

1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

[From today's sermon.

Since last week we have been reading from the epistle of 1 John.

Last week's passage said, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

How blessed we are to have been separated from God, but now, through Jesus' redemption on the cross, we have been made close to God, we have been made sons of God, and we have been brought into fellowship with God the Father and with His beloved Son.

What does it mean to be brought into fellowship with God?

God is light, and there is no darkness in Him. If we say we are in communion with God, but we are walking in darkness, we are deceiving ourselves. When we search our hearts, we can never be sure that there is no sin, selfishness, or ugliness in our hearts, and because of this, we find it difficult to come into God's light. We feel difficulty in stepping out into God's light because of this. It is our true feeling that we are not afraid to arise in this place.

It all depends on this one thing: "The blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. So we can confess our sins. Then everything is brought to light, cleansed, and we are brought into fellowship with God.

Good morning everyone. It's the first day of the new year, and we have only 10 days left in January. It is going to be cold this week, with a minimum temperature of minus 6 degrees Celsius. There is a snow mark in the weather forecast. Please take care of yourselves.

Since last week, we have been reading from 1 John 1. Today's theme is fellowship with God the Light.

5 The word that we have heard from Jesus, and the word that we tell you, is this. God is light,

and there is no darkness in Him.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness, we are deceiving, and not doing the truth.

Verse 3 said. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

And he said, "That ye also may be partakers of our fellowship. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. We write this so that our joy may abound.

Our relief at being brought into such a joyful fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters in the faith is tempered by the fact that verses 5 and 6 sound a warning to us: God is light, and God is not a little light.

If we say that we are in fellowship with God because He is light and there is no darkness in Him, but we are walking in darkness, we are deceiving and not doing the truth. These are frightening words, are they not?

While thinking of eternal fellowship with God, who is light, and whose light is beyond all trouble, trouble, and sorrow, we should also be unclouded, because God is light and there is no darkness in Him, and we who are invited to live in His presence should also be unclouded. Therefore, the Bible says that we are not qualified to have fellowship with God, but we are falsely claiming that we have fellowship with God, even though we are not.

It is a harsh word, as if cold water were poured on our faces, as if we were being thrown into an abyss, when we thought we had been forgiven and brought into fellowship with God.

5 For the word that we have heard from Jesus, and the word that we will preach to you, is this. God is light, and there is no darkness in Him.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness, we are deceiving, and not doing the truth.

Here we are taught once again that we are not brought into fellowship with God solely by our own efforts.

God is light and there is not a bit of darkness in Him. I agree with this. And now we have been brought into communion with God. This is also true. Through the atonement of Jesus, we have received God's love in our sinful state only through God's mercy, and through the Lord's atoning sacrifice, we have received forgiveness from God unilaterally and without ransom. But even though we have been brought into fellowship with God in this way, we are still

walking in darkness, and although we are saved, we discover that we have not yet reached the point where God is the light and there is no darkness in us, just as there is no darkness in God. We are not in the light at all, without guilt, in perfect righteousness, in God's righteousness, while having fellowship with God. Yes, we are. We are the very ones who are supposed to be in communion with God, but are not doing the truth. The more we are illuminated by the light, the more we cannot help but feel this deception. The more we are illuminated by the light, the more we are forced to feel this deception, the more we are forced to feel that we have a false nature and are not always doing the truth. Paul's words of lamentation echo in our hearts.

Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will save me from this body of death?

But verse 7, here is the word "but".

7 But if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Romans 7:25 Should God be thanked by our Lord Jesus Christ? Thus I myself serve the law of God in my heart, but in my flesh I serve the law of sin.

But, but, but. But still we are, and still, though we are weak, false, and untruthful, yet still we can walk in the light. That is what the Bible tells us is the cleansing by the blood of Jesus, His Son. And that is where our fellowship is, the Bible says.

We do not have the power to walk in the light by ourselves. But because God redeemed us by giving us the blood and life of His precious Son Jesus Christ, we can walk into the light in our sin, in our weakness, and in our darkness, and each time we receive new forgiveness, all our darkness is illuminated by the light and we become light. What is important here is that we acknowledge our weakness, our darkness, our sin, our deceit, and our unfaithfulness before God's light. Only then can we be enveloped in God's light, and God's light will cast out all our darkness. That fellowship as forgiven is our fellowship. It is a fellowship of thanksgiving and praise in which those who have failed in salvation by their own efforts, who desire to live righteously but fail because of their feeble stones, are forgiven of their sins only through God's mercy.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

We do not need to defend ourselves anymore on this, to defend ourselves as being righteous. We no longer need to strive to act and be recognized as respectable in the church and in the world. Christians may have this image of being saints, holy-hearted, saints, and so on, and perhaps this is the result, but we could say that we are the ones who know better than anyone else in the light that we have an uglier side than anyone else.

