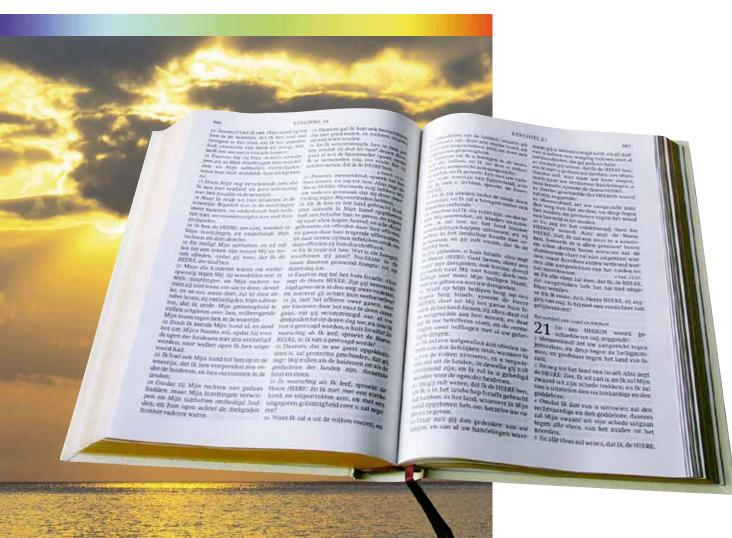
Walking in the Light



All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

No. 33-E

Bible study

The idea is ...

1John 1:4,5,7

- 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.
- 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.
- 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.

True joy is found in the study of God's Word, the Bible. We thank God that the Gospel was written down and is accessible to us anytime, anywhere. Take for example, the truth of the Light. Believers walk in the Light and thus, there is community that is brought about by God Himself. This allows for believers to have fellowship with one another, because there is nothing that separates them. (Romans 8:38-39) This is a community that is not brought about by the believers themselves. Therefore, they cannot undo that community. The Lord has asked his heavenly Father (not us!) for this community. (John 17:21) His prayer has clearly been answered and that should fill us with great joy.



Walking in the Light

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1. Introduction

1John 1:1-7*

- 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life
- 2 -the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-
- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.
- 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.
- 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
- 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.

The main clause at the beginning of this letter of John ("That which was from the beginning [...]") is continued in 1 John 1 : 3 ("[...] we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us [...]") and 1 John 1 : 4 ("[...] that your joy may be full.") John continues to preach what he has heard from the beginning. This means, in any case, that the message that was preached, and was here described in a special way, is immutable and incorruptible. The preaching of the Gospel means proclaiming things that defy the centuries unchanged.

2. The Word of God does not change

We, as humans, naturally have to deal with the fact that things change, life happens. This particularly concerns things that are professed, in all areas. Views change. Man must always adapt to different conditions and teachings. What we were once taught in school, now often proves to be out-dated. In fact, this is seen as a proof of progress.

Opposed to that, the hallmark of the Bible is that the Word of God is immutable. We can therefore trust it without question. Issues that were taught from the Word of God in the old days are still true today. Those things have not changed.

1John 2:24

24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

The things that were once proclaimed are still being proclaimed. We must therefore hold on to these things. Furthermore the Word of God still has the same effect. Where the Word of God is brought, on the one hand a final separation arises, but on the other hand a permanent community is brought about.

The intention is, of course, that this community is established. Although this is a doctrine, it is primarily about the Son of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not about "cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1:16), but about the Son. John and his friends saw Him: the glorified Christ. They did not follow "cunningly devised fables" or Jewish fables (Titus 1:14). It is about things heard, seen, witnessed and touched, not only by John, but also by many other believers of his time. In John 1 we find the same.

John 1:1,2

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.

The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ

John began the Gospel that he wrote with the same words as his first letter: "In the beginning". He then wrote:

John 1:14

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

* Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

John and the other apostles had seen the glory of the Son. This glory is related to His resurrection and exaltation. This is what we find in the First Epistle of John. John also speaks of the glory of Christ. The Apostle Peter wrote about this as well. He also beheld the glory of Christ.

