

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 4- The True Test of Salvation- Part 2

30. The Belief in Confession and Forgiveness- Part 2

WAOY Wednesday 05/30/07; WOSM Friday 11/11/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about “A Biblical View of Confession and Forgiveness”. So let’s open our Bibles and read **1John 1:7&9** and **1John 2:1a** again together.

7 but 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.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin...

As Christians, we are forgiven people. Our sins have been graciously forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ. Since that is true- we also must be a people who forgive. This is true. But we have been bombarded over the last several decades with false and incorrect and incomplete viewpoints of what sin and forgiveness and are all about- so I want to go over this issue with you very carefully.

One of the main principles that we need to understand is that without confession- there is no forgiveness. God is not obligated to forgive us our sins unless and until we confess those sins to Him. Look very carefully at verse 9:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now this verse of inspired Scripture gives us a glorious promise and this wonderful promise should give us great comfort and hope. This verse says that even when we do sin- that God is faithful and God

is Just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Isn't that a wonderful promise?

But look with me at the very first word in that verse. The Apostle John used the predicate, "if" to begin this verse. This verse does not say that God will forgive us our sins every time we sin. That is not what this verse says. This verse says that "if we confess our sins"- that God is Faithful and God is Just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So rather than a statement of fact- this is statement that is predicated upon something that we must do.

My father used to tell me before he died that the word, "if" is the most important word in the English language. When you say, "*I will do this if you do that*"- you are saying that unless the other person meets the prescribed requirement- then you are not going to do what you said that you would do. That is what the word, "if" means, beloved. The reason that this word is so important is that most people want to go straight to the forgiveness part and the cleansing part of this verse and by-pass the Biblical requirement- that John places upon us here. But you simply cannot get there from here.

John does not teach that forgiveness from sin comes to us from God simply because we want it to- or even because we asked Him to forgive us. Paul didn't teach that either and neither did Jesus. You are not forgiven simply because you asked to be forgiven- that is not why God forgives you- beloved.

The Bible says that both forgiveness and cleansing are the result of real confession. So without correct confession- there is neither forgiveness nor cleansing.

John is telling us here that the nature of sin is so destructive and the reality of sin is so certain- even in the believer's life- that God will withhold His forgiveness of our sin and God will withhold His cleansing of our unrighteousness unless and until we do something first. That something is to confess our sin.

Now if we are going to be true to what the Scripture teaches here- we must understand what the Bible requires of us. The word that was translated into English as "confess" comes from the Greek word, *homologeoo* (o(mologē/w) which means: *To agree with; to ascent; to concede; and to verbally declare and to verbally profess*. It is interesting to know that this word also means: *not to deny*.

Well who are we agreeing with when we confess our sin? We are agreeing with God. God says that we are all sinners. And we must understand, beloved, that sin is not defined by our terms. Sin is only correctly defined by God's terms. So to agree with God about our sin is to confess our sin to God. In other words, we must comprehend that what offends God is sin- and that it is sin whether or not it is legal or illegal; whether or not it is popular or whether or not it gives us comfort or brings us satisfaction.

What the act or the attitude or the statement may or may not do to us is of no concern here. Of course sin is destructive to those who engage in it- but that is not what makes sin wrong. Sin is wrong because sin offends God- that is why sin is wrong. So to agree with God that that thing that I did or that statement that I made or that attitude of my heart offends God and is therefore wrong is to confess my sin.

Now let's put this Truth into practical application. Suppose that I begin to have certain feelings for another woman who is not my wife. This woman appears to be very spiritual and she and I hit it off right away. And say that I begin to have some kind of an "emotional" attachment to her because she seems to understand me so much better than my own wife.

Right off jump street- I am sinning. Now keep in mind that I haven't physically done anything yet- I just have this internal "feeling" for this other woman. The Bible says that right at this point- way before I actually do anything- I am sinning. Why is that? Because almost 29 years ago, I made three covenants about the woman that I am married to. Three covenants? Yes three.

I swore a covenant with my wife that I would forsake all others and love her and cherish her with all my heart for the rest of her life. And I made that very same oath to God Almighty and I made that very same oath to all the people who witnessed my wedding. So I suppose that you could say that I made one oath three times- or that I made three separate oaths- but the result is the same.

So in order for me to even have any feelings at all of "love" or an emotional attachment in any way or a spiritual union to the same degree or in the same way that I have with my wife is to already violate the covenant that I made with her and with God and with the witnesses.

So if I ever one time have any of those kind of wicked feelings at all in any way shape or form for any other woman in any way whether I express them or not– then I have sinned and I need to repent and I need to be forgiven.

