

1: The Basic Message

1 John 1:5-9

John and the other disciples spent altogether about three and a half years with the Lord Jesus Christ. They learned quite a lot from Him, and they wrote about it. That's what we've got in the New Testament. That's a lot of teaching. But the basic Christian message can be summed up in just these few verses. This gives us the whole reason why God sent the Lord Jesus Christ into this world in the first place.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you,

[5] 神就是光，在他毫无黑暗。

This, verses 5 to 9, is a summary of the main message that the disciples heard, which came from God through Jesus Christ. And John now declares it to his readers.

that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

这是我们从主所听见、又报给你们的信息。

The message begins with a description of God. God is light, and He's only light. He doesn't contain any darkness at all. That's the one true living God. There can only be one God who is all-powerful, all-knowing and in control of everything. I have to say that, because men have invented all kinds of gods for themselves, gods who aren't gods at all really. The gods men invent get angry, they get jealous, they have emotions. In fact they're all too much like us.

But the one true God isn't like that. He is light. In Him is no darkness at all. He is good. He's only good. He's always good. That's what it means when it says He is light. So He's not like these man-made gods, doing what He fancies at the time, sometimes this, sometimes that, so you never know what He's going to be like. He is always good, so everything He does will only ever be good. There'll always be a good reason for everything He does or allows to happen.

But, you might say, if God is always good, what about all the evil in the world? Where does that come from? Well, it doesn't come from God, because we're told here that *in Him is no darkness at all*. Darkness, or evil, comes from men.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

[6] 我们若说是与神相交，却仍在黑暗里行，就是说谎话，不行真理了。

John tells us here that men walk in darkness. And Christ said elsewhere that they don't even want to see the light:

John 3:19

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

[19] 光来到世间，世人因自己的行为是恶的，不爱光，倒爱黑暗，定他们的罪就是在此。

John here specifically mentions people who walk in darkness but at the same time they say they have fellowship with God. In other words they're lying to us. What can we learn from this? Well, if you want to know anything about Christianity, be careful where you get your information from. They might be deceiving us, like these people here. But not only that. Even the best Christians, who have the best of intentions, will still make plenty of mistakes. They'll say wrong things, because they're still learning about the faith. They'll get angry when they shouldn't, they'll do wrong things and regret it later, and so on. So please don't dismiss Christianity because of wrong words or actions you've seen from some Christians. To find out about Christianity, the only truly reliable source we have is to go to Jesus Christ Himself. Not men, not a church, but Jesus Christ Himself. Find out how He lived, and what He had to say. Then you won't get a distorted view.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin

[7] 我们若在光明中行，如同神在光明中，就彼此相交，他儿子耶稣的血也洗净我们一切的罪。

A Christian is one who walks in the light as God is in the light. Or at least that's what the Christian's aim is. That's what the Christian wants more than anything else, to be like Christ. Christ was perfectly sinless, the only one who has ever lived who never at any time walked in darkness. In fact He said of Himself:

John 8:12

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

[12] 耶稣又对众人说：我是世界的光。跟从我的，就不在黑暗里走，必要得着生命的光。

Christians are far from perfect. We have Jesus Christ as our ideal, but we don't live up to it. But to the extent that we do *walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another*. Christians fellowship is something that the world can't really understand. The world lies in darkness. But Christians are those who, although maybe still very dark in themselves, but they are at least aiming towards the light, they are wanting to be Christlike. Christian fellowship is the fellowship of all those who are heading the same way. We encourage one another along the way towards the light. People who want to continue in darkness won't understand that.

Ephesians 5:8

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

[8] 从前你们是暗昧的，但如今在主里面是光明的，行事为人就当像光明的子女。

Every one of us was originally born in darkness. But Christians have come to the light. We hate the darkness and want to get away from it. Christ has given us light, so we want now live our lives as children of light, not as children of darkness any more. But how do we come to the light in the first place? Well, *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

What does this mean? Well, men, who live in darkness, put Jesus Christ to death on a cross, despite the fact He never did anything wrong. Men naturally don't like Him, because He tells them they're ways are evil. Christ said of Himself:

John 7:7

The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

[7] 世人不能恨你们，却是恨我，因为我指证他们所做的是恶的。

But what these men who crucified Christ didn't know was that His death would become life for all those who put their trust in Him. That blood which He shed on the cross cleanses His people from all their sin. The Bible tells us that:

Hebrews 9:22

without shedding of blood is no remission [of sin]. 若不流血，罪就不得赦免了。

In the Old Testament, this concept was symbolised by a series of animal sacrifices. The animal sacrifices didn't take away sin, but they pointed forward to the day when a sin-bearer would come to do just that. And that sin-bearer is Jesus Christ.

And in order to make sure His shed blood takes away our sins, all we need to do is believe on Him, trust in Him to cleanse us from all sin, and He will. Call upon Him to do this. Pray to Him. But do we really want this? Many people don't want to talk about their own personal sins, because they don't want to believe they have any:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

[8] 我们若说自己无罪，便是自欺，真理不在我们心里了。

But all of us have sins before God that need dealing with, we must acknowledge that fact. In fact we don't really see how dark we are inside at all. That only comes the nearer we get to the light. But this is what God wants us to do, acknowledge our sins before Him, and come to the Saviour.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[9] 我们若认自己的罪，神是信实的，是公义的，必要赦免我们的罪，洗净我们一切的不义。

Do we recognise our sins before a holy God? Do we want cleansing from them? The good news is that we can have this freely if we really want it. All we have to do is pray. Confess our sins to God, not to anyone else, nobody else needs to know about them, just

between each individual and God. And if we do genuinely confess our sins to Him, *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* That's it. Just come to God through Jesus Christ confessing our sins to Him. We don't have to do anything difficult, just come to Him.

Do you want a clear conscience before God? He is there for the asking for all those who are genuine, take Him seriously and confess their sins to Him. That is the basic Christian message that John had heard from God, and is giving us here. Yes, there's plenty more teaching the Lord Jesus Christ came to give us, the Bible is full of good things for us to learn about how we should live, but this is the one message that can begin a new life, a life of following Christ, of wanting in our hearts to be more and more like Him. This is where the Christian life begins.