

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF JESUS

A Harmony Of the Gospels

A Daily Devotional Study Guide - Book 2



Week 20

“The Defiled Heart”

Study: Matthew 15:10-20, Mark 7:14-23

Reading: Isaiah 58:1-14, Psalm 51

Memory: I John 5:15-16

When I see a man who claims to be a follower of God and they have hair that is past their shoulders, my first thought is that they could not be real Christians. Why do I think this? The Christianity I grew up in emphasized this over and over again. It was declared to me that men with long hair were living in sin and therefore a person who would not cut his hair would show by his actions that he was not a believer. After studying the Word of God and seeing how skewed this thinking is, I realize my thinking was wrong, but my first thought still is normally one of judgement and condemnation. This is because, by default, my childhood understanding takes over my thinking unless I consciously tell myself different.

Today, we are going to read how Jesus taught something that was completely opposite of what the disciples had heard from their childhood. This thought was so contrary to their thinking that they struggled to understand how Jesus could be teaching the truth, but His truth was the truth that would set them free.

What Does the Bible Say?

The teaching of Jesus in this passage must have astounded the Jewish leaders. The Old Testament Law had given a list of things that would cause Israelites to be unclean, which included eating and touching certain foods. The Pharisees had taken God's regulations to the extreme and added all of their man made rules to God's original law. They had taught and declared that a person would be defiled by not following all of their extra-biblical rules. This is why the teaching of Jesus would have shocked his listeners when He told them that nothing that goes into a person's mouth causes them to be defiled. By this, Jesus was declaring that what was on the inside was important and if the inside was correct, the outside would follow. What would come out of a person's mouth and how a person chose to act would reveal what was in their hearts and would give evidence if that person was clean or defiled (Mt 15:10-11, Mk

7:14-16).

This statement not only confused His hearers but puzzled His disciples as well. His disciples had grown up believing that being clean had to do with following the rigid guidelines of the religious leaders. Jesus told them that all who followed the Pharisees were blinded and were headed towards trouble because the Pharisees were blinded to the real truth of God (Mt 15:12-14).

When they were alone later with Jesus, they asked Him about this so He could clarify what He meant. Jesus told them that anything that went into a body could not defile it because it was only going into the stomach and not into the heart. The body works its magic and the food is expelled, giving it no moral value. Mark added that Jesus was describing how all foods were now clean for every man to eat, though this full revelation had not been given when Jesus was speaking. Things that are evil were things that came out of the heart. Words and actions that were against the character of God were the things that truly defiled a person. All of the rules and regulations were given to help the Israelites avoid heart defilement, but the Pharisees had placed a great emphasis on the outward and completely neglected the heart (Mt 15:15-20, Mk 7:17-23).

How Does this Apply to Me?

If you were asked to describe what a Christian is, would you end up with a list of do's and don'ts? Do you find yourself looking at another person and judging them based on their looks or on your external view of how a Christian should look? It is very easy to look at the outside while neglecting the issues of the heart. If the heart is correct, most of the time the outward will be what God want it to be. Just as the Pharisees did, you can get caught up equating spirituality with rules and regulations. The question to ask is "Where is your heart?" One of the reasons that people get caught up in rules is because people say they have a "heart for God," but live in sin. Jesus helped us see that things like "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness" revealed a heart that was defiled.

Thought for the day

Mark 7

Why do you think Jesus emphasized that He wanted them to understand (vs 14)?

What can not defile a person (vs 15)?

Why would this have been a stunning statement to the Jews (vs 15)?

What did Jesus say does defile a person (vs 15)?

Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus about this (vs 16-17)?

Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples why they didn't understand (vs 18)?

What did Jesus say happens to food that a person eats (vs 19)?

What did Mark say that Jesus was doing with this statement (vs 19)?

****Shortly after the death of Jesus, God gave Peter a vision to pass along to the Jews declaring that all foods were now clean.*

What did Jesus emphasize about how a person becomes defiled (vs 20)?

What things did Jesus say come out of a person's heart? Take time to think about what these actions reveal about what is in your heart.

