

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 4- The True Test of Salvation- Part 2

31. The Belief in Confession and Forgiveness- Part 3

WAOY Thursday 05/31/07; WOSM Monday 11/14/22

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...

Now on the last broadcast, we saw the great importance of confession in the life of the believer. We studied how that to confess our sins is to literally agree with God about what is and what is not sin and then to verbally acknowledge that we are guilty when we have sinned. According to what the Apostle John writes here in these inspired words, rightly agreeing with God about what sin is and then verbally acknowledging that you are guilty of that sin is a biblical requirement for both forgiveness and cleansing. So, I repeat my earlier statement- without the confession of sin – there is neither forgiveness nor is there cleansing.

We need to understand that those who try to hide their sins are not confessing their sins. Those who make excuses or to blame others for their sins are not confessing their sins. Those who say that sin is really not sin are not confessing their sins. Therefore- those who do these things are not forgiven and they are not cleansed from their sins because John says here that to be forgiven requires that we confess.

Now that we realize that confession is a requirement for

forgiveness- now comes the issue of just how do I confess my sins? Do I always go to my wife or the priest or the pastor or some other person and confess my sins to them? Do I go to the Church, or can I confess my sins at home or at work or while I am driving down the road? Just how does the Bible teach that I am to confess my sins?

First of all- we must remember that since all sin is an offense to God- all sin should be confessed to God. And that confession should be verbal, and it should include as much detail as possible. Now why is that? First of all, the word confession literally means *to verbally declare and to verbally profess*. So, we should find our own prayer closet and go before God and agree verbally with God that sin is wrong and that we agree with God that the particular thing that we did or thought or trusted in- is in fact a sin. Then we should verbally acknowledge that we are guilty of committing that sin and then we should spend some time talking to God about what we did and how it has grieved your own heart. After that- it is appropriate to humbly ask God to forgive you.

Now I would like to say something at this point about this. To come to God with some vague and innocuous statement like, *“Lord, if I have done anything wrong, please forgive me”* violates the very intent of confession. We need to verbally acknowledge our sin and that means that confession is not accomplished unless we speak the name of that sin out loud.

But wouldn't that humiliate us, Brother Blair? Yes, it very well might embarrass you to do that. But we must remember that we have sinned, and we are guilty and confession is designed in part to humble us. Remember, when you speak something out loud- you're not informing God about something that He doesn't already know about. God knows you better than you know yourself- so when you confess sin- you're not giving God information that He wasn't aware of.

No, Confession is all about humbling us; it is about reminding us that God is holy, and we are not. Confession is about bringing the horror of our transgression to the forefront of our minds and to make sin so distasteful to us- that we will energetically look for ways not to engage in it. It is about bringing back to the forefront of our minds the great price that was paid to save us, and that Salvation is not something that we deserve- but something that God gave due to Mercy and Grace.

And we must know that confession should have some degree of sorrow about it. After all- we have transgressed against a holy God, and we have brought dishonor to His great Name. We have damaged our own personal testimony and we have also damaged the corporate testimony of the Church at large- so it is perfectly appropriate to feel really bad about sin. To flippantly just say, “*Forgive me*”, and then move on very quickly to something else- is to marginalize what confession is all about.

Now some people have told me that all this is way overboard- that God doesn’t require all of this. But I believe that attitudes like that about sin is precisely why we have seen a complete collapse of Biblical morality in our nation over the last 50 years. Listen, brothers and sisters- *something* has caused more sin to come into the Church than ever before. *Something* has caused the people of God to have just as many social and sinful problems as the people out in the world. And I believe it is because we don’t view sin the way the Bible teaches us to; we don’t hate our sin; and we don’t really believe that sin is that serious. And I believe it is because we take such a cavalier attitude about forgiveness and repentance that sin remains so powerful in our lives.

But if the criticism is true and what I have been teaching about confession is really not necessary- then why did the Apostle John write about it here in verse 9? Are we saying that these words of John are not inspired? Are we saying that we must obey part of what John taught but we are free to ignore other parts that John taught? And if that is true- when did that become true?

And if we are free to ignore confession as a requirement to receive forgiveness- then what other parts of the Bible are we also free to ignore? How about the parts that demands that men love their wives or how about the part that teaches about honoring our mothers and fathers or what about the part that requires saved people to give to God?

Why did John put confession as a requirement to receive forgiveness in verse 9? Because God the Holy Spirit inspired Him to do so. And for anyone to try to minimize or marginalize this Biblical requirement is to doom people to a lifetime of being at the mercy of sin.

Now I fully realize that what I am teaching flies in the face of the modern doctors of the “feel good gospel”- but the Bible teaches that

every single blood bought child of God should be sick in his heart when he sins. Yet the last thing that should be in anybody's mind during confession is how terrible sin has treated us. Listen, we are so interested today in our own self- importance and how we feel about things that we forget that God owns our breath and when we sin- we have shaken our fist in His Face, and we need to feel real bad about that. I mean what is the alternative- to ignore what God says about forgiveness and just die in our sins and go to hell?

We have to remember beloved that confession is not optional. God doesn't *ask* us to confess our sin- He demands it; He expects it; and He is entitled to proper confession every time we sin. Stop and think about it- if you were God- would you forgive people simply because they said they were sorry? So please beloved, don't try to minimize the impact of confession by trying to hold on to your pride. Confession does great damage to human pride and human self- worth and human self-esteem, and it is supposed to- because we are not more important than God. Brothers and sisters, God is vastly more important than we are, and God's Ways are more important than our ways and when undeserving sinful human beings continue to flaunt their wickedness in the Face of a holy God- we really need to be brought down a notch or two.

Now again any time that someone preaches like this- people begin to scream, "legalism". But once again, what I am saying is nowhere near legalism- it is simply Biblical Truth.

King David didn't consider it to be legalism to confess his sin- he thought it only proper and right- and he was a king! He wasn't concerned about being embarrassed about confessing his sin because he was heartbroken over the fact that he had transgressed against the God that he loved. And when David confessed his sin- he was so broken over what he had done- he cried; he fell on his face; he walked up and down in the Sanctuary- lifting up his hands and crying out loud in bitter repentance to God for his sin. He made no excuse at all for what he had done; he didn't try to hide his sin or to lessen its impact. Compare David's broken heart over his sin with the modern cavalier attitude about sin and confession that is so prevalent today by looking at **Psalms 51:**

1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

- 2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.
- 3** For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.
- 4** Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.
- 5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.
- 6** Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
- 7** Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8** Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.
- 9** Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.
- 10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11** Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12** Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.
- 13** *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.
- 14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; *Then* my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.
- 15** O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.
- 16** For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.
- 17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
- 18** By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19** Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

I tell you that if we would confess sin like this more often we would engage in sin a whole lot less. Compare this biblical example of confession with some of the flippant statements and jokes that people make about sin in our day. And notice that David didn't just mutter, "*Lord, forgive me*", but he went into great detail about the horror of his

sin. So, we should use this part of inspired Scripture as a model of how we should confess our sin before God. And to suggest that we are important and busy people and that we don't have either the inclination or the time to do this- simply confirms how arrogant we have become and how flippant we are about dishonoring God- which is what sin does.

Well, I'm out of time again today- but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of 1John. May God help us all.

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