

Christians Confess Sin (1 John 1:9)

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Would you please open to 1st John chapter 1, verse 5?

I do plan, Lord willing, to move on to chapter 2. This is my last message today in chapter 1. I plan to move to chapter 2 next week.

1st John chapter 1, verse 5, "This is the message we have heard from Christ and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Now I want to draw your attention specifically to 1st John 1:9. Verse 9 in this first chapter, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now, I believe this verse is speaking to you and I who are Christians. I believe this verse is specifically referring to what happens when a Christian sins, and then goes to their heavenly Father; and pours out their guilt and their sorrow before Him. His response is one of forgiveness and cleansing.

I believe this is one of those verses that assures the Christian that when the Christian sins, his fellowship with God is not destroyed; neither does he stop walking in the light. I believe that's what this verse is all about. This is actually about someone who is walking in the light and recognises his sin. The light exposes that sin; and instead of hating that light and running from the light, the light reveals the sin and they admit it and they confess it; and they find their heavenly Father does not cast them out for it, but for Christ's sake, is pleased with such confessions of guilt and forgives them, and washes them. That's what I believe this verse is all about.

I do not believe that this verse is primarily evangelistic in nature. In other words, I don't believe that what you have going on here is that this verse is aimed at encouraging lost people to confess their sins to the Lord so that they might be saved. I believe this verse is primarily aimed at assuring Christians that when they do sin, their fellowship with God is not terminated because of that sin; but the blood and death of our Lord Jesus Christ makes it just for God to forgive those sins and maintain uninterrupted fellowship with us.

Now look, of course when the lost come in repentance to God and confess their sins, clinging to Jesus Christ in faith, of course God is faithful and just to forgive them. I'm not arguing that. That is not the issue here. Of course that's true. Of course God is faithful and just to forgive such a lost person and cleanse them. I just don't believe that's what this verse is dealing with primarily, and I would like to start my sermon today with six reasons as to why I believe 1st John

1:9 pertains to the confessions of God's children and the pardoning and cleansing that follows such confessions.

Now look, I want to prove this to you because I think that this is extremely helpful and valuable to you and I as Christians in living our Christian life. The truth that is proclaimed here.

So six reasons. I want to prove these to you. Six reasons why I believe this is not speaking primarily to the lost, but to Christians.

First, notice the word 'we' that is close to the beginning of verse 6, verse 7, verse 8, verse 9, verse 10. You see them there? "If we say." verse 7, "But if we walk." verse 8, "if we say." verse 9, "if we confess." verse 10, "if we say."

Now, in the original greek, there are no pronouns, but the verbs in greek tell us what the pronoun should be. And the fact is, everyone of these indicate a first-person, personal pronoun - which means you are going to translate that 'we' or 'us'. The 'we' is absolutely right here. John is including himself with the people. He includes himself.

Now here's the thing. Who are the 'we'? I don't believe the 'we' is everybody in the world. I believe that this 'we' is specifically referring, not just to Christians; it's referring to professing Christians. Now, if you are a true Christian, you profess to be a Christian and it's true. But there are a lot of people who profess to be Christians and it's not true.

I don't believe this is speaking about everybody in the world. I believe that he has in mind here, professing Christians, some of which are true and some of which are not true.

Look at verse 6, we can go all the way through here. Look, "If we say we have fellowship," Who does that? Professing Christians. Somebody that's not a professing Christian doesn't do that. They're not claiming to have fellowship with Him. "If we say" - If a professing Christian says, "I have fellowship with Him," while that person walks in the darkness, He's a liar and doesn't practice the truth.

"But, if we walk in the light," - we as professing Christians; this is the true Christian. True Christians profess Christ. Look at verse 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" - well, where's the deception? The deception is because this person believes they are a true Christian but the fact is they're not.

Verse 9, "If we confess" - If we professing Christians confess our sins, "He is faithful and just to forgive" over against, if we as professing Christians say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar. Again, why is He a liar, and His word is not in us? Well it's because such a person claims that His word is in them. We make God a liar if we are claiming to be a Christian while we walk around with His word not in us.

That's the first reason. The 'we's here, I believe, are speaking about professing Christians. I don't believe it's just speaking about any lost person out in the world. I don't believe that's what he has in mind. It seems true professors and false professors are what are being compared back and forth here. That's the first reason I believe that verse 9 is specifically addressing professing believers; and certainly verse 9 is referring to those that not only profess Him but are truly believers who are in the light. They're confessing their sins and God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Here's the second reason why I believe that verse 9 is speaking to Christians: Chapter 2, verse 1, "My little children, I am writing these things to you." Now I know it goes on from there,

but "I'm writing these things to you"- that's the second reason why I think that this has to do with Christians.

The third one is this: 1st John 1:9 is sitting in a portion of scripture in which John introduces all of this to us (verses 6 through 10) with this 'light' motive. John has our minds on 'God is light.' Look at verse 5, "God is light." verse 7, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship." Look, the massive distinction between true Christians and false Christians is: the true ones walk in the light; the false ones walk in the dark. That's the distinction here.

And walking in the light means what? What happens when you walk in the dark? You can't see things; and so you stumble, and you trip, you run into things. You can't see things the way they truly are. When you walk around in the pitch black, you run into things, you can't see. But if you're in the light, you can see. Do you see what's happening in verse 8 and verse 10? The people can't see what's true; they're not in the light - over against the guy that's in verse 9, He does see. He sees things the way they are, he sees his sin as they are.