2 Peter 1:16-18

- 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.
- 17 For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Here Peter does not only mention the future of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also His power. That power will be manifested and revealed in the future. Peter has actually seen that power of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the power of His majesty. Peter witnessed His glory at the transfiguration. (Matthew 17:1-13) The Lord Jesus Christ received honour and glory from God, the Father. In Hebrews 2:9, we find the words "honour" and "glory" also in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 2:9

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Peter literally saw the majesty of Jesus Christ. Christ received honour and glory from the Father. Peter saw that honour and glory and referred to it as "majesty". At that same moment, he heard the voice of God the Father, who said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 17:5) Peter, James and John were on the Mount of Transfiguration and they heard and saw these things. (Matthew 17:1-8) They saw the Lord Jesus Christ in a glorified form. It was only Peter, James and John who saw the glory of the Lord. This indicates that only a small portion of the believers is aware of the exalted position of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the majority of the believers it is hidden. The objective is of course that the believer knows Christ as the Glorified, seated at the right hand

of the Father. The believer must know Him as the One who is extremely exalted. (Philippians 2:9) This appearance of the Lord in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration was a representation of the position of Christ since His resurrection. He is highly exalted. He has received the highest position. He is placed far above every principality, power, might and dominion.

Ephesians 1:20-23

- 20 Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,
- 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.
- 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,
- 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The believer must be continually reminded of the glorified Christ, who is highly exalted. Moreover, He is given as Head to the Church. Many believers sing songs every week talking about the glorification of Christ. However, it is necessary for the believer to wonder what the consequences are of that glorification. Does he know Christ as the One who is given by God from that exalted position to the Church as Head?

The objective is that the believer knows the Lord as his Saviour. This means that he not only knows Him as the One who has taken away his $\sin(s)$, so that he will one day get to heaven. It means that he ought to know Him as the One who takes care of him right now and gives his life direction and content. Through and in the glorified Christ, the believer has received eternal life. Through and in Christ, we share in the glory that Christ has received Himself. That is the foundation on which the believer should live!

John proclaimed the glorified Christ. In 1 John 1, John talks about "the beginning". This indicates the beginning of the new creation. This beginning is also the beginning of a new dispensation that came with the resurrection of Christ, the dispensation of the grace of God. (Ephesians 3:2)

Life was manifested

Life was manifested. (1 John 1 : 2) Hence this life was not previously disclosed. God made it manifest at a given time. This life was promised before, that is, in the gospel of God. Which, of course, is the gospel about God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:1-4

- 1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God
- 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,
- 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,
- 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

The life of the new creation began with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the moment of His resurrection this Life, as announced and promised in the Old Testament, was manifested. The entire Old Testament announces the arrival of that Life, that is, the arrival of the living Messiah. Life was manifested. This is consistent with:

John 1:10-13

- 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him. and the world did not know Him.
- 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
- 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
- 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To those who received Him He gave power to become children of God. This points to those who are born of God. This would be actualized later, after Jesus Christ had risen. John refers to this in his first letter and there says that this has been fulfilled.

1John 3:1,2

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on

- us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
- 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

In the original text of the Greek New Testament it says: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God and that is who we are." We would be called children of God. It was promised that the believer would become a child of God. Meanwhile, this is fulfilled since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Life was manifested. This is a direct reference to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is when the promised Life came about. On the basis of that Life we have been born again.

1Peter 1:3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Through the resurrection, the Life we have received by faith was manifested. The resurrection of the Lord, who has conquered death, is central in the books of the New Testament. He has brought life and immortality to light. (2 Timothy 1:10) That is what John proclaimed. That is why he uses the phrase "Word of life". (1 John 1:1) John speaks of God's Word, but Word is Life. That Word, that Life, is revealed. John and his friends saw that Life. That is what they proclaim. That eternal life was revealed by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

- 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand.
- 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you–unless you believed in vain.
- 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
- 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

The gospel is that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, that He was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. This is the content of the gospel. In the remainder of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul only speaks about the resurrection.

