

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

Over the next six weeks we will be using the epistle reading from 1 John to focus on Thy Will Be Done: Out of Love. We will see how God's will is done out of love for us and, because of this, how it instills love in us. A love that enables us to live out a life of love to our neighbor.

Today, I'll be talking about how, out of love, we are to walk in the light. God is light, he shows us our sins and lights the trail of sanctification, where we are in fellowship with him and one another.

However, so often, instead of walking in the light, we walk in darkness.

[Hiking in Darkness]

It was the summer of 2005, and I had just returned to my parent's house in the mountains of Colorado after my sophomore year in college.

My 2nd oldest sister, Melisa, and her future husband, Kirk, would be coming up as well so that we could do a family hiking trip and campout.

Since my youngest sister, Briana, was still in High School it was decided that Melisa, Kirk, our family dog, and I would hike up the south side of the Mount Rosalie and over Rosalie pass. While Briana and my Dad would drive around to the north side and hike up with Briana's horse after she got off of work. Then we would meet at the Beartrack Lakes and camp for the night.

The plan seemed good, however, like most plans, something went wrong.

It all started when Briana and my Dad weren't able to get their stuff and the horse packed up as quickly as planned.

Then as they drove to the trailhead on the north side of Mount Rosalie they ran out of time and darkness fell on them. By the time they got to the trailhead and got the horse unloaded and packed with all of their gear it was well past sundown.

My Dad, being confident in a well-marked trail and past experiences with this area, decided to have Briana, the horse, and himself set out in the dark, anyway, in order to meet up with the rest of us and provide us shelter for the night.

However, after they had hiked for a little while they quickly realized that the trail, that used to be so well marked, had recently been victim to large areas of fallen trees from the weather. You could no longer just follow the trail, because every hundred feet, or so, you had to guide the horse around another fallen tree or try and get the horse to jump the tree with all of the gear of his back.

Keep in mind, that while they were navigating all of these fallen trees, it was completely dark. So, after getting around each tree they then had to search for the trail again because the trees were rarely kind enough to fall perfectly perpendicular to the trail.

They quickly became lost, exhausted, and frustrated. All the while trying to find their way in the dark. They deceived themselves into thinking they could find the trail on their own. That they could find the trail without the light of the Sun.

[*Walk in Darkness*]

The story of my Dad and my sister, Briana, hiking in the darkness reminds me of what John was trying to tell us in our Epistle reading today.

John says, “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” (1 Jn 1:5–6).

You see, when we try to justify our sinful actions or when we keep our sin hidden we are walking in the darkness. We are lost wondering the world with no light to see by. We are lost trying to find the trail. We can’t see how far away from the trail we have strayed and we can’t even see what is blocking our path.

By falsely justifying our sinful actions, we try to say we have no sin. Instead, we hide our sin and carry the burden of that sin around with us. We deceive ourselves and walk in the darkness of our sins.

However, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn 1:5).

So, in our sin, in the darkness of our hearts, we have no fellowship with him, because we are walking in darkness. We don't see his light and love, we don't get to experience his grace.

Instead, we stubbornly hike around another tree in the dark, only getting further lost and only getting further from the trail of sanctification.

[Hiking in the Light]

Instead of continuing in the dark, let us walk in the light. That's what my sister, Melisa, my future brother-in-law, Kirk, and I did.

Well before my Dad and Briana, got packed up and drove to the north side of Mount Rosalie, my band of three and the dog started up the trail that would lead us up and up and over the south side of Mount Rosalie. We got started plenty early, and as we headed up the mountain in the morning light it was easy to follow the trail as it slowly wound its way higher and higher.

It was a beautiful sunny day when we arrived at Rosalie pass. And just before we started our descent down the north side, we miraculously got cell phone coverage. So, I did what anyone would do.

I got out my little flip phone and sent my future wife Hope, a picture of the view from Rosalie pass. The picture looked out into a sunny green valley framed by mountain ranges stretching out below us and allowed me to share my joy with Hope since she was stuck at her parents' house in Missouri.

After spending a little time fishing at the top of the pass we started heading down towards Beartrack Lakes. We noticed many of the trees had been knocked over in a storm, but didn't think much of it, because the trail was easily visible in the light of the afternoon.

We arrived at the Beartrack lakes in the late afternoon and figured it should only take a couple hours for my Dad and Briana, to arrive. So, we sat down our packs and tried our luck fishing in the Beartrack Lakes.

By late evening we still hadn't seen anything from Dad and Briana, and since the horse was carrying the tent, we instead, put together a makeshift shelter out of a tarp that I had brought with me and bedded down for the night.

It wasn't until around 5am that we woke up when the dog started barking at something. It turned out to be my Dad, Briana, and the horse finally finding us as the earliest rays of light had started shining. My Dad and Briana cheered in happiness when they heard the dog barking.

What was supposed to be a 3-hour hike for them had turned into a 6-hour hike. They had planned on starting their hike around 5pm and ended up not actually getting started until around 11pm.

Exhausted, my Dad setup the tent and him and Briana fell asleep as the morning light dawned and shined through the tent.

[Walking in the Light]

God is light, he shows us our sins and lights the trail of sanctification, where we are in fellowship with him and one another.

When we try to go through life in the dark, we stumble and fall. We run into trees across our path and find ourselves making more detours, then forward progress. But when we walk in the light of God, then we can abide by God's commands and follow the trail of sanctification through this life. And when we stray back into the darkness, then by confession and repentance we are pulled back into the light. God is light and reveals our sins.

Therefore, John tells us, that "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. [but] 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." (1 Jn 1:7-9).

John wrote "these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Jn 2:1-2).

Thy will be done: Out of Love. Christ's death paid the price for your sins, so that God's light can shine on you. As you walk in the light of God's will, you have the guarantee of the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. You know Christ's promises are true, because, **Christ is Risen.** He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

"Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Heb 13:20-21)
