

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 4- The True Test of Salvation- Part 2

29. The Belief in Confession and Forgiveness- Part 1

WAOY Tuesday 05/29/07; WOSM Thursday 11/10/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to begin to look at what John taught about “A Biblical View of Confession and Forgiveness” by examining verses 7 and 9 of chapter 1 and the first part of verse 1 of chapter 2- so let’s read those verses 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 over the last several broadcasts, I have tried to deal fairly and thoroughly with the issue of sin. Starting today, I want to begin to look at the other side of the issue of sin and that is confession and forgiveness.

The Apostle John taught that while it is true that we all sin- it is also true that we may confess and repent of our sins and we may obtain forgiveness for our sins through the great Mercy of our great God.

The trustworthy Promise of the Gospel is that the free and marvelous forgiveness of our sins is given to everyone who truly repents and believes in the Person and the finished work of Jesus Christ. This promise of Divine forgiveness is so great that it removes all of the filth, and guilt, and punishment of the trusting sinner and in their place- God grants righteousness, sanctification, and the reward of everlasting life.

Now all through **Romans 8**, the Apostle Paul gives us a summary of what it really means to be forgiven in a Biblical Sense:

Romans 8:1

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28-35

Romans 8:28-35

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:37-39

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a promise! But because God's forgiveness is so sweet and so glorious and so complete- many have come to the false notion that those who have been saved never have to confess their sins or repent of their sins or ask for forgiveness ever again.

The logic of these people's false understanding of forgiveness says that in order for Christians to fully appreciate their Divine Pardon and walk in the liberty that Christ has provided for them that they must

now ignore their sin when they are guilty of it. But this logic is the foundation of the ancient heresy of Antinomianism which both Paul and John fought against in the first century.

You may not know it by the “three dollar term” of Antinomianism, but you are confronted with this heresy all the time when you hear people make comments like, “I’ve got my ticket punched and I don’t need to worry about sin”, or when you hear people say that “it really doesn’t matter how they live once they are saved because Jesus loves them just like they are”.

This kind of attitude about the reality and horror of our sin is based in human pride- the notion that I am so valuable to God that He wouldn’t dare hold my sin against me. The results of thinking like this is always a great boldness to sin with impunity and a total lack of the fear of God and a complete disregard for Gods’ holy Law.

Let me say this the best way that I know how. There is nothing about God’s Love that cancels out God’s Righteousness and Holiness. There is nothing about God’s Love that overwhelms God’s hatred of sin and His opposition to sin. People who believe that sin no longer matters once they are saved are not spiritually mature, beloved- they are just deceived.

God’s Love is vast and powerful. God’s Love is higher than a Mountain and deeper than the Ocean. God’s Love will ascend to the highest star and go down to the lowest hell- but the Bible clearly teaches through the fact that God drowned the entire human race in the Great Flood that God’s Love does have its limits. Go ask the people of Sodom and Gomorrah if God’s Love ever reaches a limit. God’s Love is to be received and marveled at- but not to taken for granted. God will not always strive with man. If you play around with sin- please know that you will get burned and you will be at odds with the Creator of the Universe. Play with me; play with other people- but do not play with God. God takes sin so seriously, that He allowed His Own Son to be brutally beaten and murdered so that we could go free. If we sin without regard once we are saved- we are making a mockery of Grace and Forgiveness.

Because God does not instantly judge all sin the very second that it is committed gives some people the idea that God doesn’t care about sin anymore or that God doesn’t see our sin- but that would be misunderstanding and misinterpreting God’s Love.

Now I realize that anytime anyone begins to go down this road- and correctly discuss a Biblical view of sin and repentance- people start screaming, “Legalism!” But what I have just said is nowhere even remotely connected to Legalism.

Legalism is the false teaching that says that you have to earn your own Salvation through your own efforts. I reject Legalism and I reject it in all of its forms. But teaching that we have a duty and an obligation and a responsibility to walk with God and to obey God *after* we are saved is not Legalism, beloved, it is Biblical Christianity. Paul taught this- and he wasn’t a legalist. Peter taught it and he was not a legalist. Neither James nor John nor Jesus were legalists but they all taught that once you are gloriously saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone you must bear fruit and you must do good works and you must obey Jesus Christ- or else you are not really saved- you are simply deceived.

Look what the Apostle Paul said about our duty and our responsibility after we are saved by Grace in **Ephesians 2:8-10**:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Notice here that in verses 8 & 9, Paul makes it clear that Salvation cannot be earned nor can it be deserved- but that Salvation is a free gift given by Grace through Faith without any human works attached to it at all. Now why is that? Why did God exclude any human participation in the miracle of Salvation? Firstly, and most importantly, God Sovereignly saves so that God may receive all the Glory and not have to share any of the glory with man.

If we do anything to be saved- if we initiate Salvation or if we cooperate with God in our own Salvation in any way – then we rightly deserve some of the credit for it- but if Salvation is a Sovereign work of God alone- then only God deserves praise for our Salvation.

So if you believe that you helped out God in the saving of your own soul; if you believe that you assisted God or that somehow the Creator of the Universe was helpless to save you unless you gave Him

permission- then you need to give praise to yourself and share the glory with God for your Salvation because you are rightly entitled to it.

But if you believe that- you need to figure out just how a dead person can assist in his own Salvation. I mean if the Bible is true and we are all dead in sins and trespasses and we are separated from God because of our sins and if it is true that when man fell in the Garden that, that fall was complete and affected every facet of his being- then just how did we get the ability to choose God or to cooperate with God or to assist in our own Salvation?

You see, you can't have it both ways. Either man really didn't fall in the Garden or else his fall was really not that great; or else God is really not Sovereign at all or else He is really not that Sovereign- if we have the ability to choose God or if we have the power to affect our own Salvation. Either Salvation is by Grace through Faith without any works or else Salvation is by Grace through Faith with some works or else Salvation is all by human works without any Grace or Faith.

Those are the three views of Salvation that exist if the world today- but only one of them is taught in Scripture- the first one- Salvation is wholly a Sovereign work of God alone by Grace through Faith without any human works and without any human cooperation and without any human assistance of any kind. That is what Paul taught here in Ephesians 2:8&9.

But now look again at verse 10:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

It is true that the Bible clearly teaches that Salvation is a Sovereign work of God alone that He administers by Grace through Faith and that it does not include any human work at all. But it is also equally true that once you are saved by Grace through Faith without any human works at all- you are then created to do good works.

So works cannot save you- but you cannot be saved without doing good works. In other words- Good deeds are not the *root* of Salvation- they are not the *cause* of Salvation- but good deeds are the *fruit* or the *results* of being saved. You cannot save yourself by doing good works- but once God saves you – you are commanded to do good works.

Part of those good works that we are commanded to do is to confess our sins.

Here in this first Chapter, the Apostle John is teaching us that the Fall really was that great and that every human born of woman are wicked sinners and that all of us are helpless and hopeless in and of ourselves to cooperate or even assist God in our Salvation. John is teaching here that we have great need for a pure and sinless Savior to come to us- because we cannot go to Him. We have need for Him to choose us- because we cannot choose Him. We have need for Him to wash and cleanse us- because we cannot wash and cleanse our own sins. We have need for His Righteousness to be imputed to us- because our righteousness is as filthy rags.

So John is teaching us here that in order for us to receive true forgiveness- we must first learn how to confess or admit our sins- and we must understand why confession of sin is so important. Well, I have to stop right here, 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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