

*We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— 3we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.*

*5This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; 7but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

*8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

*2My little children, I am writing 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; 2and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A spotlight on a police cruiser, God is light like that. Patrolling through the dark night, searching the darkness of the alleyway for the one who intends to steal, God is light like that. Illuminating all that takes place in parked cars on lonely streets, this is the light in which there is no darkness.

Or like the electric lantern with its powerful beam that I carried to the barn. In its light the eyes of the rats glowed red before they fled back into the darkness.

God is light, searching, probing light so that no sin remains unexposed, no sinner unseen. Like light that bank examiners bring to bear, or the IRS, like the light that is shone on lives in psychologists' offices or at AA meetings. God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

I was getting ready to shine that light on you this morning, but just before I sat to write the words to do it, I looked out of my Friday morning window. My eyes were greeted with another light - blue sky, a world turning green, daffodils yellow, pinks and whites and lavenders of the flowering trees - all of them illumined by the bright morning sun.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

Sometimes I forget that he is this light also. Not the heaviness of gray skies and dreary days, but joy and laughter and smiles galore. How different is this light from the search light that would expose and convict and condemn. In Friday morning's light the day was new and everything in it.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

But what if your life is not Friday morning sunshine, but a traveler tossed on the dark sea.

A little over a week ago my family and I were climbing the stairs of the first building authorized under the U.S. constitution. Round and round the stairs led us, until at the top we entered the place where a kerosene light had glowed in the darkness of the night. There at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay this lighthouse had been constructed, to guide and to assist those who traveled through the darkness.

How many times when there is no other light, God shines in our darkness, bringing us to safe harbor. Through illness, through chaotic and troubled times, when there is no one else to help, he is the light when wind and wave had led us to despair of ever seeing light again.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

He is all of these, light exposing sin, and generating joy and warmth, and light guiding us safely home - searchlight, spring sunshine, lighthouse beacon.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth.

I hear these words and I start to feel responsible for dragging out the searchlight and shining it on you. Walking in darkness, I know some of you are. You know who you are, and so does God. He is light from whom no conversation is hidden, no deed concealed, not even thoughts are exempt from this intensely glowing light. Turn from every darkness, no longer excuse yourself or accept living in half light. God is light; he calls you to walk in his light.

But as I looked out the window I realized there are other sorts of walking in the darkness: Like never taking time for dancing, and laughter. God has not gone to all the trouble of creating me so I could spend a lifetime lamenting sin, wearied by how awful it all is. If for someone else walking in the darkness is theft or adultery, that is probably not what the Lord will be most upset with me. "Why didn't you lighten up a little?" he'll say. "All that light and you couldn't get your eyes off the darkness."

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

Then there is the lighthouse. Most all of us are not very adept at walking in that light. Troubles come and we see the wind and the waves, and we walk in the darkness of worry or despair, rightly thinking that we will never be able to handle the storm. We can't. But he can. In every dark night he is the beacon.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. What shall we do?

The writer of First John tells us: My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus Christ is our advocate. Jesus Christ who walked in the light every moment of his walk among us, pleads for us that we might be forgiven. Another chance, God gives to you this day, and to me. Another chance to try once more and in ways we've never tried before to walk in the light.

Jesus Christ is the light revealing the darkness of all human sin. He will send your sin scampering like rats caught in the light as you reveal your life to him.

Jesus Christ who died and rose for us, he is the spring sunshine God has raised into the sky of your morning. All around you life is a gift carefully prepared for you by your God. Delight in it.

Jesus Christ is a beacon for your living, never hidden by the clouds and the rain. With eyes focused on him, you will come to the shore once more.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.