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“Feeding the Dogs”

Study: Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30

Reading: Luke 11:1-13, James 5:13-20

Memory: 1 John 1:7

What Does the Bible Say?

Though much of the ministry of Jesus was in Galilee, we do have record that He spent a little time in Judea and now we see that He also spent some time in the region of Tyre and Sidon. This was a Gentile region of the land that was located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It seems that one of the reasons He traveled there was to reveal that He was not just to be the Savior of the Jews, but of the Gentiles as well. Matthew also states that He “withdrew” (ESV) to Tyre and Sidon, which seems to indicate that tensions were high between Himself and the Jews, and this move was meant to give time for things to calm down in the region of Galilee (Mt 15:21, Mk 7:24).

Jesus wanted it to remain a secret that He was there in the region, but it



didn't take long for the people to find out who He was and start coming to Him. One of these was a woman who had a demon possessed daughter and desperately needed help, pleading with Jesus to cast out the demon. She was not a Jew but was a Canaanite woman who was from that region, though she did understand that Jesus was the “Son of David.” When she first asked Him for help, Jesus did not answer her, but she kept begging Him to do something. The disciples urged Jesus to tell her to go away and leave them alone, but Jesus didn't do that either. Jesus finally responded by saying that He was not sent for the pagan nations, but to help the “lost sheep of Israel.” She did not let this deter her so she continued to ask for help. Jesus responded to her plea for help by telling her that He had come to feed the children of Israel and that it wouldn't be right for Him to give the Gentiles what He came to give the Israelites. These words may sound harsh from Jesus, like He was referring to her in a negative way by calling her a dog, but the word that Jesus used referred to a family pet. Here, Jesus pictures “lambs” and “dogs” and said the lambs were His first priority. She was not offended at all by this statement, but used the statement to declare how even dogs received the crumbs that were leftover from the family meal (Mt 15:22-27, Mk 7:25-28).

The response from Jesus towards this woman must have made her day. He told her that her faith expressed through her persistence and humility had been the catalyst for Him to make the choice to heal her daughter. Jesus did not even need to go see the girl, but told the woman she could go home and find her daughter well again (Mt 15:28, Mk 7:29-30).

How Does this Apply to Me?

How persistent are you when it comes to prayer? Are you convinced that God can do miraculous things and change your situation? Do you come to Him in boldness knowing that He will hear and answer? This Gentile woman set a great example for us because of her persistent faith. This doesn't mean that we should attempt to whine and beg God for something when He has clearly told us “no,” but it shows us that God wants us to continually ask Him in boldness, knowing that He has the power to change things. True faith is often revealed over time and not just in an instance where we are feeling spiritually strong. Sometimes it is that enduring faith and continual prayer that strengthens us spiritually and allows God to be most glorified in your life.

Mark 7

Where did Jesus travel to (vs 24)?

Why do you think Jesus traveled there?

What was Jesus not able to do (vs 24)?

****It should be noted that there would have been Jews living in the region. Unlike most people, most Jews have never identified themselves with the region they lived in. Instead, they focused on who they descended from.*

What did a woman do when she knew it was Jesus (vs 25)?

What was the woman extremely concerned about (vs 26)?

What was emphasized about this woman (vs 26)?

Matthew 15

What didn't Jesus do (vs 23)? Why do you think He responded this way?

How did the disciples respond (vs 23)? Why do you think they responded this way?

Who did Jesus say He had been sent to minister to (vs 24)?

How was this woman persistent (vs 25)?

Why do you think Jesus made the statement He did in verse 26?

How did the woman respond to this statement (vs 27)?

What did this reveal about her faith and humility (vs 27)?

What did Jesus declare about her faith (vs 28)?

What did Jesus do as a result (vs 28)?

What lesson do you think this passage is attempting to teach?

“God Supplies”

Study: Matthew 15:29-38, Mark 7:31-8:9

Reading: Matthew 6:21-34, I Timothy 4:10-20

Memory: 1 John 1:7



Excavations at Bet-Shan (Scythopolis), one of the cities of the Decapolis

What Does the Bible Say?

