

Kim Philby. The name probably means nothing to you. But the man named Kim Philby was an amazing man. He was one of the most important and talented spies of all time. He started working for British version of the CIA before WWII and skyrocketed to the top as a result of his talent, acts of patriotism, and daring missions. He posed as a news reporter while feeding vital information about the Germans back to England. He trained British agents on how to sabotage the enemy to save lives. In one year he was the head of all the British Spies in Spain and Portugal. He thwarted the Nazi's by decoding plans of German subs to destroy Allied supply ships. Through his tireless detection of Secret German troop movements he rose to the head of all of British Agents in North Africa, Italy, and Turkey.

He then was promoted to the chief director of Espionage in Washington D.C. where he uncovered 5 Soviet secret spies who were posing as CIA agents. He was so good at his job that he was interrogated multiple times because they thought there was no way someone could have found out all this information without cheating or making up random facts. He was a shining example of dedication, patriotism, and tireless work. He was a server of Country and Life.

We all have groups that we associate with: our families, our hobby groups, and our friends. And in all of those groups we tend to display certain characteristics and do certain things that make us a part of that group. And in each group, certain individuals seem to exemplify characteristics of what it means to be a part of that association. In every organization, there seem to be shining examples of those who are the epitome of being a member of that group, just like Kim Philby.

This group of Christians is similar. And in a similar way of its own we tend to show characteristics of membership of this group of Christians. We probably own a Bible or know how to find one online. We might attend a Bible class and go to church. We encourage others and sing; we read and listen to what God says. If you're not a member or not a Christian, you probably know what Jesus is about, or have a vague understanding of what a Christian looks like. And you look around and you see other people who seem to do it all, they serve in every capacity that they can. The shining Kim Philby's of Christendom.

But there's something you need to know about Kim Philby... Kim Philby was not what he seemed. You see, even before he became a member of the British spy group MI6, he had been a Soviet KGB agent for nearly ten years. He was a liar. A façade. For the entirety of his career, he was feeding the secrets of the British and Americans to Moscow. He let them know where the troops would be, he told them where the secret missions would land, he passed off the names of British Agents so they could be assassinated. He helped to plant Communist agents in the CIA. Despite everything that he put out, he wasn't really part of the group. He wasn't that shining example after all. After he was finally found out, he was placed in exile for the rest of his days.

Do you ever feel like a Kim Philby? Do you ever feel like you're sort of living a lie? Like you're really not part of the group even though you yourself are in and around people who are? How do you know that you are a part of the light? John writes: **"Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person."** If you're anything like me when you hear that verse, it cuts your heart to the core. I hear that verse and think to myself; I am just like Kim Philby. I claim to be Christian, but I've done x, y, or z. I'm not as good as other people. I try my best, but I still slip. Sometimes I don't really even seem to try at all. I hear Christ beckon to me from the shore of the sea: "Follow Me" like he did to Peter and Andrew, but I'm not sure if I can. I know for sure I don't live as Jesus did.

And when we think of all the times that we've slipped, all the times that we've hated a brother or sister it's hard not to despair. The devil whispers in your ear and makes you think that you're not part of the group. You're not one of Jesus' disciples. If you were you'd never fall. You're a liar, a fraud, you're not a part of the light, you are in the dark. Maybe even worse, you're a hypocrite, just pretending to be something you're not. You, just like Kim Philby, should be in exile for the rest of your days.

But it's at this point that Gospel shines so brightly. It is at this point of despair that Jesus steps in on your behalf. When Jesus came into the ministry in humble Galilee and called his first disciples he didn't come with a message of condemnation, but with the message of salvation and comfort. 1 John gives you the hope and the promise of Jesus with wonderful clarity. Look again at verse 8: **"Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is**

seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.”

You may feel like a Kim Philby, But you don't have to. And that's because of some truths that we know about Jesus that are objectively true. Jesus, your Lord came to this earth. Jesus your Lord lived on this earth. Your Jesus went his whole life as both God and Man and never once sinned. Your Jesus came down and obeyed every single one of those commands. Jesus spoke only truth. Jesus only loved the people around him. Jesus suffered the pure hatred on the cross, Jesus suffered all of the sins that everyone has ever committed and ever will commit. Why? So that when the God looks at you, he only sees you through the lens of his Son Jesus. And that's because Jesus loved you.

That grace is the divine truth. You hold to that divine truth. That beautiful verse 8 changes our whole perspective: Since it is true in Jesus, it is true in you. You are his followers. You know him. You're not a liar. You're not fake. You're part of the light. There is no falsehood, there is no accusation that the devil can bring against you, there is no exile for you. You have been eternally exonerated. The light of Jesus that shines in this dark world was brought to you in the message of the Gospel. And it shines in you.

The love of God was made complete in you. **“But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them.”** This was love that is shown in you, it is complete in you, because it was completed by God for you. God's light was shown and was brought to you, and now it shines in you. Jesus was the true light that shines to the brokenhearted to assure you with comfort: **“You are my follower. I love you. I forgive you. You are in my light.**

And it's not a one-time thing that is contingent on you and your actions. The love of God and your life in the light are life-long. You remain in the light and are totally free of that darkness. Free here, free eternally. The true light shines every day and shines brighter as every day the darkness comes closer to its end. The true light shines in you and for all Christians not because of what you did, but what Jesus did for you. Jesus is the Light; as you follow him you reflect him.

And when you think of all those things that Jesus did for you, when you think of all the love that God outpoured and brought to perfection in you, everything else just falls into place. When you look at the pits of despair that Jesus brought you out of you want to shine like the light that you are. When you realize how God has brought you out of the darkness and into his wonderful light, you want to shine light the light that Jesus made you.

Notorious Kim Philby went down as the most impressive double agent of all time. His trials are still used by the CIA and MI6 as a way to train them how to lie and blend in with a different group. But he was caught and lived the rest of his life in a lonely exile.. God's love, and Jesus actions make you a part of his light. So go and follow Jesus. Live, love, and shine. Because of the way that Jesus lived, loved, and shined for us. That's the light of grace. That's the light of truth. God bless you as you reflect it. Amen.