This is the message John proclaimed as well. John then mentions why he proclaimed this message: "[...] that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1: 3) The objective of the preaching of the gospel is to bring unity (oneness). It is primarily to provide unity with God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When a man accepts the Word of life, he comes to accept the Lord Jesus Christ who has bought him and rescued him from the power of darkness. He is reconciled to God. (Romans 5:10)

Thus he has become born again and united to God. He became partaker of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4) He has been participating in the resurrection life of Christ. When the believer has fellowship with the Father and the Son, he shall also have/receive fellowship with fellow believers. John changes the order and mentions first the community of believers. He thereby emphasizes the unity of the Church as such.

Partakers of the Lord Jesus Christ

In the basic texts of the Bible, there is one word translated as "church". The Church is one, because of the unity Christ has accomplished. The Greek word is "ekklesia", which is related to "community". The translators held on to the word "church" to indicate that unity. The Church is formed by a group of people who are one, because they have become partakers of that one God. They are partakers of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:2-6

- 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
- 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

We have become believers on the basis of one gospel. Therefore we are reconciled to God and we are placed in one body. Paul says, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13) Many see the gospel as a kind of "life insurance". When they die, there will be a happy end anyway. They need the Lord for their (earthly) life, but more so after that, or they will be subject to eternal judgment. In that connection one often speaks about "faith in Jesus". The titles ("Lord" and "Christ") have suddenly disappeared. This is far off from what is described as "gospel" in the Bible. John writes about the outcome of the Word of God and the result of the gospel, especially in the life of the believer. This clearly refers to the time the believer still lives on earth!

John wrote these things in order that one might have community with the Father and the Son, but especially so that the believers might have community with each other. The emphasis is therefore placed on the development of the life of God in the life of the believer as long as he is on earth. In John's letters the unity and hence the community is central. The Word of God dwells in the believer. It is therefore to be expected that believers keep the Word of God. (1 John 2:5) John uses synonyms to put the same forward again and again, such as:

Walk in the light
Keep His commandments
Keep His Word
Abide in Him
John 2:3
John 2:5
John 2:28

When the believer walks in the light, keeps His commandments/Word and abides in Him, it will have consequences. According to John the effect is that he loves the brethren. The term "brother" refers to a basic unity, on the basis of birth. Believers are brothers. They are in fact born of the same God and the same Life is received. Therefore, they ought to walk from this position of unity. In other words, blood is thicker than water. There is unity in spite of everything. This unity is not based on our characters. Nor is it based on our way of life. This unity is simply founded on the same life that we as believers have in us. According to John the primary purpose of preaching the gospel is to promote unity and community. This is the basis for the faith of believers ever since the resurrection of Christ, regardless of the dispensation in which they live. The apostle Paul preaches the same principles regarding the unity, although he adds many things. (Romans 12:16; 15:5; Philippians 2:2)

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself also spoke about that unity. This we find in John 13-17. Some examples:

John 13:34

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 14:20, 21 + 23

- 20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.
- 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

John 15:9

9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

John 15:12-14

- 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
- 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

John 17:11

11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

John 17:20-23

- 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
- 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
- 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

3. Community, joy and Light

In fact John speaks about the same things in his letters. In 1 John 1:4 he gives another reason for writing these things:

1 John 1:4

4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

There are two purposes in proclaiming the Word of God: "community" and "joy". The preaching of the gospel seeks to create community and to maintain it. It also has the goal to establish joy and to make it grow. Both terms indicate the same, because they are related to each other. When a person is happy he wants to share with others. Joy often manifests itself in celebrating (to be happy). Celebrating always happens with others. Where one meets and knows they are interconnected, there is joy and happiness. Community is a matter of joy and not of sadness. When we experience something else then something is wrong. When one meets with no unity, there is no joy. Such is usually the situation in places where the Word of God is not present in the hearts of the listeners. One does not come together to rejoice in such cases. It only leads to greater sorrow. It often even leads to increased controversy. In principal, when one comes together based on the unity that is in Christ, then one has community. Then there is also joy. Therefore the gospel is "the joyful message". Believers share in the gospel. When they gather around the gospel it leads to joy.

