

# God's Light Exposes the False Christian

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Well, let's turn to 1 John once again. Resume our study. 1 John 1. I want to read the whole chapter. Ten verses. "That which was from the beginning..." 1 John 1:1. "That..." John is speaking of Christ as a "That," but not just "That." "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard..." This that is called: "that which was from the beginning" is something that can be heard. "...Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes." Which we looked upon "and have touched with our hands." John's own hands. "...Concerning the Word of Life. The life was made manifest and we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life." He calls Christ "the Word of Life." "The Life." "The eternal life." "...Which was with the Father." Again, he doesn't say "He" was with the Father - "...Which was with the Father," still speaking of Him in that way. "That which was from the beginning." "That which was with the Father and was made manifest to us." "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. And we're writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 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. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us."

Now back up in verse 1, we read this: "That which was from the beginning which we have heard..." If there's one thing that he wants to bring out: "We heard Him..." Now if we stop - imagine, you stop. John, tell us, what did you hear? They heard a lot. John, what is it that stands out in your mind that Jesus said to you? Think about it. John, you walked and talked with God. What do we need to know? And he says this in v. 5: This is where we're picking up our ongoing study of this book. This is what John tells us: I walked with Him. I walked with the Eternal Life. I walked with God incarnate. This is what you need to know. This is the message we've heard from Him and proclaim to you. This is the message he heard from Jesus Christ Himself. And what is it? "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

I have this image in my mind. Can you see it? The disciples. They're sitting around a fire at night. And Jesus is there. Can you see His face? I know I'm creating this. I just have this image. The flickering light of that fire upon Christ. And I always think of His eyes. You remember His eyes when He looked at Peter after he denied Him. Luke tells us that. Eyes that were piercing and they could see through a man, and yet gentle. And there He is, the fire flickering on His face. And the apostles, the disciples, there they are around that campfire. And He's teaching them. And He's telling them: My Father is light. That's the picture that I have of this. Now I don't know if this was really the setting that it happened, but I know there was a setting. Right? We know there was a setting in which they were taught that God is light. We know it. We know Jesus taught His followers that about the nature of God being light because John tells us right

here that that's indeed what happened. We know it because John says it happened. And yet, you know what's really interesting to me? Go and scour John's Gospel. You know what John's Gospel is. It's the things that John thought were most important of all the things that the world couldn't even contain all the volumes of all the things that Jesus did, but those things in the Gospel of John he pulled out of the teachings and the doings of Jesus Christ that we might believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God. You can look through there from beginning to end, and you know what, you will never find that John records for us where Jesus taught that God is light. In fact, none of the Gospel writers do. Isn't that interesting? Of the thing he says is really important that Christ taught, and yet, in his whole Gospel, nothing of it. The only way we know that Jesus specifically did teach that God is light is right here: 1 John 1:5. That's how we know He did. Other than that, we don't know.

And the question we ought to ask is this: Why is this so important? Let me tell you something. John does not introduce this fact that God is light just on a whim. This isn't just incidental. He doesn't just happen to bring this up casually or off-handed. Look, you need to understand this. The first chapter - really the whole book of 1 John - but we're in the 1st chapter right now. This first chapter is polemic. Do you know what that word means? It's the idea of: there's an argument. John is arguing for something. John is on the attack. John is strongly arguing against those who have come into the church with false doctrine and dark lifestyle. And I'll tell you this, the thing he wants us to see is that he's arguing for what true Christianity is. That's what he's arguing for here. And you know what true Christianity is? Whatever it is, he's telling us this: The reason he introduces something about the nature of God is because he's saying this: What Christianity is - true Christianity - not just those that come along saying they're Christian, but true Christianity is based on the very character of God Himself. That's how He's arguing here. He is telling us that there are moral implications for you and me that arise out of the character of God. And I'll tell you, John is clearly distinguishing in these verses, clearly separating between not Christians and Muslims, he's distinguishing between people who sit right in the same church. Those who are true Christians and those who claim to be but are not. That's what's happening here.