But wait just a minute. According to what John says here in verse 9- I can't simply acquire the forgiveness that I need for my sin until and unless I confess that sin. So in order to be forgiven according to **1John 1:9**, I must accomplish both parts of true, biblical confession here.

First of all, I must agree with God that those inappropriate feelings that I had in my example are indeed sinful. If I try to justify those feelings or if I make excuses or try to blame my wife for having those feelings- then I am not agreeing with God that they are sinful and I am not truly confessing. And I must arrive at the conclusion that my feelings are sinful because God's Word says that they are sinful- not because I got this internal "feeling" or because my wife found out about it and not because my name got in the newspaper. I must agree with God that for anyone to have such feelings about someone who is not their spouse is indeed sinful and is not of God. That's the first step.

Secondly, I must agree with God that the fact that I did have these feelings in my example classifies me as being guilty of committing that sin and therefore I am guilty.

So until I agree that that which God says is sin is really sin and until I agree that by doing what God says not to do- I am guilty- I have not really confessed my sin and if I have not really confessed my sin- I cannot be forgiven or cleansed from it.

Now keep in mind- in my example- I haven't touched this other woman and I have not even said anything to her. And in my example I am not even talking about lust or physical adultery at this point. I am simply talking about an internal feeling that is reserved solely for my wife that no one knows except me and God and that went no further than that.

When a man's heart begins to accept that kind of companionship from any other woman other than my wife; when his conversations with any other woman are such that he should be having with own wife- then he is in violation of his covenant with his wife and he has sinned.

Now there is nothing wrong with having friends beloved- but friendship and intimacy are two different things and we must understand that emotional and spiritual intimacy and the sharing of hearts is reserved solely for the mate that God has brought into your life- not friends.

This is exactly what **1 Timothy 3:12** means when it says that Elders must be, **“the husband of one wife”**. This verse is not exclusively talking about divorce only - but is literally saying that the Elder must be a “one woman man”- that an Elder must have his eyes and his heart and his mind and his emotions and his intimacy and his affections on one woman – his wife- and one woman only. And if he does not fulfill this requirement- then he is not Biblically qualified to lead in the House of God.

He might have a great personality; he might preach like a house on fire- but if he has roving eyes- if he is emotionally or intellectually or spiritually joined with another woman other than his wife- he is not qualified to stand in the place of leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Now some of you would say that my example is extreme. But first of all, I assure you that this goes on far too often among those who say that they believe. But secondly, think what you just said. You just said that what God says is sin is not really sin. This is exactly the point that John was making in this section. We can't do that beloved. We don't have the right to say that someone is or is not sin unless God's Word says it. We must agree with God about what sin is and what sin is not and then when we find out that we are in violation of that sin- we must quickly confess or agree with God that we have sinned and not hide it or to say that it really isn't sin.

To reject God's definition of sin or to redefine sin along lines that are more acceptable to us- is to deny sin and denying sin is not confessing sin- denying sin is the opposite of confessing sin.

So in my example- if I were to tolerate that internal feeling and yet say, *“Well it really isn't that bad because I didn't physically do anything”* or to say, *“Bless God, I'm saved and so I am free to live anyway that I want to”* or to say, *“Well, God understands my needs- so He brought this very spiritual woman into my life to help me because my wife doesn't understand me”*. To say anything like that in order to justify my sin – is to guarantee that I will not be forgiven for that sin-

because the only way- the only way- to be forgiven of sin is to confess that sin and denying that something is sinful is not confessing it.

The nature of genuine believers is to do the Will of God. But because this new Divine nature is still entombed in this fleshly body- we struggle with sin. So sin is the single greatest problem in our lives. So because this is true- the Apostle John is teaching us here how to regard sin and how to be forgiven when sin does come.

Many today have bought into the pagan lie that says that if you just ignore sin- it will go away. Others say that “time heals all wounds” and that through the passing of time- sin will diminish. That’s about the dumbest thing that anyone could ever think. Time doesn’t heal anything, beloved- Only Jesus heals the human heart and only through forgiveness and the washing of pure Red Blood over a sinful black heart- making it whiter than snow can sin be removed from us and forgiveness and cleansing only comes through the agency of confession.

So if you deny your sin; if you try to hide your sin; if you reject God’s definition of sin; if you ignore your sin; if you try to just “move past” your sin- you are not confessing your sin and John says that until and unless you confess your sin God will not forgive you and God will not cleanse you- and if you are not forgiven and if you are not cleansed- then God will hold your sin against you. Can’t you see now how important and serious confession is, beloved?

So be quick to confess your sins. Hurry to agree with God about your sin so that God may forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1 John**. May God help us all.

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