

If - Then

1 John 1:5-2:6

Preface

Illus: We use If - Then logic every day. If the weather is pretty this weekend, then I am going to work in the yard. If the weather is not pretty, then I am going to clean house. If God shows absolutely no favor upon me this weekend, and this is my weekend for deep punishment for all of my wrong doings, then I will go to Hattiesburg and visit my mother-in-law.

Computer programmers are familiar with the concept of If-Then statements. If-Then statements are precise logical statements that tell a computer program how to respond to the user's action. If the user clicks the Print button, print the report. If the user clicks the search button, display the search screen.

God's word uses some very precise If-Then logic as well. Watch for the If-Then logic in our text this morning.

Scripture

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But 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.

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

¹My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 1:5-2:6 NIV

Introduction

In this text, we find the most important if-thens we will ever encounter in our life. These are the if-thens by which we must stake our life; the choices and consequences that will determine our happiness, peace and stability as Christians.

Colossians 1:10 speaks of Christians bearing fruit and "growing in our knowledge of God."

1 Peter 3:18 speaks of Christians "growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Philippians 2:12 says we are to "continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling."

Clearly being a Christian is a growing process. Christianity is a process by which we **trust, obey and build up faith**. As our faith becomes stronger, we trust more, obey more and build up more faith. This is the process of growing in our understanding of God.

Illus: I asked a man if he had any more work lined up. He said, "I do but I don't know where they are yet." That is faith talking.

John writes to Christians who seem to be stalled in this process. He points out some very important if-thens; choice-consequences.

Content

1. If we walk in the light, then we have fellowship with God (1:7)

⁷But 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.

What does it mean to walk in the light? You might answer, "To not walk in darkness." Then we must know what it means to walk in darkness in order to know if we are walking in the light.

Illus: I remember when we had the Christmas program and I played the role of a preacher. I stood over in the corner area of the sanctuary in the dark until it was time for my scene. When the spotlight was turned on me, I suddenly became illuminated. Everyone could see me and I could certainly see myself. At that point I became conscientious of my every word and my every action. Nothing was hidden whatever I did was freely exposed to all present.

When walking in the light, God exposes our sin and we become aware of our wrong doing. But if we are walking in darkness, we are hiding from the truth that the light exposes.

John warns in verse 6 “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.”

When we choose to be disobedient to the word of God and we pursue our own selfish desires, we are walking in darkness. That is to say we are not walking in the way of Christ but rather the way of the world and our own selfish desires.

But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another. The Greek pronoun translated “one another” in verse 7 actually refers to two parties (**God and Christian**). It is not referring to fellowship with other believers but fellowship between the Christian and God.

The fundamental thing we share with God is the light of Jesus Christ. It is through Christ that we have fellowship with God

2. If we claim to be without sin, then we deceive ourselves (1:8)

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

John recognized that his statements might be construed as if a Christian will be sinless. This is certainly not the case. Notice that we are to walk *in the light* rather than *according to the light*.

This is very significant. To walk according to the light suggest being just like Jesus; sinless. **That is simply not possible for sinful humans.** But to walk in the light is to be aware and responsive to the light.

Being in Christ does not mean we are perfect. On the contrary, being in Christ means **the truth of the light is controlling and influencing our actions.** We become ever conscious of our sin and we must not attempt to deny it. To do so is to deceive ourselves.

Self-deception is extremely dangerous. Self-deception leads to self-destruction. To convince ourselves that something is not wrong when we know it is wrong is a futile action. The sin will lead us deeper and deeper into sin and conviction.

As Christians, we must be ready at all times to acknowledge any failures God’s light exposes to us. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves.

3. If we confess our sins, then God is faithful to forgive & purify us (1:9)

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

In our hour of weakness and desperation **we can find the power of grace at the cross.**

Illus: I was talking with a gentleman this week about the process of confession and purification. He gave me an excellent illustration by referring to a pearl in an oyster. The pearl begins as a small grain of sand. It is a thing of discomfort for the oyster. It is unpleasant but when properly worked and refined it becomes a valuable jewel.

Such is the case with Christians and our sin. **God never waste a hurt.** God calls us to confess our sins. **In confession the process of healing by His grace begins.**

But grace does not work without confession. Confession is to acknowledge our wrong doing. Only God knows the full extent of our unrighteousness. But as we grow in our understanding, God exposes things to us that are sin in our life. At that point **we must confess in order to experience forgiveness.**

Jesus instructs us seek forgiveness in the model prayer; “forgive us our debts.” **Confession is the way out of darkness and back into the light.**

If we confess, full and complete forgiveness is promised. John says God is faithful to forgive and purify.

4. If we know Christ, we will obey His commands (2:3-4)

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Illus: Someone emailed me this week and I want to read to you what they said. *“In reading The Bible I am seeing how much God asked of His people and I am realizing how little He asks of me and how hard it is just to do that.”*

God calls every Christian to obey His commands. As we walk in the light we become more knowledgeable of the ways of God. We

must be willing to obey in order experience the process of growing in our faith.

The response to sin is confession. The response to confession is grace. The response to grace is obedience (repentance).

God holds us responsible for what we DO with what we KNOW.

So often, we talk about the power of God but we seldom make ourselves available to experience the power of God because **we are not willing to be obedient.**

Illus: Being obedient means obeying God when your flesh wants you to do otherwise.

Young adults want God to send them the right mate but they disobey God by living together.

Believers want God to bless them financially yet they lack integrity in their business dealings or refuse to return a tithe to God.

Men ask God to bless their marriage yet they find themselves viewing pornography on the internet.

Women ask God to bless their marriages yet they refuse to honor and respect their husbands.

Young people want God to give them guidance about their future yet they go places and do things they know do not honor God.

These are but a few examples of how we miss God's blessing by failing to be obedient.

People often say, "I just want God to be real to me." **God will be real to you when you treat Him like He is real by obeying Him.**

Conclusion

John outlines for us a process by which we trust Christ; we strive to live in Him. We recognize that we sin but upon confession we are forgiven and purified. In response, we obey and grow. God's love is truly amazing.

Video: Show the video Never Been Unloved

Illus: Perhaps you can relate to some of those "Uns" Have you been unfaithful, unapproachable, unfit, unworthy, unrighteous, unteachable, unreachable, unwilling, undesirable, unwise, unsure, uneasy, unbroken, unreliable?

Just remember, **you have never been unloved.**

God invites you to bring all of your undesirable faults to this altar today and lay them at the foot of the cross. You have never been unloved. God loves you and If you give your life over to Him, Then He will raise you up to live in the light.