And he's able to identify the one from the other how? Not by first taking the true and the false and putting them together (incomplete thought). You know where he goes first? To God. He says look at God and then you can tell if they're real or not. That's exactly what's going on here. That's why God being light is so important.

Notice how John goes back and forth in these verses. Look at v. 6. "If we say we have fellowship..." So here's the guy who's false. He says he has fellowship with God, but he walks in the darkness. He's a liar. He lies. And he does not practice the truth. Immediately he goes to the true: "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." Then he goes back to the false: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." Then he goes back to the true: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Then he goes back to the false: "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us." Do you see? Just back and forth. These are sandwiched one after another. That's how these verses are divided right here. You've got false, true, false, true, false. Back and forth.

And notice this: Think with me here. 1 John 1 does not teach anything about how to come from the darkness to the light. Do you notice John's not doing that? John isn't calling those in the darkness into the light. He's arguing for something here. He is arguing specifically, focusing specifically on the fundamental distinction between true and false Christians. There's no call to faith here. There's no presentation of the Gospel to the lost. There's no saying to the false professors, the false brother: Hey, come into the light. He is just simply saying here it is. Look at the nature of God. Here's the fundamental distinction and difference between the true and the false. That's what's going on here. I think you can all see that. And he does so by starting with God. God is light.

Brethren, I think we need to stop here just for a second and soak this up. You start with God. You start with God to figure out how things really are. You see, that's the way he's thinking. Do you recognize? Have you thought about this? The character of God is the basis for everything. Think about what I'm saying here. How you raise your children, for instance, I just happen to be looking over here and see mom and dad and child - the way we raise our children has everything to do with who God is. What Christians are has everything to do with who God is. What the church ought to be like has everything to do with who God is. Everything. Brethren, this is our Father's world. Everything in this creation comes back to who God is. Why things are the way they are - everything! Literally, everything. The character of God is the basis for absolutely everything.

Why does God want young men and young women to be pure? It's a reflection upon Him. Why does He want the thief to no longer steal but work with his hands that he might have something to share? Because God shares. God's not a taker. These are all reflections. You know when we get laws from God, when we get commandments from Him, you recognize God didn't just randomly dream up commandments and say, well, you know, these people I create down there on this earth, they need some sort of rules. Let's see, maybe we'll just this and that. Do this. Don't do that. Just because you need regulations. All of these things flow out of the very nature of God. As I was thinking about this, I just thought, Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine at a wedding. Why? Why that? Because God's saying that's who I am. It all comes back to that. Brethren, everything in creation, everything in salvation, everything. Everything in life, everything in death. Everything about Heaven, everything about hell. All of it. It just comes back to who He is. The answer is rooted in God. Everything. Everything good and evil. When John tells us here in 1 John 1 that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all; when he tells us that and then goes on to show how this leads to us able to discern true Christians from the false, it's just another instance of the Bible showing us you start with God in everything. This is critical for the way we interpret everything.

Brethren, if you happen to look out your window tonight and you see a beautiful sunset, that goes right to God. If you look at beautiful flowers or even when you look at dirt... but when you look at the clouds, when you look at the creation, when you think about all this, they declare Scripture says that there's a declaration. Speech goes forth day by day. What are they saying? They're saying something about God. Everything. Everything.

We need to start with God. We need to view all things from the standpoint of who He is. And you know what? We are doomed to all manner of problems when we start with ourselves. And that's what natural man tends to do - start with ourselves. What John is doing right here in 1

John 1 is saying we need to forget ourselves, and our own opinions about what is and what is not Christianity. We need to get our eyes upon God. That will set things right. He isn't dealing with our felt needs or what we want Christianity to be, what pleases us or displeases us or makes us comfortable. He starts with the fact that God is light. In Him is no darkness at all. You know what he does? He just hurls man into the background. He says this is the starting point. Just critical. Critical. All starts with God. God is at the center.

