

Walking in the Light

We have all been forgiven. The blood of our Master Yahshua was shed for *all* sins, not ours only, but for those of the whole world! There is not a single sin that Messiah's blood does not atone for. The sacrifice is completely out of proportion to the offense. For those of us who have accepted Messiah's sacrifice, there is nothing that God holds against us. But that is not to say that Messiah is blinded to our condition. He still sees us where we are, the way we are, with our weaknesses and rebellions. Forgiven, yes, but not perfect by any means.

Our Master's work is not merely to have us forgiven; He wants to take us farther than that. God set the Israelites free from Egypt but He wasn't satisfied in just doing that. He didn't want a nation of freed slaves inhabiting the Promised Land; He wanted free men, confident in their identity, occupying the land of promise. Our Master doesn't want to merely free us from the penalty of sin and death (although that is the necessary first step). He wants to free us from the vicious circle, from the acts that lead to sin and death. Only then is He able to use us to enact the righteous ways that lead to life (in ourselves and others). Only pure vessels can be used for God's highest purposes. This is a fact of truth, not arbitrary exclusivism on God's part. We can only be in one orbit — walking one path — grafted to one tree.

The first step in allowing us to be used for these high purposes is to be freed from the slavery of our old mentality, self-image, and ways of relating. Our heart has been changed—a glorious instant miracle! For the first time in our life, we truly *want* to do what is right, but that doesn't make it automatic. We still fall prey to old desires, to paranoid ways of relating to people—defensiveness. We have a common fear. We fear that if our acts or thoughts are found to come short of the standard set by God or our conscience, that our *heart* will be suspect. We *know* our true desire is to do what is right and true and perfect, so we tend to hide that which doesn't measure up, because we fear we will be rejected as one who doesn't love our Master with all his heart.

Revelation is not the grasping of a doctrinal truth, or getting the gist of a teaching. It is *seeing* that which the light shines upon, good, bad, or indifferent. The light merely exposes. For us to *see* the light and what it is revealing, that is revelation. It may shine on the body of Messiah, or on God's word, but most of the time it shines on us. And most of the time, when it shines upon us, it reveals things we earnestly wish were not there, things we don't understand why are still there, things we recognize and hate, but somehow they haven't been fully dealt with. So comes our reaction:

"I already know this is in my life, I have already confessed it a million times. I hate it, I am ashamed for others to know that I still struggle with this. I have told my brothers before; there is no need to tell them again. This is my struggle. This time it will be different."

So we shove it under the rug. We may confess it to our Father, but that's like telling the mailman you just got a letter. We haven't fully realized that God—and our brothers—accept us the way we are, right now. Our acceptance to the table of communion with God and His people is through the blood of our Master Yahshua. It is eternally fixed. There will never be a time that the table will be approached any other way. The unchanging blood of our Master Yahshua has opened for us an unchanging way to fellowship with the Father and the household of God.

So God accepts us now. Not by what we have done, but by what our Master Yahshua has done. Now we are free to be open. Our work is to believe the One God has sent. That's no small labor, but it is a constant effort we must practice. As the light shines on us and reveals our true condition, we must *exercise* our faith to know we are still accepted. This is practicing the truth. This is the first step truth leads us to—to admit our failings and shortcomings without losing faith.

Jn 3:14-21 —“But he who *practices the truth* comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

Those who come to the light are not those with a good performance, those who know how to behave, but rather those who *practice the truth*. Practicing the truth is believing that the basis for our fellowship

with God and each other is solely upon our Master Yahshua and the acceptable sacrifice of His shed blood. If we believe this is truth and practice it, then nothing can separate us from fellowship with God and the saints. We become a people quick to repent because we are confident of our position in Messiah. We have no reason to hide anything. We walk in the light and allow the light to shine in our lives, to reveal the good and the evil alike.

The light doesn't shine on us without reason. God doesn't merely want us to be with Him. He wants to be *like Messiah!* This requires a molding process. We cannot bring it about by ourselves. It is not enough to be grieved about our condition and admit it to ourselves and God; we must be open about it. *Then* we practice the truth; then we share all things with our brothers, even our burdens. We believe we are loved because of our Master Yahshua. We humbly accept our place in Messiah because of what He has done rather than our efforts. We cease striving and enter His rest. By being open, by sharing our condition and struggles with those around us, by practicing the truth, by coming to the light, we will find ourselves being more and more at peace, able to accept ourselves, our brothers, and our Master. We will find ourselves content to be where God has us in the present condition we are in.

