



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Second Sunday of Easter (B) – 1 John 1:1-2:2

Focus: *Not Deceiving Ourselves*

word of life

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8 (NRSV)

Read 1 John 1:1-2:2

Today’s passage is from the First Letter of John, but this short book of the Bible does not clearly indicate which John wrote it. Traditionally, it has been assumed the Gospel of John and the First Letter of John were written by the same person. At first glance, it appears they both share similar language and themes such as life and light/darkness. But, at times there is a different cadence and vocabulary as well. Modern scholars are not as convinced the same person authored both the Gospel of John and the First Letter of John.

1. *Compare and contrast the first verse of each of these books of the Bible attributed to John:*
 - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1 NRSV)
 - “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ...” (1 John 1:1 NRSV)
2. *Is it of importance to you to have the same author of both? Explain your answer.*
3. *How is “word” used in each of the above passages? Is the context the same?*

To complicate things more, this letter does not have the form of first century letters. Take a moment to compare the beginning of this book of the Bible to the way Paul begins his letters to the Romans, Corinthians, or Galatians.

Despite this confusion, it is refreshing to find familiar words. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9 NRSV)

4. *What comes to mind when you hear these words?*
5. *How is it possible to deceive ourselves?*
6. *Give examples of how sin blinds us.*

Whoever wrote these words had clarity about the power of sin in our lives. The author understood “that God is light and in [God] there is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5 NRSV) If we walk in God’s light, we are given the gift of *koinonia*—fellowship with others who can help us live out our life connected to Christ. (See 1 John 1:6)

7. *How does it feel to walk in darkness?*
8. *What is it like to walk in the light of God?*

It is impossible to be connected to God and continue to walk in darkness and sin. God lights the path and exposes our behavior—good and bad. With God’s light, we see there is another way of living. We confess our sins to God and receive forgiveness. Through it all, Christ remains our advocate. To walk in the light of God is to live as God intends for us.

9. *Do you find this light/darkness imagery helpful to describe sin?*
10. *What does it mean for Christ to be our advocate?*

word among us

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8 NRSV)

Certain statements, such as the one above, nail the truth. It is no wonder so many Christians include this verse as part of their worship. It cuts through our rationalizations and grandiose ideas about ourselves and reveals the bottom line.

1. Define sin.
2. Give examples of ways we deceive ourselves.

The truth is: We do not hit the bull’s eye. We are not perfect. We walk around with blinders, not seeing how our words and actions impact others and ourselves. We truly convince ourselves we are self-made and an island. Now that’s the truth.

3. Define truth.
4. Can we handle raw truth? Explain your answer.

An addict invests time and energy convincing others (and sometimes self) that there is no problem. All is well, but not really. When it comes to sin, we are all addicts. We cannot control ourselves acting like selfish two-year olds more times than we like to admit. We are concerned about our own interests rather than others, especially those in need.

But hear these words as well, “If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9 NRSV) There is more to the story than our sinfulness.

It is Jesus Christ who forgives us our sin.

faith practice in daily life

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper

This passage both convicts us of our sin and frees us from the power of guilt. We are reminded of the gift of forgiveness. No matter how many times we might hear this word of God, it has the potential of healing our wounds and soothing our soul—again and again.

We receive the body and blood of Christ both with the humility of those who are guilty and with the joy of receiving God’s grace. Thank God that God’s light keeps shining.

5. Without forgiveness, where would we be?
6. How does forgiveness feel like cleansing to you?
7. How does this passage speak to you in your daily life?

Prayer

Light of the universe, keep on shining even on those places of our lives we would rather hide. God of Light, keep on shining. Amen

last word

One day this week,
find time to pray in a spot which is dark.
Find time to pray in a spot which is full of light.