

“True Moral Purity!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Belize Sabbatical; Haiti** (another 5.9 this am; & another aftershock tonight); **I leave Sat.**
1. Pray for Haiti.
- B. **Crazy birds in Belize** - They're brown, They have big eyes. They lay in the road & wait for car lights to come by. Then they dart at the last second, *through* the light, to try to find bugs. **I only had one wise one.** He cruised just in front of our van lights, maintaining the speed of the van, constantly staying in the light, able to grab bugs as he flew.
1. **I wonder how many Christians live the same way?** Instead of *walking* in the light, they dart every once in a while ***through*** the light.
- C. **Fellowship** is the *key theme* in the first 2 chapters. (see 1:3a,3b,6,7)
1. **Fellowship** has to do with our **communion** with Christ, **not** our **union** with Christ, which is **sonship**.
 2. Our **daily fellowship** changes; our **sonship** remains the same.

II. **TRUE MORAL PURITY!**

- A. **GOD'S MORAL PURITY!** (5)
- B. **God is light** - The nature of God determines the *conditions* of fellowship with Him.
- C. It seems so many Christians today are coming to the bible for **personal growth** **rather than** trying to understand the **character & nature** of God.
1. Oh, *personal growth* should become a bi-product of that understanding.
 2. **Example: What is the 1st story in the bible?** Right, the story of Job.
 - a) And **what is his story about? Pain?** *And in it the secret steps to dealing with pain?*
 - b) **No,** it seems to teach...its about **life** & there aren't any **secret steps** at all.
 - c) It seems the 1st thing God wants to communicate with humanity is **life is hard**, & there is **pain, great pain in life**, & its not given any explanation.
 - (1) **Rather, God offers to this pain, or this life experience, Himself!!!**
 - (2) He communicates to us, He is God.
 - (3) **And if He can do all Job says** (read ch's.38-41) **then He could be trusted!**
- D. **John** has sought to define for us who **God** is: **God is Spirit**(Jn4:24); **God is Love**(1Jn.4:8); **God is Spirit** (Jn.4:24); **God is True** (1 Jn.5:20); **God is Light** (1 Jn.1:5); **Hebrews adds, God is an all consuming fire** (Heb.12:29).

- E. If **light** is moral **purity**, then **darkness** is moral **evil**. God & sin are mutually exclusive.
1. If God is light then fellowship w/Him is dependent on **moral purity**. (vs.6-10)
- F. **OUR MORAL PURITY!** (6-10)
- G. Here comes 5 conditional statements - "If".
- H. **Walk in the light** = dealing honestly with sin.
1. **Salvation** is a matter of life & death, **but fellowship** is a matter of light & darkness.
 2. If you lie to **God**, to **others**, & to **yourselves**, you will lose your fellowship with God & your character.
- I. For fellowship to be maintained with God, **what provision has He enabled?**
1. **Honesty & Confession of sin.**
 2. **Corrie Ten Boom** made a keen observation about the futility of rationalizing our sins. She said, **"The blood of Jesus never cleansed an excuse."**
- J. If men deny this provision, **what can we conclude concerning them?**
1. **We lie(6); we deceive ourselves(8); we make him a liar(10)!**
- K. Here's what's happening here...There are **3 different claims** false teachers were making. Each moving a **step farther** from the truth.
1. **First false claim:** that a person could sin & still be in **fellowship** with God (6,7)
 - a) The question went, **"Is it possible to live in sin & still have fellowship w/God?"**
 - b) **Walk** is a *present tense verb*. Commonly referred to as a person's moral activity.
 - (1) In this tense then it draws attention **not** to a **few dark acts**, **but** a **habitual lifestyle** of walking in the darkness.
 - (2) The **Gnostics** believed that **knowledge** was the key to life & that **righteous living** was not important!
 - (a) Though *Gnosticism* is not a formal religion today many people claim to have fellowship with God, even though they live a life of sin. **John taught religion w/o morality is an illusion.**
 - (b) **Can the crazy Belizean bird fly both in the dark & light?**
 2. **Second false claim:** that sin is not a part of one's personal nature (8,9)
 - a) To claim you **live in sin** but that sin doesn't affect your **fellowship** w/God is one thing. To claim that you **have no sin** is quite another!