And look, you can bank on it, man's wrong ideas, his delusions about Christianity, they all come back and stem from a man-centered approach to everything. Look, brothers and sisters, when you start with man - man's big; God's small - when you start with that mindset, when you start with the natural mindset, brethren, it's not surprising that everybody wants a Christianity that allows darkness. That ought not to surprise us. Of course, natural man wants a Christianity with a "god" who smiles upon him no matter what he does. That's the god I had when I was lost. I thought God smiled upon me and would never send me to hell no matter what I did. It's no surprise to us that men want a God like that and they want Christianity like that. Of course, natural man wants a Christianity that allows him to go to heaven but still embrace the sin that he loves so much. That ought not to surprise us. Of course, natural man wants a non-threatening God. Of course they want a promise of health and wealth and prosperity and all that. That ought not to surprise us. We see it all around us. But that really ought not to surprise us.

Be that as it may, John says when we're going to consider who is true and who is not true in the Kingdom of God, the ones who are truly walking with God, the ones who are truly in fellowship with God can be recognized by something - by the fact that who and what they are will always be in accord with who and what God is. That will always be true.

Let's look back at our text. I don't intend to get anywhere near finishing this today, but I want you to see how this reality about God, who God is, dictates what a Christian must be. Did you get what I just said? Who God is dictates, it indicates, it regulates, it mandates what a Christian must be. Christians must be a certain way because of who God is and God is light and in Him there is no darkness. Look at the text. Verse 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. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in the darkness, we lie..."

Now notice something, you either do have fellowship or you say you have fellowship and you don't. That's the two categories that he's dealing with here. Like I say, he's not dealing with Muslims here. He's dealing with professing Christians who are true and professing Christians who are false. Just two categories. "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." There you have a person that's false. But, "if we walk in the light..." There's the true. "...As He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another..." You have those who say they have fellowship and don't, and those who truly do have fellowship. "...And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Make no mistake about it, there are only two categories here, only two. There are those who have fellowship with God. There are those that walk in the light. They practice the truth. They have fellowship with one another. They have the cleansing of the blood of Christ. There is that group and there is the other group. And the other group is just the opposite. They say they have fellowship, but they walk in the darkness, which means they truly don't have fellowship. They lie. They do not

practice the truth. They do not have fellowship with those who walk in the light. And the blood of Christ does not cleanse them from sin. Remember, remember, come back to this. John is focusing on the fundamental distinction between true Christian and fake Christian. And what he's emphasizing is what the true Christian will always be and that it's directly connected to who God is.

Now think about this. John is saying that God's character, God's character makes it impossible to have a true Christian... (incomplete thought). I was just up in Austin two weeks ago. And in the Sunday School they dealt with the carnal Christian heresy. Now look, true Christians can be carnal. True Christians can be carnal. How do we know that? Because 1 Corinthians 3 calls true Christians carnal. And we know the vast majority of them are true Christians because when you go to the 2nd letter chapter 7, we see that they repented. But that's what true Christians do who fall into sin and receive rebuke. But this idea that somebody can consistently as a practice walk in carnality, the nature of God forbids that. Why? You know what Scripture says? That if you're born of God, God has put His seed in you. The God of light puts His seed in you. The God of light puts His Spirit within you. The God of light causes you to be born of Him. If you are a Christian, you are born of the God of light. Paul says we become children of light. You see, light is that which characterizes God, and for you to be a Christian is to be brought into that light. And so if you claim any type of Christianity that actually is in the darkness, it doesn't work.

The very nature of God - look, when God brings somebody into His light - think about Moses. Moses' light was shining. This was the same idea. You know, if Moses came down from the mountain and his face wasn't shining, and he said he'd been in the presence of God, you might say, well, you know, maybe you don't know that there even should be a shine, but the very lack of it would have indicated something. The very fact that the shine was there indicated something. And this is the same truth that we get in 2 Corinthians 3 right? The truth is this, that if I come into that light and I am drawn near to this sort of light, I begin to take on that light from one degree of glory to another. I am brought into His image.

Listen, brothers and sisters, the moon must shine. Now, I recognize sometimes we're at an angle to the moon like when you've got a new moon you can't see all the shine. But it's shining. It's just shining on the other side. Brothers and sisters, the moon has to shine as long as there's a sun. And the same thing is true of a Christian. This is what he's saying. You have to shine. Christians must shine because there's a God of light.

