

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 4- The True Test of Salvation- Part 2

35. The Belief in Confession and Forgiveness- Part 7

WAOY Thursday 06/07/07; WOSM Friday 11/18/22

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 because the subject of Confession is so important, I want to continue to go over and recap what we have studied so far about true biblical confession.

The first Principle that we must know about forgiveness is that without Biblical confession of sin- the Bible teaches that God will not forgive us. As we studied- the word confession has to do with two separate aspects that we must keep in mind:

1. Agreement with God
2. Verbal acknowledgement

Now on the last broadcast, we recapped what John taught about coming into agreement with God about our sins and today I want to finish our review by going over the second component of confession- which is verbal acknowledgement.

After we have come into agreement with God about the fact that what we did or what we said or what we had in our heart was sinful- we must now go to God and verbally acknowledge that we have sinned.

But why does God want us to verbally acknowledge what He already knows is true? Why does God require that we “name our sin”? How come we can’t just go through the motions of confession and make a real quick statement like- “*Well, if I was wrong, I’m sorry*” or “*If I sinned, I’m sorry*”. How come God won’t accept those kinds of statements so we can just “move on” to something more important than telling God what He already knows?

Here’s why. First of all, confession of sin is important. It might not be on *our* top ten list- but rest assured that confession is on God’s list of things that are real important.

Now for some strange reason- Protestants seem to have a lot of trouble with the concept of Confession. I’m not sure why other than the fact that many Protestants have taken two very wonderful and Biblical concepts of the Sovereignty of God and the priesthood of all believers and they have stretched these two Truths farther than the Bible allows them to.

Many today believe that by virtue of the fact that they are saved by a Sovereign act of God’s Grace and Mercy that there is no need to confess sin or to even repent again. But that is not what the Bible teaches, beloved. So here is how you need to think about this. The only person who needs to confess sin is the one who has sinned. If you have ceased from sin- then you don’t need to confess it before God- but if you still sin then the Bible commands you to confess that sin before God whether you are saved or not.

Salvation is a free gift of Grace from an all knowing and all powerful God and I agree that the only people who get saved are those whom God has chosen before the foundations of the world in accordance with **Ephesians 1:3-6**- so let’s read those verses together:

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

So we can clearly see that God is the One Who saved us- we didn't save ourselves and we didn't even cooperate with God in our Salvation. How could we? Before we are saved- the Bible says in **Ephesians 2:1** that we were dead in trespasses and sins- and dead people cannot do anything until they are resurrected.

So I agree with you that the Bible teaches that Salvation is a Sovereign work of God alone which is why true Salvation is strong and secure and safe and reliable and trustworthy and eternal.

But nothing in that Truth about Salvation being a Sovereign act of God alone contradicts what John is saying here in verse 9.

When we sin- it is still wrong- even though we are saved. It still offends God and our sin still dishonors God- in fact- it dishonors God *more* for saved people to sin than it does when lost people sin because we know better and we have the ability to resist temptation and they don't.

So I would argue that it is precisely because we are saved and precisely because we have the new nature and precisely because we are a child of the King that confession is all the more mandatory and all the more important for us to fulfill.

Confession is a testimony of our heart toward God- it brings to the forefront that we don't want to sin and that we are truly broken over that sin and that we really understand that it displeases God and we really don't want to do it ever again.

I asked this question the other night in my Church and I want to ask it to you today on the radio. How long has it been since you or anyone you knew stayed up all night walking the floor because you were so troubled over your sin? I mean have we really gotten to the place where we believe that Salvation means that sin doesn't matter anymore?

Are we really so calloused and so hard hearted that our transgression don't bother us? Has our conscience been so seared with a hot iron that we can sin and just go about life like nothing happened?

Beloved, not being deeply and profoundly affected by your sin is not a sign of your spiritual maturity it is a sign of your backslidden heart.

Salvation is not about "getting your ticket punched" so that you can now do anything that you are big enough to do. Salvation is not about

you living anyway that suites your fancy. Salvation is not about you being so important in your own eyes and thinking that God loves you so much that you now are allowed to ignore two thirds of the Commands in the New Testament and to do what is right in your own eyes and still go to Heaven. Thinking like that does not come from studying the Bible.