There is an example in the history of Israel. When Israel was to be delivered from Egypt, Moses told Pharaoh that the people were going to have a celebration in the desert. This is a picture of our redemption. We are redeemed and pulled out of this world (the darkness). (Colossians 1:13) We are placed in Christ in heaven. (Ephesians 2:6) We have come into communion with the Lord Jesus Christ and that is obviously a matter of great joy. In the old creation, one came together because one was part of a society, but there was not, or hardly, any community. One finds, at the most, a superficial, imposed community. Most people are basically all alone and they go through life completely on their own. There is no com-

munity and therefore there is no joy. They try to organize it, but it leads to nothing. The old creation is not characterized by unity, but by division and strife. Many believe it should be otherwise and they are committed, therefore, to establish a certain unity. If one is honest, one will admit that these efforts lead to nothing. In the old creation there is no unity because unity corresponds to "life". Life, namely the Word of Life, although preached, is not accepted. Only when that Word is accepted, unity is established. "Life" is in fact "community". Through community life arises, and life is maintained by it. The old creation is perishable. Everything is temporary. Everything eventually dies. In practice, there actually is no life and therefore community is lacking. Without community, there is no joy.

By nature man knows "unity" and "joy" should exist. There are a sufficient number of signs pointing to this. In practice, however, one finds no unity and joy. Neither are "Life" and "community" found. In the old creation these matters do not exist, because death reigns in the old creation. John emphasizes that the transience of the old creation has been overcome by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has conquered death.

Hebrews 2:14.15

- 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.
- 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Death was conquered. Whoever believes that, has received Life. If that is the case, then there is room for fellowship and joy. Anyone who has received life, received light, for God is light. (1 John 1:5) Light also brings about community. Where there is light, there is life. When a believer says he has fellowship with God, then he must walk in the light. It involves walking, indicating that it is the practical way of life. When in practice someone walks in the darkness, then he has no communion with God. Whoever says he walks in fellowship with God and also walks in darkness, is a liar. Many say that they walk in fellowship with God while walking in darkness. "Darkness" is, after all, the absence of light. When there is no light, there is no wisdom. The one who walks in darkness has no knowledge of the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When believers start talking about the Bible, it appears that many have never read the Bible, although they claim to be Christian. There are those

who read the Bible without understanding anything of it. Many do not even want to talk about the Bible. They are not interested in the wisdom of God and therefore they walk in darkness. Many people use the Bible to bring forward a certain view. People are not interested in the Bible itself, but often they are interested in different views about the Bible. Those views are usually very contradictory, so they can never be described as "light". One immerses oneself in all sorts of views and thus walks in darkness. At the most one has theoretical knowledge about certain views. All sorts of views can be proclaimed. All kinds of Biblical issues can be raised in beautiful discourses. However, it is not about whether the believer listens to discourses of other people. The question is whether he is walking in the Light. The aim of every believer should be to walk in the Light. The preaching of the Word of God seeks to bring about unity, joy and light, and to maintain it. This is rare though because one usually walks in darkness. Everyone knows that the Bible can be used for any explanation. Many therefore conclude that the Bible cannot be used to come to the Light.