I totally understand why people want to fight. I understand. You understand why it is that people want to fight against and argue against the biblical definition of Christianity. Look, we have a world around us that is arguing - they adamantly argue for ungodly Christianity. We can understand why they do. Most people want to argue for an ungodly Christianity why? Precisely because that's their kind of Christianity. That's why they do. Many in that day, what are they going to say? Lord, Lord... but what does He say? He says, "Depart from Me, you workers of..." what? Lawlessness. Lawless Christianity is going to be massively prevalent in the day of judgment. Now it's not true Christianity. This is a familiar crowd. These are the people that come along and anybody that's serious about holiness, what's the charge from this group? Legalism.

And by the way, we have that group represented here today. It's not just like they're out there. Remember, this is true and false Christians. This is the mixture in here. We have some of

both. Listen, if those who excel in holiness in the church bug you, ooh, that's bad. It's a familiar crowd. Lordship salvation. And they say it with scorn. They don't like that. What? Good works? You're adding works to grace. No, grace produces works. But you see, they want to fight and they want to argue. We know this crowd. They want to complain about these things. The demand for Christianity characterized by light and right and good and purity and holiness. They don't like it. Salvation by works! Look, all manner of people.

Brethren, this is the deception in the beginning. You can have the forbidden fruit and it will be okay. You can have the forbidden fruit and you won't die. That was the deception. It's the deception today. Oh, it's all around us. Brethren, we have commonplace people living in love with the world and wanting to think I'm heaven-bound. I have fellowship with God. I know Him. And Scripture's saying: No, you're lying. It's not true. All sorts of people in love with their idols. They don't really want God's Heaven. The real issue is they don't want God's hell. And so anything else... they recognize there's only one or the other alternative. It's either heaven or hell. They don't want hell so they'll take heaven. But look, the heaven that they say they're bound for is a place of pure holiness. It's a place of purity. It's a place of righteousness. It's a place where that reigns which they despise here. They really don't want it. They fear the sound of hell. They want to go to heaven and they want to be in love with all the treasures of Egypt and all the pleasures of sin. And you know what? They, boy, the doctrine of justification is just twisted to their own destruction.

Oh, and they - this crowd - I say they as though that's third person, but it's some of you. I don't know how many of you, but I know it's some of you. This crowd, like I say, we've got both representatives of both these crowds right here. This crowd loves to find the sins of the saints. Oh, they love to talk about Peter's fall and David's fall and Samson. And they love to find true Christians right here. The righteous man does fall seven times and the people in this crowd, they love it. You know why? Because these falls which in the life of God's true people are the exception, not the rule, people in this crowd, they like to grab on to to try to justify their life which is darkness all the time. That's what's going on.

And you know what? When that's the kind of Christianity that they want, they become suckers for the devil's lie. You'll not surely die. Have the forbidden fruit. You can have it. And God's Word, it's not like it doesn't see this coming. Why do you think that we're repeatedly told: don't be deceived? "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived." Why would he say don't be deceived? Well, for the very fact that so many people are deceived! You've got all these workers of lawlessness that are religious and they think it's going to be okay in the end. They think that somehow this doctrine of justification is going to pull them through in the end. They're saved by grace, but look, if that grace doesn't produce a righteous lifestyle, it's not the grace of God. God doesn't legally wipe the guilt of your sin away and then leave you to just wallow in your sin. Not at all. Don't be deceived.

Ephesians 5: "Let no one deceive you with empty words." What kind of empty words? Well, the kind of empty words that would say: Well, you can be involved in all sorts of sins and still it's going to turn out okay. He says, "Be sure of this, everyone who is sexually immoral, impure, covetous, that is an idolater..." Just covetousness. Listen, covetousness just controls your life. He has no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. "Let no one deceive you with empty words. Because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."

Therefore, do not become partners with them. At one time, you were darkness..." It's interesting, right here in not being deceived, he brings in this thing of darkness and light. "One time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. The fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true."

And Paul says it to the Galatians too. "Don't be deceived. God is not mocked." If you sow to the flesh, you say, what is that? You live for the flesh. You live in the flesh. You live a life void of the power of the Spirit. If you live that way, the end is going to be corruption. That's not a good thing. Listen, what he's saying is ungodly Christianity is impossible. Do you understand that? God is light.

