

Sermon 2009 St. John Apostle & Evangelist
12-27-09
Text: 1 John 1:5-7
Theme: "Light Us Up Lord!"

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

St. John was the only apostle to die of old age. The rest were martyred. Why do you think that was? Was it a reward or a consequence? It was a great honor to be martyred for the faith and all the other apostles were martyred – some in most creative ways. Did John, Jesus' closest friend on earth not measure up for martyrdom? Or was John needed because of his vast understanding of the nature of his Lord and his best friend? Considering that second to St. Paul, he is the most prolific writer in the New Testament, I suspect the latter.

John got Jesus. Peter loved him. Paul studied him. But John got him. Jesus is light and when you walk with him, you walk in the light, absorb the light and start glowing yourself. Words are important for Paul. He is precise and meticulous, but

words are like paint for John and throughout his writings we see a beautiful work of art develop that shows us what it is to be with Jesus. Walking with Jesus in the light changes us into people who are more like him. We are like a mirror. We cannot generate our own light but only reflect light. This picture that John paints is beautiful and simple.

Many people try to intellectualize Jesus. I personally am not so impressed with my brain that I think I can understand Jesus if only I have enough information. I'm not un-intelligent, but I'm no Einstein either. Sara calls me and talks to me about Organic Chemistry and Molecular Biology. I politely act as though I have a clue but eventually she figures out that I was lost several paragraphs earlier. I figure that if I cannot keep up with a pre-med student's discussion of her classes, I am probably never going to understand God either and do you know what? That's okay with me because I don't have to understand to reflect.

Many people try to emotionalize Jesus. They are always feeling something about Jesus and they like to sing songs about how they feel. Their songs usually have about 7 words and they

sing them 11 times each time with a slightly higher key change and more heart-felt than the last time. I don't have a lot of feelings about Jesus. I am grateful for what he did. I cannot grasp a love deep enough to suffer hell in another person's place. I love my kids and I like to think I would do anything for them, but if you asked me to go to Hell so that they did not have to pay the consequences that they had earned with the behavior they had chosen despite multitudinous warnings, I cannot say that I would do it. And don't think that Jesus felt all warm and bubbly about it either. But for him, love is not an emotion. It is an action. He chose to do what needed to be done to legally free us from Satan's tyranny. I don't think it really matters how I feel about that. He chose to do it and I am glad he did.

John neither intellectualizes nor emotionalizes Jesus. He paints Jesus as God in flesh who came to earth to accomplish his will for us. We do not understand it and we cannot reproduce it. It simply is and the fact that it is changes us if we stay in proximity to our Lord. He is light and his light melts away our darkness. If you want darkness, you have to get away from him

because he is light and you are a mirror. But if you want light in your life, stay close and enjoy. Read and study his word, receive his body and blood and enjoy his light filling your life and melting away all the dark corners.

Over the years people have wondered why I don't seem to worry. What if I do the wrong thing? What if I sin and offend God? What if I get caught? The light forgives all sin. The light melts away all shadows. And no human being is in control of the light. The light is not on because I have done something or spoken the magic words. The light is on because that is what the light does. All I have to do is stay in the light. It really is that simple.

St. John was a wise man; perhaps he was the wisest of all the apostles for he knew that we are saved not because of what we know or what we feel. We are saved because of who Christ is and what he did for us. Light us up Lord. Amen.