Leaving Tyre and Sidon, Jesus traveled back to the Sea of Galilee, but not to where He had been before. Jesus chose to continue His ministry to the Gentiles and He traveled to the cities in the region of the Decapolis. The Decapolis was a league of ten cities that were located east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. These were not Jewish cities, though some of them were in the region of Israel. The Decapolis were Hellenistic cities. Cities that were distinctly Roman in culture and had been greatly influenced by the Roman Empire. Most Jews would avoid these cities because they represented everything that was wrong with the Roman occupation of Israel and many of the Jews despised these cities and the people in them. Most of these cities were much more

sophisticated than the Jewish cities and represented the power of the Roman Empire in the region (Mt 15:29, Mk 7:31).

Though many of these cities were more modern, they still had the same sicknesses and diseases that the other regions had. The fame of Jesus had spread through these places and when He had come to the region, many people flocked to Him for healing. One by one, Jesus would heal these that came to Him, amazing the crowd each time. Jesus would charge those He healed not to tell anyone what He had done, but they didn't listen and His command inspired them to tell more people (Mt 15:30-31, Mk 7:32-37).

We are not told exactly where Jesus was at in the region, but we find out that He was doing much of His healing in an out of the way place. This is seen as the disciples responded to the request of Jesus to feed all the people and they describe the place where they were at as a "desolate" place. As He did when He fed the 5,000, Jesus declared His compassion towards those who had been coming and listening to Him speak. Many had been there three days and had run out of food. Jesus was afraid that some would not make the journey home due to the lack of energy from the lack of food. Though the disciples had seen Jesus feed the 5,000 men (not including women and children) in Galilee, they still questioned where Jesus was going to get enough food (Mt 15:32-33, Mk 8:1-4).

When asked how much food they had, the disciples told Jesus that they had seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. Jesus took the loaves, prayed over them and began breaking them apart. The food kept coming and there was enough bread for the whole crowd. Jesus then took the fish and did the same with the fish. The people ate until they were full and there were still seven baskets of food left over. All 4,000 men were fed and that number did not include women and children. Once they were full, Jesus sent them home full and also amazed at what they had witnessed (Mt 15:34-38, Mk 8:5-9).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you ever doubt that God will provide for your needs? Do you ever wonder how He will provide for your needs? It is easy to be like the disciples and fail to see how God will provide, even though He has done it before. This is because we as humans live in a physical world and don't understand things that defy nature. God often uses natural ways to provide for your needs, but there are times that He provides for you in miraculous ways as well.

Mark 7

Where did Jesus go after He left Tyre and Sidon (vs 31)?

Why do you think He skipped over the area of Galilee at this time?

****Tyre and Sidon were north and west of the Sea of Galilee, on the Mediterranean Sea. The Decapolis was located on the east and south side of the Sea of Galilee.*

Who was brought to Jesus (vs 32)? What did the people beg Jesus to do?

Why do you think Jesus took this man aside (vs 33)?

What method did Jesus use to heal this man (vs 33)? Why do you think He used this method?

Why do you think Jesus sighed before healing this man (vs 34)?

What did Jesus say (vs 34)? Why do you think He said this?

****Ephphatha was an Aramaic word. Mark described how it meant "Be opened." It is interesting that Jesus spoke in Aramaic since he was in the Roman region of the land where they all would have spoken Greek.*

What did Jesus tell those He healed not to do (vs 36)?

Mark 8 - What was the response of Jesus when He saw the crowd and that they had nothing to eat (vs 2)?

What was Jesus concerned about (vs 3)?

What were the disciple concerned about (vs 4)?

What did Jesus do with the loaves and fish (vs 5-7)?

How many baskets were left (vs 8)?

What do you think Jesus was attempting to teach by performing this similar miracle again?

“Seeking a Sign”

Study: Mark 8:10-12, Matthew 15:39-16:4

Reading: Matthew 12:15-42

Memory: 1 John 1:7

When I was younger, I used to love playing games at night in the dark. One of the most exciting experiences of these games was when the person who was coming to find me was standing very close to me but couldn't see me. Though I could see that person clearly, and my heart would beat like crazy for fear that I would be discovered, I loved being able to go unnoticed and see that person who was looking for me walk away.

