

Walk in the Light

As Christians we are constantly faced with decisions and choices in our lives and wish to make them according to the will of our Father in Heaven. Even with the help of God's Holy Word this is not always straightforward, but there is one principle which can and should make our decisions, both easier and pleasing to God. It is that we should ---WALK IN THE LIGHT !

One of the first things a Christian learns is the definition of sin. 1 John 3:4, "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*". We learn that the penalty of sin is the end of life.

Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" As we progress in our study of God's word, we find it to be rather like an onion. We just begin to understand one layer and then a deeper layer of meaning is exposed.

We come to understand that sometimes, a smaller point of the law gives way to a greater principle. Jesus taught us that, by healing on the Sabbath Day, and by showing us that preserving life itself, can sometimes take priority over lesser laws, Mark 2:25-26, "*And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?*" And yet we are plainly told that God's Eternal Law should always guide our footsteps, Romans 7:1, "*Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?*"

So, we must come to the realisation that one of the reasons Jesus Christ came, was to reveal to us HOW to perform God's Law, HOW to understand it's true intent, HOW to put it into practice in our lives, Matthew 5:17, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*"

Whenever we have any difficulty in understanding God's will, there is then, one deep and abiding principle that should guide us, 1 Peter 2:21, "*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*" There is only one man that we should ever follow – that man Jesus Christ, who is our living example - who walked this earth so that we can know **how** to walk – and follow in His steps.

Even today in God's Church, there are those who do not grasp this simple instruction. They come up with their own well intentioned, logical sounding ideas, but though they present them as doctrine, we cannot find them anywhere in God's written word. Because they conflict with the practice of Jesus Christ, they can divide us from the mind and will of our Father in Heaven!

If we are tempted to put such ideas, well presented as they may be as fitting into God's way of doing things, ahead of the Divine example of our Saviour, in effect we are rejecting Christ's light and Truth, as the following scriptures reveal. It is the apostle John who expounds this for us in chapter one of his gospel.

John 1:1, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* The ‘Word’ here is the Greek word, ‘LOGOS’ – which Vines Expository dictionary says means “the personal manifestation not of part of the Divine nature but the whole Deity.”

Here, was God walking with men, and being Divine he embodies divine communication in every way – what He said, what He did and the way He lived His life... . John 1:4, *“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”* We have joy because Christ is our salvation - our way to eternal life, John 1:5, *“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”* By His presence among men, the Logos brought an illumination surpassing that which had been available to men previously. His example provides for us a faithful witness of the very mind of God. John 8:12, *“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: **he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**”*

Jesus Christ is for us the ultimate source of all knowing and understanding, Psalm 119:105, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* His words and example are the light that should guide our path, but there are those who should know better who flinch from that light, John 3:19-21, *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”*

We cannot afford to flinch from that light. The Jews hid from it – John 1:11, *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not,”* but we must absorb and reflect it, Matthew 5:14, *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid,”* just like the moon reflects its source of light – the sun, so we should transmit that light to the world.

If we believe Him, v 12, *“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you”*, and we will never reject His example. Christ suffered because of his loyalty to His Father’s word. We cannot expect to walk in His steps and find it easy. Hebrews 13:12-13, *“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”*

If you chose to live and teach truth, you must be willing to be unpopular. Like Jesus you might find yourself rejected by the majority. If we stand up for God’s word and follow in Christ’s steps we will share his reproach.

I recently heard a minister say that Jesus accepted the authority of the Sanhedrin, right or wrong. Could that be true? Jesus was full of grace and truth, given by His Father. To have accepted error, or anything which transgressed His eternal law would have been totally incompatible with his Divine character.

Hebrews 13:8, *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”*

God cannot compromise with the truth, unlike we mere mortals, and Jesus could not permit it of himself. John 1:17, *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* The Law was only made known by Moses. Jesus brought its grace and TRUTH. He is our true paschal lamb, the true bread of life. Just as we eat unleavened bread during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we take on His righteous character by emulating His way of life.

That's why we need to closely study how Jesus lived, eg John 7:37-39, "*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"*" and John 1:18, "*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*" Christ is as one with His Father. His life declares His Father – or makes Him known, as the NRSV has it.

Now, through Christ, we may understand the will of God and the way of salvation – the pattern of life that is both grace and truth!

Now, the question is, do we really need to follow God's written word, walk in Christ's light, and accept the truth of Christ's example, especially where the latter illuminates and verifies the former? How do we receive salvation?

Lets note first, that we need faith to receive salvation, Hebrews 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*" Faith is not blind belief. Faith means trust, based upon God's past performance – His creation, fulfilled prophecy, and our answered prayers. We are saved by faith that Christ's sacrifice enables our sins to be blotted out! It is a free gift which we receive through faith.

However, faith, if it is alive, is active faith! James 2:26, "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*" If we have no works we delude ourselves that we continue in faith. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise! That means obedience to the Law of God, following the truth revealed by the Divine example of our Saviour. Romans 8:3-4, "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" Jesus Christ's example amplifies and fulfills the Law! Those who walk in the spirit are enabled to fulfill the righteousness of the Law!

Some preachers imply that works are not a 'salvation matter'. Acts 16:30-31, "*And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*"

But notice that Paul added to that verse, Acts 16:32, "*And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*"

Jesus Himself answered a similar question. Matthew 19:16-19, "*And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, **keep the commandments.** He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*"

Obedience is faith in action - 1 John 2:3-4, "*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" You cannot have faith without obedience, for they are two sides of the same coin, both necessary to please God.

Some though, read the specific word of God on a particular point, then read how Jesus carried it out Himself as our example, and then go on to deny our need to follow in His steps! The calendar which determines God's Holy Days is an example. James 2:20 is addressed to such people - "*But wilt thou*

know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

So if we truly seek to do God's will, we must seriously examine our approach to the word of God, and the example of the living WORD of God, 1 Corinthians 11:28-32, *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."*

Do we believe and follow the written word? Do we walk in the light of Christ's example? Only then are we truly discerning our Lord's body and blood which we annually accept on the evening He called Passover. 1 John 1:6-7, *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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."*

Remember that vital instruction in 1 Peter 2:21, *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, **that ye should follow his steps.**"* If we will follow in His steps, we can have confidence our sins are forgiven, and that we remain on the only path to Eternal Life , walking in the Light!