- (1) Note *sin* is singular, so its the principle of sin, or the sin nature.
 - (a) (i.e.) The heretical teachers claim to have been cured of their sinful natures because of their *gnosis*(knowledge).
- (2) **You deceive yourself, you're out of touch w/reality!**

3. **Third false claim:** that the enlightened have **never** sinned (10)

- a) **To** claim you **live in sin** but that sin doesn't affect your **fellowship** w/God is one thing. **To** claim that you **have no sin** is another. **To** claim you've **never sinned** is the most blatant denial of all.
- b) **And its climatic ascension of error...it would make God a liar!**

L. (7) **If we walk in the light** - what a true believers lifestyle is like.

1. Again, *walk* is a *habitual lifestyle* of walking in the light of God's revelation in conformity with His moral standards.

M. **We have fellowship with one another** -

1. Are there relationships that you could *naturally deepen* by **introducing** your spouse, friend, or family member **to Christ**?
2. Are there relationships in which you realize your level of *expected intimacy* is **too high since** Christ is **not** a part of them?

N. (9) **Cleanse** - The blood of Christ does more than *forgive*; it *erases the stain*, "*it purifies us from all sin*"(NIV). [pres tense shows that it's a continual process]

1. This is the answer, **confession not denial** is the answer to our sin problem!
2. How confess our *sins* (plural).
 - a) Confession is specific & particular, **not** general.
 - b) **It involves consciously calling to mind each sinful I deed, 1 by 1, admitting w/God that it was wrong, & then forsaking the sin.**

- (1) **Prussian King Frederick the Great** was once touring a Berlin prison. The prisoners fell on their knees before him to proclaim their innocence, **except for one man, who remained silent.**

Frederick called to him, "**Why are you here?**" "**Armed robbery, Your Majesty,**" was the reply. "**And are you guilty?**" "**Yes indeed, Your Majesty, I deserve my punishment.**" Frederick then summoned the jailer and ordered him, "**Release this guilty wretch at once. I will not have him kept in this prison where he will corrupt all the fine innocent people who occupy it.**"

- c) **Key >> Christians don't deny their sinful bent.** They **acknowledge it &** then **confess** to God specific sins as they are brought to awareness.

d) Sin is forgiven, debt is released, stain removed. (what a great feeling when you save a favorite shirt that had gotten stained, & it comes out!)

- O. We said, if God is light then fellowship w/Him is dependent on *moral purity*. So what does moral purity look like?
- P. Is it a list of what you don't do?(dance, drink, cuss) Is it a list of things that make you feel better about yourself, or better than other people? Is it based on whether or not a person behaves? Or, is it to make/keep you *one with Christ*?
- Q. A god who says everybody can *do as they please* would be a bad god, a bad father, giving license for anarchy. Love creates rules, & forgives when they are broken. People would hurt themselves if they did anything they wanted. People do hurt themselves & others all the time by neglecting laws & rules....but what is the reason for morality???
1. David indicated in Ps.23 God led him in the path of righteousness for **His name sake!** (Not for David's sake, though it would benefit him; not for Pete's sake; but for God's sake!)
 2. The *reason/motive* is love for God & love for your fellow man.
- R. When you sin do you see it as breaking a rule of theology, or cheating on a lover?
1. If you roll a stop sign you're breaking a law against a system of rules.
 2. But if you cheat on your spouse, you've broken a law against a person.
 - a) The 1st is *impersonal*, the 2nd *extremely personal*.
- S. Our morality then builds **oneness & intimacy with Christ**. Which in this *relational setting* becomes the bond/glue which holds our **families** together, our **churches** together, our **communities** together. It becomes the voice of love to a bitter/hurt filled world.
1. Here's **moral** ideas presented in the NT. **They involve:** loving our neighbors; being one in the bond of peace; loving our enemies; taking care of our own business before we judge someone else; forgiving debt even as we have been forgiven; speaking in truth & love; & protecting the beauty of sex & marriage.