Today, we are going to see how sometimes we look for God, but we miss Him though He is right there in front of us.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jesus was somewhere in the Decapolis region, which was located on the south east side of the Sea of Galilee. After feeding the 4,000 men, He and the disciples got into the boat and crossed over to the other side near Magdala. Mark called the area Delmanutha, but there is no historical record of this place. We must assume it was a place close to Magadan (Magdala) since Matthew describes that Jesus went there. It is assumed that the area of Magdala was on the south west side of the Sea of Galilee and it appears that Jesus was visiting all the regions around Galilee (Mt 15:39, Mk 8:10).

Once He arrived, there was a group of Pharisees and Sadducees who went to Him and began to argue with Him. They were trying to get Him to make some type of mistake. In an attempt to disprove that He was the Messiah, they kept begging for some type of sign to show that He was who He said He was. Mark recorded how Jesus was deeply grieved in His spirit because of their great desire to see Him perform some miraculous sign. Jesus told them that they would not see any great signs because of their lack of faith. He had already given them several great signs by all the miracles and wonders He had performed, but they weren't satisfied. The reality was that it took faith to believe and the religious leaders didn't have faith (Mt 16:1, Mk 8:11-12).

Though they did not have the sophisticated technology of today to predict the weather, the people observed changes in nature and used those as signs to know what the weather was going to be for the next day. If the sky was red at night, the next day would be nice and sunny, but if it was red in the morning, the day would be a stormy day. They had this all figured out, but they couldn't see the obvious signs that Jesus had been showing them as proof that He was the Messiah. The religious leaders had missed everything, which caused Jesus to tell them that the only sign that they would be given was the sign of Jonah. In Matthew 12:38-42, Jesus had told those religious leaders the same thing (we are not sure if these were the same or different leaders). What we do know is that by the sign of Jonah, He meant that He was going to be buried for three days and rise again (Mt 16:1-4).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you have real faith? Do you believe in God even when you can't see great things taking place in your life? Are you missing the signs of God's presence and God's working in your life because you are looking for the wrong signs? So often, believers miss the reality of God's working in their lives because He is not doing what they want Him to do. This is very easy for all of us to do. Most believers will have times in their lives where they are looking for God to do something and they completely missed what He did because He worked in a different way. It is easy to be self-centered and think that you know what is best. It is easy to want God to do a miraculous great thing, rather than to see all the little ways that He is accomplishing something better. Disappointment in the Christian life and discouragement often come when things don't work out the way you think they should. This is when it is easy to get upset at God and question if He is really there. The problem is never with God, it is with you and your self-centered way of thinking. Choose today and each day to see how God is working all around you.

Thought for the day

Matthew 15

Where did Jesus travel to once the crowds left (vs 39)?

****If you have a Bible map (or you can search online), take a moment to follow the travels of Jesus we have talked about the last few days. He went from Tyre & Sidon to the Decapolis and then to Magdala.*

Matthew 16

What did the religious leaders want Jesus to do for them (vs 1)?

How do you think this was a test for Jesus (vs 1)?

What did Jesus tell them they were able to determine by looking at the weather (vs 2-3)?

What did Jesus say they had a hard time figuring out (vs 3)?

Why do you think the religious leaders wilfully chose to reject the clear signs that had already been given?

Have you ever found yourself choosing not to see something that should have been obvious? Explain.

What did Jesus call the religious leaders (vs 4)?

Why do you think He declared this?

What sign did Jesus say would be given (vs 4)?

What was Jesus referring to by this sign(vs 4)?

What did Jesus do after declaring He would only show them one sign (vs 4)?

Why do you think Jesus did not want to waste His time arguing with the Jewish religious leaders?

What can you learn from this?