9 If we confess our sins, God, being true and just, forgives them and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have never sinned, we make God a liar, and His word is not in us.

Here is a poem by Tomihiro Hoshino.

Tomihiro Hoshino was born in 1946 in Higashi-mura, Seta-gun, Gunma Prefecture (now Higashi-machi, Midori-shi).

After graduating from the Faculty of Education at Gunma University, he became a physical education teacher at a junior high school, but while teaching a club activity (gymnastics), he accidentally fell on his head while performing an aerial rotation as a model performance. He suffered a cervical cord injury. He lost his freedom from the neck down. While hospitalized, he began writing and drawing with a brush in his mouth. Held his first exhibition in Maebashi. In 1982, he held the first "Flower Poetry Exhibition" in Takasaki, which was followed by exhibitions in other parts of Japan and abroad. 1991 Tomihiro Museum of Art opened in Higashi-mura, Setagun, Gunma Prefecture (now Higashi-machi, Midori-shi). He continues to create poems, paintings, and essays. He is the author of numerous books.

Here is a poem that Tomihiro wrote in 1981 along with a picture of chrysanthemums.

Clusters of sorrow I feel... are closer to real happiness than clusters of joy
Crowds of weak people I feel... are closer to truth than crowds of strong people
Clusters of unhappiness I feel... are closer to love than clusters of happiness

Joy is better than sorrow. Strength is better than weakness. Happiness is better than unhappiness. But sometimes joy, strength, and happiness can lead us away from God. And in the midst of them, they can keep us from seeking God and keep our neighbors away. But in our times of sorrow, we can understand the best happiness that we really do not have, we can feel the truth of the help that comes to us even in our weakest moments, and we can see the light of love that serves and works without change, without seeking anything in return, when

unhappy people gather together.

We are to think earnestly of the One who found us when we were poor and weak, sad and unhappy, who served us and rescued us out of love for us even at the cost of His precious Lord Jesus' life, and we are to confront our own darkness continually and go forward on the path of praying and hoping for the light of God's forgiveness and grace. 9 If we confess our sins, we will be forgiven.

9 For if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 12:9 But the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will rather boast in my weakness gladly, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

12:10 Therefore, I will be willing to suffer weakness, insult, danger, persecution, and stalemate for the sake of Christ, for it is precisely when I am weak that I can be saved. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.

James 4:6 But God gives more and more grace. Therefore God turns away the proud, and gives grace to the humble.

4:7 Therefore obey God, and stand against the devil. 4:7 Therefore obey God, and stand against the devil, and he will flee from you. Then he will flee from you.

4:8 Draw near to God. 4:8 Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners! Cleanse your hearts, ye double-minded.

4:9 Suffer, grieve, and weep. Turn your laughter into sorrow, and your joy into grief.

4:10 Humble yourselves before the LORD. 4:10 Humble yourselves before Him, and He will exalt you.

Matthew 5:1 When Jesus saw this crowd, he went up on the mountain and sat down, and his disciples came near to him.

5:2 Then Jesus opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, "Do not be afraid, my disciples; for I am with you always, and will not leave you.

5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:4 Blessed are the sorrowful, for they shall be comforted.

5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

5:6 Blessed are the righteous, for they shall be satisfied.

5:7 Woe to the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

5:10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile and persecute you for my sake, and shall speak evil against you falsely, and shall say all manner of evil against you.

5:12 Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For the prophets before you were persecuted in the same way.

5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth. If the salt has lost its taste, by what shall it be restored? It is no longer of any use, but is cast out, to be trampled underfoot by the people.

5:14 Ye are the light of the world. 5:14 Ye are the light of the world: the city that is upon the mountain cannot be hid: ye are the light of the world.

5:15 And no man lighteth a lamp, and putteth it under a measuring cup. Rather, on the candlestick, let all things in the house be lighted.

5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. We thank you that you have mercy on those who can never enter into fellowship with God in the light, but that you "cleanse us from all sin through the blood of Jesus your Son" and allow us to go forward in the light with God in salvation and blessing. We ask that you lead all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.