So I would argue beloved, that Salvation is not the freedom for you to live any way you see fit but rather Salvation is a precious gift and a marvelous privilege that none of us deserve and true Salvation is a wonderful opportunity and freedom to live for God and to honor God through your life and actions and thoughts and deeds that lost sinners simply don't have.

So instead of spending all your time trying to see how much sin you can get away with a still be saved- why don't you see how much sin you can stop doing to prove that the Power of the Holy Spirit lives inside you?

I believe that this is what the Bible teaches and I believe that for two reasons. First of all, I can quote to you hundreds of Scriptures that teach what I just said. Not one or two vague or nebulous portions of the Bible- but literally hundreds of Scriptures- a lot of them right here in **1John**- that teach that after we are gloriously saved by Grace through faith in Christ alone- that we are *commanded* and we have an *obligation* and a *duty* and a *responsibility* and a joy- to live for God and to serve Jesus and to deny ourselves and to crucify our flesh and to mortify the deeds of our bodies and to present our bodies as a living sacrifice and to not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers and to not touch the unclean thing and to walk circumspectly and to fight the good fight and to give no place to the devil and to walk in the light even as He is in the Light and when we fail in that endeavor- when we sin- we are to humbly and quickly confess our sins.

But secondly, as well as being a struggling student of God's Word- I am also a student of both Church history and of world history and the fact of the matter is that before 1900- every Church on earth- as a tenet of their officially written Doctrine taught what I just said. All of them- Baptists, Presbyterians; Lutherans' Methodists, Pentecostals- they all taught that to live continually in sin doesn't prove how good God is – no, it only proves that you are lost.

The Baptists believed in confessing sins. The Lutherans believed in confessing sins. The Presbyterians believed in confessing sins. The

Methodists believed in confessing sins and the Pentecostals believed in confessing sins. You don't have to believe me- go to the Internet and look up their Doctrinal positions on this issue and see for yourself- I'm not making this up. None of these churches taught that saved people are exempt from repenting or confessing sins- none of them.

So the question that I have about this is this. We all say that we believe the Bible; and we all say that our Churches are based upon Scripture; and we all say that we want to do what God says to do. Okay fine so far. But if the Bible says that we are to confess sins why don't we do it today like it was done years ago?

There are only two possible reasons why when you talk about confession today with most people they think you are speaking in a foreign language. One possibility is that I am just out of my mind don't know what I am talking about. That's possible- I have certainly been wrong before- so maybe I am wrong about this.

But if I am wrong about confession- then why did all of the major Protestant denominations of a hundred years ago agree with me? I can understand if you think I am crazy- but are we to assume that all of these denominations were all collectively wrong about the issue of confession? Maybe so. And if that is true- then I need to repent for teaching it like I have.

But there is a second possibility here that we need to explore. Another reason that we do not promote and teach and conduct true genuine biblical confession of sin today with the same urgency and with the same earnestness and godly fear that was done a hundred years ago is because we really don't know the Bible like our predecessors knew it and we really don't believe that sin is that big of a deal and we just can't imagine in a million years that God might really hold our sin against us like our fathers did. And if that is the reason that confession is almost non-existent today- then those of you who are ignoring this biblical command need to repent.

To white wash sin or to minimize sin does nothing for your walk with God, beloved, except to hinder it. So I will tell you that we are not better off today because we have such a cavalier attitude about sin. We are not better off being served by lukewarm ministers- who love their paychecks and the praise of men more than they love the sheep to warn them about the horrific consequences of un-repentred sin. We are not more equipped to serve and please our Lord by being taught or by

believing that Salvation eliminated our need to ever repent or to confess sin again.

John didn't teach like that. Paul didn't teach like that. James and Peter didn't teach like that and neither did Jesus. So we shouldn't teach that way either because to do so- simply cannot be defended.

So what is the end of this matter? Sin is very bad, and God is very Holy and we are very blessed that God would even deal with us in the first place. So don't play with God. Don't dabble with sin. Don't wade into the river of the world- but love God with all your heart and when you fail; when you do sin- be real quick to agree with God that it is sin- and don't try to hide it and then verbally acknowledge that the you have sinned against a holy God and beg God for forgiveness and then stand on top of that mistake and walk away forgiven and cleansed and love and serve Jesus all the more.

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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