Notice this. Go back. "This is the message..." v. 5, "that we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Now watch this: "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." Look, when somebody comes along and they wear the name of Christian, but their life is full of the love of the world and sin is not a big deal to them, they're given to sports and music and ungodly friends and money and sex and movies and fun. All those things are more important than godliness. You know what John does not say? He doesn't say, well, that's just an innocent mistake. No problem. Slight oversight. Do you see that? Such a one is a liar. You say, wait, v. 6 doesn't say that he's a liar, it says "we lie." If we fit in that category, we lie. It doesn't say we're a liar. Well, if you just jump right over to 2:4, "Whoever says 'I know Him,' but does not keep His commandments..." which is virtually saying the same thing in other terminology, "he's a liar."

Now be careful here. Make sure you see this. To say that you're a Christian - this is big - to say you are a Christian... I mean to go through this life wearing this banner, to tell people, to let it come out of your lips, you tell people "I'm a Christian..." "I know the Lord..." For you to say that when your life as a whole is not characterized by light but by darkness, God's Word says that to do such a thing is not an honest oversight. It is a conscious, deliberate lie. If you appear to be a Christian and you are not truly one, you need to be careful, to consider just what you are.

I was thinking about this, that to wear that name - remember it was said of one of the churches in Asia Minor, "you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." In this world, that is to put you in the camp of liars. You are a liar. Deliberately, consciously a liar if you walk in the darkness, your life is characterized by darkness. And I want you to think about who you are if you're in that camp. You know how Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 15? He says, you know, if the dead are not risen, Christ isn't risen. If Christ isn't risen, we of all people are most to be pitied. Why? Because Christians suffer for claiming to be Christians. They're not living it up with the rest of the world. They're not out there eating and drinking for tomorrow they die. Jesus said count the cost and there is a cost for following Christ. What Paul says is you know what, if this whole thing turns out to not be true in the end, guess who is most to be pitied in this whole world? A bunch of us right in this room. Let me tell you something, Christ is risen from the dead. And I guarantee you this, there is a day coming when every single person in this world will more than anything else desire to trade places with us.

But let me tell you this, there is somebody in this world most to be pitied, and I'll tell you who it is. It's those who came closest to the Kingdom and fell short. It's those who wore the name of Christian and they sat under the Christian preaching. They came face-to-face with the

Gospel and with the work of the Spirit of God. They heard about the Lord. They sang the songs. They were on their tongues. Those truths came through their eyeballs and into their heads over and over and they came close. Brethren, I'll tell you what, those are the people most to be pitied. Those are the people whose places are most fearful. It is the Judas's, it is the Demas's, the Simon magicians, the Hymenaeus's and Alexander's of the world who are most to be pitied.

And look, just here to the end of this message, I know we have you here. I know these people who claim to have fellowship with God but walk in the darkness, I know you're here. I know it. I want to speak to you just for a moment. What Jesus says is that it would be better for you if you had never been born. Now, I know He said that to Judas, but He said to those cities that He did His works in: It's going to be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Tyre and Sidon. And you know what? He didn't lessen the guilt if it is not Him who is directly preaching but His people. He said when He sent forth His disciples that if people would not hear them, it would be likewise more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah. I'm telling you this, when you despise the teaching in this hour that comes from God's Word through His servants, your guilt is just as much as if you rejected it from Christ Himself.

Look, be honest. Darkness. Are there all manner of lifestyle that you possess? Many of the things that you do, you don't want many of us here to know. You live a hypocritical life. One of the dead giveaways is what you do when nobody's watching. What you really are, you can tell the Judas's and the Demas's and the Hymenaeus's, because you act different, you do different things. I speak to you. You live as though purity, righteousness, holiness - you've lived thus far just like they're sort of optional. You know something's wrong. You know you don't have the desires that others do. You just can't figure out why is it that I have no desire for the Word of God? Why is it that I hear about some people that they can spend hours? I don't even care to be in there for 5 minutes. I have to force myself. There's never anything delightful about it. Prayer, Bible reading. Those are chores. Those are things that are always difficult. Look, if you've suspected something, but when it comes to the things of the world, when it comes to sin, when it comes to money, (incomplete thought) Some of you guys continually falling into sexual sin, there may be a reason for that. Like I say, it can be so easy just to latch on to the fact that true Christians fall. Yeah, but true Christians practice righteousness - the practice of their life because their Father is light. And He's made them children of light. And if there's that dark strain in your life, you don't want to just dismiss it as though: I hope it's going to turn out okay in the end. Don't rest your soul on such uncertainties. Don't do that.