“Catching the Message”

Study: Matthew 16:5-15, Mark 8:13-26

Reading: Philippians 3:17-21, James 3:13-18

Memory: 1 John 1:7

When my son Brandon was young and started watching TV shows that were geared towards adults or children’s movies that had certain puns, he would often ask “What?” over and over again as I, Jen and Bethany laughed at something that was said. Brandon was very literal, and because of that, he had a very hard time understanding figures of speech and puns. When we explained it to him, there wasn’t much laughter because it still took him a while to process things. I found myself saying, “Poor Brandon, you are going to miss out on a lot in life!” As he matured, so did his ability to look at things in a less literal way and now he quite often comes up with some pretty good jokes himself.

Today, we are going to see that there are things that we all can miss because we aren’t thinking a certain way. The disciples missed out on some of the teachings of Jesus because they were so focused on the earthly things. We will see the importance of focusing on the spiritual lessons in life.

What Does the Bible Say?

After visiting Magdala, Jesus and the disciples got into the boat, and when they were about to arrive at the shore of Bethsaida (north shore of the Sea of Galilee), when the disciples realized that they had forgotten to bring bread with them. They started discussing this amongst themselves, perhaps even arguing about whose fault it was. While they were talking about this, Jesus spoke up, using the illustration of bread, and told the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod. They tried to clarify to Jesus that they were talking about actual bread and how they had forgotten it. Apparently, this discussion was a concern over where and how they were going to get something to eat since they had started to feel hungry (Mt 16:5-8, Mk 8:13-16).

Jesus began to rebuke them because they were concerning themselves over a small matter like where they were going to get something to fill

their stomachs. He asked them if they didn't understand what He had done for them in the past. He reminded them how he had fed the 5,000 men and the 4,000 men and how many baskets were left over. Basically, Jesus was wanting to talk to the disciples about deeper issues than physical bread. He had already proved that He would take care of them and provide for their physical needs, and now wanted to give them a spiritual understanding. They then began to realize that Jesus was talking about spiritual needs and how the little corruption of the teaching of the religious leaders could lead to great problems (Mt 16:9-12, Mk 8:17-21).

When they arrived at Bethsaida and stepped out of the boat, there came a man to Jesus who was blind, and the man was begging Jesus to heal him. Jesus chose not to heal the man in the city, most likely this was to avoid drawing attention to Himself. When they were outside of the city, Jesus spit on the man's eyes and then rubbed the man's eyes. Jesus asked him to open his eyes and when he did he declared that he could see, but everything looked like trees. Jesus then had him close his eyes and Jesus rubbed them again. This time, when the man opened his eyes, he could see clearly. Jesus then sent the man home and told him not to enter into the city. It is not clear why Jesus healed the man in this way, but it is most likely that He was going to use this as an illustration to help teach the disciples something about Himself. Being placed here in this passage gives us the idea that Jesus was revealing how the disciples didn't have their eyes completely open to what Jesus had been saying (Mk 8:21-26).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you find yourself so focused on earthly things that you miss the spiritual lessons of life that God wants to teach you? God uses many things in this life to help conform you to His image, yet it is very easy to miss these spiritual lessons because you are stuck on earthly things. When you find yourself focused on earthly events such as sports or hobbies, when you find yourself worrying about your finances, the future or your family, when you find yourself living for the things of this world, you can easily miss the great lessons that God is wanting to teach you. God doesn't want you to worry about your earthly provisions, He can take care of them. Instead of spending your time wondering about the future or being invested totally in the physical things of this life, seek to look around at all the things God is doing in your life and learn the lessons that He wants you to learn. God daily brings things into your life to help direct your mind and heart to Him.

Mark 8

Where had Jesus just been (vs 13)? - See yesterday's study

What did the disciples realize they had forgotten (vs 14)?

What did Jesus say when He heard them talking about bread (vs 15)?

What was leaven a symbol of (v 15)?

****Leaven was just a word picture that Jesus used for something that was small but had a big effect.*

What did the disciples start discussing (vs 16)?

Why do you think the disciples missed the point that Jesus was making?

What did Jesus ask them (vs 17)?

What three things did Jesus mention in verse 18?

****They did not hear or see what was going on, nor did they remember what He had already done.*

Describe a time in your spiritual life where you didn't see, hear or remember? Explain what happened.

What did Jesus remind the disciples about (vs 19)?