John calls the believer to walk in community with the Father and the Son and in community with fellow believers. Then will he walk in the Light, for God is Light. Whoever walks in the Light, practices the truth. "Truth" is always in the singular, because it does not exist in the plural. There is one truth that is very comprehensive. John preached the Word of God so that community would be established. In 1 John 1:7 he says that there is community when you walk in the light. It must be concluded that "Light" corresponds with "Word of God" - it points to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Person. God is Word (John 1:1) and God is Light. (1 John 1:5) "Word" and "Light" are equal. Both concepts refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. When believers walk in that light they have fellowship with one another. When a believer cheats and lies instead of sticking to the truth, there will be no fellowship. That fellowship is also missing when he intends to not lie for once. He has an evil conscience and that brings about stress. When there is Light and Truth in the believers, there is unity and fellowship, because Christ is central. In that case believers see and know each other, as they walk together in the light. If that is the case, there is nothing that will cause separation. The Son has taken away the things (sin, lies) that would naturally cause separation. He has cleansed us from all sin. He is the Son, namely the Word of God. Paul says in this regard in relation to the Church:

Ephesians 5:26,27

- 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,
- 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church,

not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Christ has cleansed the Church with the washing of water, namely the Word of God. The Word of God has cleansed us. John speaks about the cleansing effect of the blood of the Son. The Son is the Word of God, so it is actually the same thing. The Word of God teaches us that we as believers stand clean before God. Christ has taken away our sin(s).

We have received new, divine life. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:38,39) We have been baptized by one Spirit to become one body. (1 Corinthians 12:13) When we are aware of that, there is nothing that could ever separate us from Him and from each other. We have been cleansed and thus have fellowship with the Father and with His Son. When a child has done something naughty, his parents immediately know, because there is something that causes separation. Believers sense this as well among each other. Believers walk in the Light. There is a unity that has been established by God Himself. This allows believers to fellowship with one another, because there is nothing that separates them. This is a unity that has not been established by the believers. Therefore, they cannot undo that unity. The Lord asked His heavenly Father (not us!) for that unity. (John 17:21) His prayer has been answered, of course.

1 John 1: 7 talks about the relationship of believers among each other. When they walk in the light they have fellowship with one another. That unity is not undone by some sins that have been committed, because the Son has cleansed these sins. In this case, it is not even about the unity they have with God. Believers have fellowship with one another because the blood of Christ cleanses them from every sin. His Word, His Life, has this cleansing effect.

The believer no longer walks in doubt, because he no longer walks in darkness. He has found solid ground: the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore he is not afraid of his fellow believers. He does not have to hold on to fellow believers. He stands on grace. The believer is aware of the life God has given him. There is nothing between him and God. He is a child of God! The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses.

The blood in our body has the same effect. Our own blood cleanses our body. Moreover, the blood provides our body with food. It carries all the essential nutrients for our body. Through the blood all parts of the body

are connected to each other. Because of that, it is one body. This same principle applies to our dispensation. Believers are part of the body of Christ. By the blood of Christ believers (the members of His body) are built and nurtured. Through His blood, believers have fellowship, because they are part of His body. They open up their hearts (since it talks about the circulation) to His Word, through which their lives are changed. They then live in unity with each other, not troubled by anything. Believers still commit sins, but their conscience is not burdened by it. This is because the blood of Christ also cleanses the conscience. (Hebrews 9:14)

In addition, there is the Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1) The Greek word "parakletos" (translated as "advocate") can also be translated as "Comforter". If the translators had been consistent they would have translated the word here as "Comforter" as well. In Latin it would be translated as "Advocate", which means "he who is called in". The Lord Jesus is like our lawyer; He is our Comforter. He looks after our business, because we are members of His body. He has set us free from everything, from sin(s) and the debt of sin. He is in fact our reconciliation. (1 John 2:2) Therefore, we are completely free and no longer responsible for things we cannot bear.

Moreover, Christ purifies and sanctifies believers through His Word. Therefore they are able to have fellowship with Him and with one another. That is what the letters of John are about. Those letters are particularly focussed on the practical life of the believer on earth.

The only thing that is expected of the believer during his earthly life is that he opens his heart to the Lord and His Word. He is supposed to take the Word of God seriously. He must live by it.

The life of the believer is not characterized by conflict, but by unity. That means a life characterized by love, love for God and love for fellow believers. Then will the believer live in unity and be filled with joy. Then will he walk in the light!

Amen