I want to point something out to you. Even though John's emphasis here is clearly to distinguish between the true and the false - I know, John is not coming to you right now in these verses and saying to you: If that's where you're at, flee from the wrath to come. That's not his purpose here. Even though John is not pleading with false Christians to come and be true ones, rather, he's simply pointing out who the false and who the true are, even though that's what's going on here, I want you to notice v. 7. "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." I know this is a statement about those who walk in the light over against those who walk in the dark. I know that's what's going on here. But listen, I could take you to other verses and show you where Christ is bidding you to come. To come enter the light. Walk in that light.



And I'll tell you this, you come into that light and yes, you become aware of sin. God's light shines. If you go to God and you begin confessing, you get in the Word, you call upon the name of the Lord, you come to the light that way, the light is going to reveal things in you that are ugly. They are ugly. And you know what, in the shame of it, you can seek to run from that light and run and hide. Or because you love your sin, and it gets exposed and you see God wants me to repent of that, and you say no, I just don't want to. You can run from the light and you can run back out in the darkness where you can cling to your sin and just hold on to your false profession.

But I'll tell you, there's a place in that light if you come in and it begins exposing that wickedness and that depravity, that vileness, the blemishes, the dark stains, you begin to see the filth, look, there is a place in that light just with head hung low in shame to confess those things and to cry out: God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I'll tell you this, when you surrender yourself in the light, to your amazement and wonder, you're going to find out that that light doesn't destroy you. You're going to find that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses that filth and makes you white and bright and full of light. You're going to find that it washes you cleaner than the new fallen snow. That is the light that bids you in. Brethren, we know, we know from Scripture the false, the tares, they grow up intermingled and intermixed with the wheat. You're here. You're here. You're intermixed.

And you know what I know? I know that there are religious people like Paul himself that get snatched. And I know through history that there have been those that have sat in the midst of God's true people and suddenly they saw. They came to the light. They recognized something was wrong and they came and they found mercy. Not everybody gets saved out of the cesspool. A lot of people get saved out of false professions. It happens. And I know, I know some of you, you look at me and hear my voice right now. Your Christianity is not a reflection of the God who is light, in whom there is no darkness at all. Your Christianity is dirty. Away with dirty Christianity. Fling it away like the vile thing that it is. It can't save you. If you do not have a clean Christianity, a Christianity that is a reflection of the God of light, run from it like the plague. Repent of it. And oh, in that light there is forgiveness. God forgives hypocrisy. God forgives liars. God forgives those who have wrongly worn the name of His Son, if you but come to the light. You say, no. Nope. I'm going to stick with this. I want my sin and I want heaven too. And I'm going to go to the grave with a Christianity that allows me to have it my own way, to cling to my idols. I want that kind of Christianity or none. Okay, you're free to do that. Just don't be deceived. Just don't be deceived.

Father, we pray that You would have mercy, Lord, and yet rescue. Rescue those who wear that unsightly name: false brethren. Oh, what names! Blights at our love feasts. False brother. Tare. Workers of lawlessness. Lord, would You please have mercy. Lord, we look to You. We look to You who alone can save. We look to You, the God of salvation. We look to You full of mercy. We think of those who have been steeped in religion, thought themselves good and safe, who You've rescued. Oh, what mercy! What mercy to rescue those! Would You please, Lord? Is there not one or two or five or ten souls deceived? That You would not feel, Lord, some movement of Your own compassion, Lord, for Your mercy's sake to reach down and pluck as brands from the fire? In Christ's name we pray that it might be so. Amen.