At this point, an important thing happens (not suddenly, but it develops). God is able to work in us and mold us, and the light purifies what it touches until that which it touches becomes light as well. Being open enables us to overcome that which we couldn't overcome in the dark (which is pride).

1 Jn 1:5-10 (NAS) —“If we say that we have fellowship with *Him* and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not *practice the truth.*” That is to say, if we say that we are in fellowship with God and are confessing our sins (to Him) and being open to our Father *without* doing that with our brothers, we're lying.

The next verse makes it clear. “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” Walking in the light *is* having fellowship with one another. You can't be open with God unless you are open with your brother.

Verses 8-10 is not dealing with your relationship with God, but obviously, with your brother. Verse 8 — “If we say that we have no sin (that is, say to our brothers that we have no sin) we are deceiving ourselves (by thinking we have confessed it to God) and the truth (the conviction that we are accepted by God and our brothers through the blood of Messiah) is not in us. We are still in the bondage of relating to and striving to be accepted by our brothers through our own righteousness and self-efforts.

1 Jn 2:8-11 — “The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.” If we are being closed because of our own shortcomings or struggles, we can't relate to or encourage a brother. We are not loving our brother or walking in the light. That brother is likely to receive accusations either about himself or about us for the lack of fellowship. Either way, our being closed opens him up for accusations and can be a cause for stumbling in him.

Verse 11 — “But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

That man doesn't know that in cutting himself off from his brother he is cutting himself off from God. He imagines that he is still in the light, walking in the narrow, but in reality he is straying. He is taking the side of the accuser of the brethren. In being afraid to confess our sins to our brother, we find ourselves caught in that trap. We accuse our brother. We are saying that his basis for receiving us is our performance, not our being in Messiah.

Being open is not merely confessing our sins. Walking in the light is letting our brothers know where our heart is what our inclinations are, even what temptations we have, whether we yield to them or not. We must “walk in the light as He is in the light.” How did the disciples know about Messiah's temptations? He was alone in the wilderness. How do we know what happened in Gethsemane? All the disciples were asleep. Only because He led an open life, sharing all things with His disciples, was He able to (in righteousness) command them (and us) to do likewise.

Unless we are open, even in our struggles against God's will — unless we express our heart whether it is good *or* evil, we cut ourselves off from life.

Ps 81:15 — “Those who hate the Sovereign would pretend obedience to Him (outward obedience without inner submission) and their punishment will last forever.”

Even an enemy of God, such as Saul of Tarsus, who openly oppressed the people of God and honestly openly expressed where he stood, could find grace and forgiveness. He was open and so he could be touched.

King Saul on the other hand, always tried to keep up a façade of goodness. He wouldn't openly admit anything, unless it was dragged out of him. He insisted that he was guilty of no wrong until judgment was brought upon him, then he admitted his guilt, but only to avoid the judgment (1 Sam 15:28). Conversely, David, when exposed, was open and freely admitted his guilt and repented, regardless of his fate. Of the two kings, whose sin was greater? Murder 1st degree and adultery? Or failure to get rid of a few sheep, and sacrificing to God incorrectly? The seriousness of the offense is in direct proportion to our own reluctance to admit our sin. Those who feign obedience, who obey without surrendering their hearts, cannot be reached. By isolating themselves, they put themselves in a place where they can never be touched or rescued.

Consider the situation with Pat Sato (there are many others). The first time she had great doubts and fears about being in the Body, she expressed them openly, and through the ministry of the Body, she could receive grace and healing—and so she was restored. The second time she felt this way, she hid it and feigned obedience and peace, while inside she was in turmoil. This condition could not be touched or healing be brought to her, and in a matter of two or three days she fell away.

God's will and eternal purpose is that He create a man that would be like His Son. He is bending every effort to bring this to pass. Our Father will not undertake any task halfheartedly—and if God wills something and He is working for it to come to pass, we can know it will be. God has chosen to redeem us, purify us, and complete us. He has not chosen to abandon us and create a new and different race of men. He has chosen to strive with us until we are perfected in the image of His Son.

We have hope. Our hope is that we will not have these evil inclinations, weaknesses, and attractions to the things of the world with us always. We will some day be pure. We will one day be with Messiah and be *like* Him. Thus, our only vocation is to be in the image of Messiah. That is our complete endeavor—that is God's complete endeavor in us.

The only time we do not appreciate our brothers and sisters is when we are not being filled with the Holy Spirit. Share this with the brethren.