

TURNING OF THE DIAMOND

We are in the first chapter of a little letter called “1 John.” John tells us why he wrote this letter; that our joy may be complete. So, everything we consider is for the purpose of having joy in our faith.

This morning we saw that our faith system is much like a ceiling fan. It only works when it is in balance. An out of balance faith is much like imbalanced ceiling fan, it will bring the world down on your head!

The truth in its entirety, is huge. So it is fair to say that the truths of Scripture are far larger than a few lines here and there. God makes points and counter-points on any given truth. Scripture is not properly understood until we balance those points.

We find that this is not a new insight. Judaism has understood this for thousands of years in the “turning of the diamond.”

There are 70 valid explanations to every part of the Torah (Bamidbar Rabbah 13:15).

The modern [Rabbi David Rosenfeld](#) explains the concept like this:

They were seeing different aspects of the same all-encompassing truth — just as the many facets of a diamond glimmer differently at different angles.

This morning we looked at:

Fellowship with God balanced with fellowship with God’s people

The spiritual side of God balanced with the physical side of God (The “logos”)

The spiritual side of our faith balanced with the physical side of practicing faith

TRUTH VERSUS LIE

1 John 1

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1

¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

We lie to ourselves~

We cannot possibly have relationship with God without addressing lies. The fall of man started with swallowing a lie and we have all become very good liars ever since; especially to ourselves. All of us, by nature; rationalize our wrongs, turn a blind eye to our deepest faults, and as Jesus put it, try to pull the speck out of our brother’s eye when we have a plank in our own. Even those who beat up on themselves by nature, lie to themselves.

We lie to each other~

I looked up some research on lying and I found this out:

On the average, a [person](#) is lied to as many as 200 times in a day.

[Children](#) begin deceiving as early as 6 months of age.

60% of [adults](#) can’t have a ten-minute conversation without lying.

86% of us lie to our [parents](#) regularly.

But the most serious lie we can tell, is to ourselves. It is this: ***We are not in need of saving.***

We don’t need God because we are wealthy; because we are naturally “moral”; because life is going ok; because we’re a nice person (at least in our own eyes); that we are enlightened or educated; that God is only for weak, stupid people and we are not weak and stupid.

We will not even look in God's direction if we love our lies. We must address our nature to lie, and admit to ourselves, and to God.

But experiencing fellowship with God isn't simply confessing the lies.

In one of our groups we talked about flagellation (not to be confused with flatulation). The flagellum was a type of Roman whip that was used on Jesus. A spiritual practice has existed for a long time, in which the observer whips him or herself. In essence, you whip yourself to show God you are acutely aware that you're a sinner. And you wish to suffer as Christ has suffered for you.

These people would refer to a text like:

1 Peter 4:12

(NIV) But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

It sounds reasonable on the surface. But let's dig a little deeper. First of all, the text is being used out of context. Scripture isn't promoting self-inflicted wounds, but suffering for the name of Christ in an unbelieving world.

Then there is the balancing of texts that seem to say the opposite to suffering for Christ, consider Isaiah 53

Considering that the Gospel message states:

Isaiah 53: 3-5

But **He** was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon **Him**,

And by **His** stripes we are healed.

The stripes of the whip on Christ were taken by Christ alone for our healing. To turn around and whip ourselves in the same manner is the height of presumption! Who are we to take back what God has already done! It's little wonder that this practice has historically led to the grossest type of spiritual pride.

In the twelfth century, and up to the 14th century, self-flagellation as a way of "mortifying the flesh" became a movement, particularly in France. The radicals preached it was a way of cleansing sin. The Catholic church ultimately condemned it as heresy. But for a time, those who joined the processions, going from town to town, were the "rock stars" of the faith. It was all based on an imbalance of Scripture.

Truth is the nature of God He offers to place it inside of us. John uses other images in this regard "light" versus "dark", and "truth" versus "sin." There is **darkness that we should run from**, and **light that we should run to**. There is the sorrow for our brokenness, but it must be balanced with the hope and joy in God purifying us.

There is the image of **walking in darkness**, or **living in light**. There are a number of ways that a relationship with God is a balance of awareness in embracing the truth and facing the lie.

John intertwines the balance of many foundational pillars of faith, because, of course they're all connected. And as he talks about fellowship with God and man, and the awareness of darkness and light, he brings in a balanced view of sin.

SIN: ONGOING NATURE VERSUS ACTIONS IN THE MOMENT

As the chapter closes, John makes some strong statements on sin:

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves...

⁹ If we confess our sins...

In the first sentence, it is "sin" singular, and in the second, it is "sins" plural.

Here's the point: We have a **nature** of sin. Before we ever do a wrong **act**, or conceive a **wrong thought**. There is something in our very nature that generates the wrong. (And by "wrong" I mean unlike God, and unlike how mankind was originally created.)

To have a "sin nature" doesn't mean we are 100% evil, it simply means we are tainted. Do you remember the poisoning of a Russian officer in London, back in 2006? It turns out that an assassin had slipped radioactive polonium-210 into his tea. In a London restaurant, I imagine it was very good tea. It was still good tea, it simply was tainted. Something lethal had been added. The good tea became a horrible way to die. No matter what you did with that cup of tea now, it was its nature to end in death.

That's what the sin nature is; it is the beauty of humanity, but now with the knowledge of evil added. To know that we have a sin nature leads us to a very logical and life-giving conclusion; we need something beyond our humanity to remove the death. Salvation by our Creator becomes a very logical conclusion.

On the other hand, the wiring of the sin nature causes us to naturally carry out acts of sin. When we fall out of step with God, acts of sin happen quite easily.

1 John 1

(NIV) ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

God delivers from the sin nature, that is, we now have the power not to follow that nature; but that is balanced for the times that we still fail. We admit the nature, and as life goes on; we confess the sins.

THE BALANCE OF MANY TRUTHS

A Christian faith; a relationship with God; the experience of joy that is complete only happens with balance.

- Balance in the spiritual and physical-
- Balance of the inner and outer life-
- Balance in understanding truth and lie, or light and dark-
- Balance in the sin nature versus the acts of sin-

Keep in mind why God has John writing this. -Not out of duty; not to make you more "churchy"; but that our joy may be complete.

DISCUSSION

WHAT STRUCK YOU MOST IN THIS CHAPTER?

HOW MIGHT THE UNDERSTANDING OF BALANCING POINTS AND COUNTER-POINTS IMPACT YOUR BIBLE STUDY?

LOOK AT 1 JOHN 1:8-10, HOW DOES JOHN BALANCE FREEDOM FROM SIN WITH FORGIVENESS OF SIN?

WHAT DO THE TERMS "WALK IN DARKNESS" AND "LIVE IN THE LIGHT" MEAN IN LITERAL TERMS? WHAT'S THE BALANCE?

WHAT OTHER TRUTHS DOES JOHN BALANCE IN THIS CHAPTER?