



Tunc Tezel

Walking in Twilight

1 John 2:3-14

INTRODUCTION

One of the awesome gifts of summer is twilight. The farther north that you go, the more you can experience this gift. Webster's Dictionary defines twilight as the light in the sky between full night and sunrise, and between sunset and full night. There is something almost magical about twilight. The heat of the day has passed, but the light lingers into the evening. If you are an early riser, you can experience a similar feeling in the morning. I very much enjoy the time when the darkness begins to fade, yet the sun has not yet fully peeked over the horizon.

Several years ago, our family took a trip to California, by car. We decided to drive through the night, so that the kids could sleep, and the trip would not seem so long to them. In the darkness of night, I struggled to stay focused and keep awake. But as the darkness began to fade, even before the sun had risen, I was filled with new energy. I was driving out of the darkness and into the light.

When I think about our spiritual journey, I believe that we are all walking in a spiritual twilight. For some people, their journey is leading them away from the dawn and farther into the darkness. But for those who have put their faith in Christ, we are walking out of the darkness into the light.

It would be great if we could honestly say that we have entered fully into the light of the glory of God in Christ. But if we are honest with ourselves, we are walking in spiritual twilight. Because of our sinful nature, the effects of the darkness are still present in our life. The difference is that we are walking toward the dawn. One day, the glory of God will break over the horizon of our life and we will never walk in darkness again.

Study 1: 1 John 2:3-6

All of us, from time to time, have questioned ourselves about our faith. I am really following Christ, or am I just playing games? John gives us a measuring stick to gauge just where we are with Christ.

1. What does John say is the evidence that we are walking with Christ?
2. Although perfection is our goal, how do we know that perfection is not our reality? Consider 1 John 1:8-10.
3. What is John's estimation of someone who claims to know Christ, but fails to do what he says?
4. John intentionally uses the Greek word for "know" to make his point. The Gnostics claimed to have knowledge of God, but failed to live godly lives. What is the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ?
5. How does living in obedience to Christ change a person's life?
6. What does it mean to walk as Jesus did?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What is essential if we are going to truly obey Christ's commands?
2. What is the difference between striving to obey Christ's commands and failing, and just ignoring them?
3. What does obedience say about our true relationship with Christ?
4. What are some ways that you can get to know Christ better?
5. How can getting to know Christ better enhance your spiritual walk?
6. In practical terms, what does it mean for you to walk as Jesus walked?

Study 2: 1 John 2:7-8

John took his readers back to a pivotal time for him and the other disciples. ***"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*** (John 13:34-35) This new command is at the heart of the Gospel.

1. Why is John reminding his readers that they have known this command?

2. Why is this command foundational to the Gospel?

3. In what way is John writing a new command to them?

4. John gives a word of encouragement to his readers.
 - a. How does John link his readers to Christ in vs. 8?

 - b. What does it mean that the darkness is passing?

 - c. What does it mean that the true light is already shining?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Before we can obey any of Christ's commands, what must we understand? Consider John 3:16-17.
2. When and where did your faith journey begin? What was involved in getting you started?
3. John is referring back to Jesus' command to love one another. Why is it not enough to just hear about Christ's command?
4. What does it take for Christ's old command to become a new command in our lives?
5. Where are you seeing the darkness passing away in your life?
6. Where are you seeing the true light shining in your life?

Study 3: 1 John 2:9-11

John finally gets to the practical application of what he is teaching.

1. What contrast does John make in vs. 9?

2. What is the difference between claiming to walk in the light and walking in the light?

3. Why is genuinely loving others a sign of walking in the light?

4. How can living in the light keep a person from stumbling spiritually?

5. John says that anyone who hates his brother is in the darkness.
 - a. What does it mean to hate one's brother?

 - b. How does the darkness distort a person's life?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Anyone can claim to have faith in Christ. What is the real measure of a person's faith? Consider Matthew 7:15-19.
2. What does it mean for us to love our brother or sister?
3. How can actively loving others keep us from stumbling spiritually?
4. What does it mean to hate your brother or sister?
5. What is the difference between getting angry with someone and hating them?
6. In what ways have you experienced the influence of the darkness blinding you to Christ's light?

Study 4: 1 John 2:12-14

In these verses, John uses a poetic form to communicate his message. This is classic Hebrew parallelism. The pattern is A-B-C, A-B-C. Some commentators see this as a reference to levels of spiritual maturity. John often uses the phrase “dear children” to refer to all believers under his care.

1. Why would John begin each phrase with “I write to you”?
2. What is John’s purpose in writing this section? How might this be an encouragement to his readers?
3. What encouragement does John give to his dear children?
4. What encouragement does John give to fathers?
5. What encouragement does John give to young men?
6. Who might each of these groups represent in the church?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Why do you think John used this format to communicate his message?
 - a. How does repetition help with remembering?

 - b. How does parallelism enhance the message?

2. Why is it essential that we know that our sins have been forgiven?

3. What does it mean for you to “know” the one who is from the beginning?

4. What does it mean for you to overcome the evil one?

5. What does it take for us to be strong in the Lord?

6. What does it mean to have the word of God living in us?