Why do you think it is easy to allow our earthly minds to cloud our spiritual thinking?

What question did Jesus leave them with (vs 21)?

Who did some people take Jesus to (vs 22)?

How did Jesus heal this man (vs 22-25)?

Why do you think Jesus healed him this way?

“The Gates of Hell”

Study: Matthew 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-21

Reading: Acts 1:1-11, 19:13-20

Memory: 1 John 1:7



Area of the “Gates of Hell” in Caesarea Philippi

What Does the Bible Say?

Jesus was doing His best at this point to avoid the large crowds in the cities where the religious leaders were out to get Him. To do this, we have seen how He traveled to different cities and now we find Him traveling up to Caesarea Philippi. This was the northern most city of Israel and was located very close to the Old Testament city of Dan. While in the region of the city, Jesus stopped somewhere to pray. He interrupted His prayer to ask the disciples what they had heard people saying about Him. He wanted to know who people thought that He was. Three main answers came to their minds. They had heard people say that He was John the Baptist who had come back to life, while others thought He was Elijah who had been predicted to come to make a way for the

Messiah, and other people thought He was one of the other prophets like Jeremiah who had come back to life (Mt 16:13-14, Mk 8:27-28, Lk 9:18-19).

The concern of Jesus was not as much with what others thought of Him, but He wanted the disciples to declare who they thought that He was. When Jesus asked them their thoughts, Peter spoke up, declaring that they thought He was the Christ, and they understood that He was the Son of God. This statement was a profound statement because the term “Christ” was the New Testament word for the Old Testament word “Messiah” which meant the “Anointed One.” Jesus blessed Peter for what he had said and declared that the Holy Spirit had revealed unto him the answer about His identity. Jesus responded by using the name Simon, Son of Jonah but then declared that his name was Peter which meant “rock.” He went on to state that He was going to build His church on this rock, thus declaring that Peter was going to be one of the key leaders of the early church. This church would be powerful because the “gates of hell” would not be able to stand against it. The “gates of hell” was most likely a reference to a place of great idol worship and animal sacrifice close to the city of Caesarea Philippi. It was a large cave thought to go directly to hell and a great deal of pagan worship took place there (Mt 16:15-18, Mk 8:29, Lk 9:20).

The church would have great power and would have the key to open the doors of heaven for those who would hear and believe. The church would have the authority to help set people free from their bondage to sin so that those who heard and understood could become part of the church and have access to all the blessings that Jesus was promising to His followers. The statements that Jesus gave about the ability to “bind” and “loosen” indicated that the disciples and the church that God would establish through them would have great power. Jesus was about to make His last tour and end up in Jerusalem on the cross. He wanted to start fully preparing His disciples to carry on the work He had called them to do. Once He finished, He encouraged them not to tell anyone about Him being the Messiah so that He could avoid an uproar among the religious leaders (Mt 16:19-20, Mk 8:30, Lk 9:21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize the power you have over evil? If you are a believer, you are part of the church and as part of the church you have been promised power over any evil that might come your way.

Matthew 16

Where did Jesus travel to next (vs 13)?

****The significance of this is not directly stated, but as we continue to study, you will see that it was from here that Jesus began to make His way to Jerusalem where He would eventually die on the cross. This was the northern most part of Israel and He would travel much of the land until He reached Jerusalem. Though Israel did extend south a good distance past Jerusalem, the south of Jerusalem was not heavily populated with Jews like the northern region was.*

What did Jesus ask the disciples (vs 13)?

What three things had the disciples been hearing (vs 14)?

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- 2.
- 3.

What follow up question did Jesus ask (vs 15)?

Why do you think He asked this?

What did Peter declare (vs 16)?

Why was this a significant and powerful statement?

What did Jesus say God had revealed (vs 17)?

How had God been revealing this over the last few years?

What did God declare about Peter (vs 18)?

What would the gates of hell not be able to do (vs 18)?

How is this a significant truth for the church to cling to today?

What do you think verse 19 means?

Why do you think Jesus told them not to tell anyone who He was?

Memory Verses

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 5 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. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin.