be my goal
- If it isn’t John has some harsh words
- **1 John 1:6**
- If you say you are a friend of God and walk in darkness = liar
- What does it mean to walk in darkness?
- The word ‘walk’ in that verse is in the present tense and speaks of a continuous action
- John is referring to someone who is living deliberately in a habitual lifestyle that God calls sin
- They are lying to God and to themselves and they are not practicing the truth
- This is not talking about imperfect Christians
- Example: Saying I love golf, but I am not very good at it, doesn’t make me a liar

- Some Christians, maybe a lot of Christians could say I love God, but I'm not very good at it – read what the Apostle said about himself in Romans 7
- Walking in darkness = walking or living in sin – habitually – on purpose
- People don't like to think about sin – they don't want people to tell them they are in sin
- And so they lie to God, to others, and to themselves
- Here is one of the ways they lie – they relabel sin
- Let me illustrate – Here is a Monster energy drink
- Be honest – how many think these are okay (give or take them, you might not drink them, but it doesn't bother if someone else does), how many think they are good, how many think they are bad, how many don't care
- We relate to sin exactly the same way
- If we were to have a debate about the good or bad of Monster drinks, there might be passionate people on both sides, some not sure where they stand, and some just standing by watching the fireworks
- And so this is what we do (put a label on the can)
- So now we have a can of flavored, colored water – that is a less offensive title
- But what is inside the can? Monster energy drink, right?
- Listen: sin does not lose its sinfulness by giving it a less offensive name
- An affair = adultery, hook-up = fornication, adult entertainment = pornography, stretching the truth = lying
- If you are walking in darkness, choosing to live in habitual sin, you are not a friend of God, God's friends don't act like that
- They're not perfect, but they are not habitually living in sin
- There is a better way to live
- **1 John 1:7**
- Rather than walking in darkness, walk in the light
- That means we choose to turn away from the darkness, from the life of habitual sin, to a life of holiness

- The main means that we have for doing that is the Word of God

Psalm 119:105

Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

- And John says two things will result from walking in the light
- First – Fellowship with one another
- This is one of the signs that you are in fellowship with God
- If you are walking in the light than you will be experiencing deep sharing of things in common via association and participation
- Walking in the light draws us to those who are also walking in the light, and binds us to them
- If you are not feeling that at this church – the answer is get connected
- Start participating in the life of the church more than just on Sunday morning
- The second thing walking the light results in is – the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin
- God can't close His eyes to sin He is holy – must judge sin
- As Christians we live in the reality that Jesus took our judgment on the cross
- Jesus took our penalty upon Himself – but sin still has power over us
- We are all born with a nature that sins
- When we are saved we are given a new nature – a nature that wants to please God and not sin
- But the old nature is still in us, and it still wants to sin
- And no matter how closely we are walking with God in the light, we are still going to sin
- But John says because we are walking in the light, His blood cleanses us of our sin
- Verse 9 is going to tell us how we appropriate that cleansing, but we simply need to understand that by walking in the light we are cleansed of every sin every day, every time
- John deals next with the person who will not acknowledge their sin
- **1 John 1:8**
- Remember, John is dealing with the proto-gnostic belief that it doesn't matter what we do with our body – only the spirit matters

- And through secret knowledge and ritual initiation they could achieve spiritual perfection
- In our culture we see people resisting the label of sinner for two basic reasons
- First – they are not responsible – they blame circumstances, upbringing, someone else – both Adam and Eve did that in the Garden
- Second – they don't see any big sins in their life – haven't murdered someone, or committed adultery, or robbed a bank
- Jesus dealt with that deception Matthew 5:28

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- Quote **William MacDonald**

What we are is a lot worse than what we have done.

- In God's eyes you don't have to have committed the sin to be guilty of it, if it is in your heart or mind
- Thankfully, God gives us the perfect detergent for our sinful soul
- **1 John 1:9**
- The word confess means 'to say the same thing as'
- What that means for us is that we call our sins exactly what God calls them
- We tear our politically correct label off our sin and show it to God
- To confess also means that we agree with God about how He feels about that sin – Father, I agree this sin is wrong – against you – please forgive me
- Then says God is faithful and just to forgive

- God has promised to forgive us **Jeremiah 31:34**

No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

- To say God is faithful means that He **always** keeps His promises
- The really powerful one is that he is 'just to forgive'
- That means it is the right thing for Him to do – Why?
- Because God the Father punished His sinless Son in our place
- Forgiveness is extended to us, not based on what we have done or haven't done but based on what Jesus did

- Sin is a part of human life, but it doesn't have to break our fellowship with God
- Confess your sin – look up to God, believe that Jesus' blood was poured out to cleanse you of sin – and God will forgive you every time
- Next verse is similar to verse 8
- **1 John 1:10**
- We are all sinners – if you won't admit it, making God a liar, which He is not – not walking in the light
- Cannot experience the love of God and the fullness of His grace in your life
- Want to finish with a story
- There was a mother who had gotten her young son ready for church
- All cleaned up in his Sunday Best, hair combed, and shoes shined
- She told him to stay in the house because it had rained during the night and it was muddy outside
- While she wasn't looking the boy slipped outside to play for a few minutes before church
- He slipped and fell flat in the mud
- He came crying in to mom and said, 'I'm sorry'
- She said, 'I forgive you'
- Now, she wouldn't leave him in those filthy cloths, but she will clean him up
- And then hand-in-hand she will walk with her son to church
- Your heavenly Father wants to do that with you
- When sin makes you dirty, come to the Father who loves you
- You can't clean yourself, only the shed blood of Jesus can make you clean
- And confess and He will clean you up and then walk with you
- And if you choose to run out and get dirty, you come back again, and let Him clean you up again, and again, and again, and again
- He loves you too much to leave you dirty, but you must come to Him
- Amen–**Pray**