Listen, confession of sin is a fruit of being in the light. That's the third reason why I believe 1st John 1:9 is referring to Christians and not just lost people.

The fourth reason that I believe 1st John 1:9 pertains to Christians just has to do with the emphasis, in this portion of scripture, on fellowship with God. Do you remember that? Look at verse 3, "That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." Go to verse 6, "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."

Listen, because the child of God is in the light, you know what he tends to do? He tends to all the more see his sin. John is being extremely pastoral here. I believe what he is doing is he's coming to the Christian who is in the light and is becoming all the more aware of his sin; and he is saying, Look, I want to tell you, child of God, when you sin, you're in the light. And you no doubt are more sensitive to it than ever. And I just want you to know, it does not destroy your fellowship. Why? Because you're sensitive to it and you take it to your Father. There is cleansing and there is forgiveness. And you're good. Your fellowship is not broken. I believe that that's what is happening here.

The fifth reason I believe that 1st John 1:9 applies to Christians is because, now think with me here, talking about God being faithful and just to forgive Christians and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness, no more confounds the doctrine of Justification than does 1st John 1:7 or 1st John 2:1.

Let's look at those. 1st John 1:7 says, "if we walk in the light" - that's truly a Christian. This is not a lost person, this is a child of God. This is somebody who professes to be a believer and truly is. "They walk in the light, as He is in the light" and what happens? "We have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses" - it's happening now. It is a present reality, it is cleansing them now. The child of God is being cleansed from all of his sin.

1st John 2:1, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin" - these are little children, these are clearly Christians. And if they sin what happens? Not that there's nothing more to be done because after all, back when you first believed, you were justified and now there's nothing more to be done. He doesn't say that He says that if you sin,

presently, as a Christian already, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. They have an advocate. They have one who pleads on their behalf, Now.

See, folks, we have a tendency to think of justification as a one-time event when we first believe. Now look, when you first believed, you were justified. But you have to remember, think with me here, when Paul starts this glorious letter - this epistle written to the Romans, (I mean, if there's ever a book that deals with justification by faith in Jesus Christ, there it is.) and when He begins to introduce this righteousness of God, by the way, that's what justification means. It means being declared righteous. When Paul first talks about that in Chapter 1 of Romans, you know how He introduces it? He talks about the gospel being the power of God unto salvation for all who believe--The Jew first and also the Greek. For in it (the gospel), the righteousness of God is revealed, not just by faith, but from faith to faith. The ESV says faith for faith. They are using an odd preposition there; but they footnote it and they say beginning and ending in faith.

Look, justification, the merits of it, are once and for all accomplished in the life and death of Jesus Christ. No more to be added. But the merits of it are not just applied the first day you believe. They go on being applied from faith to faith, beginning and ending in faith.

As I live my life, that blood is applied. That blood is effectual. I need an advocate. We need that truth to grip us more and more; that I need an advocate today. I have an ongoing need of the blood of Jesus Christ. And what John is saying is, As a child of God who is in fellowship with God, who walks in the light; that when you sin, your fellowship isn't broken. You don't fall out of the light, Why? well, you have in 1:7, "the blood." You have in 2:1, "the righteous." He's righteous, He shed His blood. And so, my fellowship is not interrupted when I fall into sin. That's the issue; this does not confound the doctrine of justification.

And the sixth reason that I would say 1st John 1:9 is dealing with Christians, not with lost people, is just simply because this is exactly consistent with the testimony of the saints of old. And particularly, I would just refer to David. Listen, you don't need to turn there but listen to this: In Psalm 32, David is already a man of God. He's a child of God. He says in Psalm 32:5, "I acknowledge my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin."

Do you know what iniquity? It's interesting. English word, but in the Hebrew, it has to do with guilt. He's putting the guilt of David's sin away, in time. As David comes to God, there is a putting away of that guilt; there is a forgiving.

Psalm 51 verses 1 through 4, and verse 7, "Have mercy on me O God. According to Your steadfast love, according to Your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin." You see forgiveness in these verses, and washing, cleansing. "I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against You and You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgement." Verse 7 says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean."-- Hyssop was what they sprinkled the blood with. "and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." This is exactly what John is talking about.

Now some questions arise. If we confess our sins, Christian, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. What if I forget to confess a sin? What then?

Well, look, I don't believe that we should take this verse in the absolute sense. John is One to speak in dogmatic terms, we would all acknowledge. If we practice righteousness, we're born of God. If we practice unrighteousness, we're of the devil. John is very dogmatic in this sense. But I don't think we want to take this in an absolute sense.

Here's a way I think you want to take it. You want to take it as the opposite of verses 8 and 10. That's how you want to take it. That's what's being compared here. Look at verse 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." - If we say we have no sin - this is the idea of somebody who believes that in an ongoing sense, we don't have sin. This is somebody believing that the state of things with themselves.

You know what? A lot of times, guys read this and they think, Oh, what's being confronted here is perfectionism, and certainly that is an error and it would be exposed by a verse like this.

But listen, somebody that just comes along and says Man is basically good; If somebody says that, they're doing this. If they just have an idea that they are basically a good person, they are denying sin. They are denying what the Bible says about sin.

So what you have here, You don't want to think about confessing sins as though, "Oh, if I forget one, it doesn't get forgiven." What you have here is a picture of somebody in the light who sees their sin and has sorrow for their sin, and comes to their Father, and they confess that sin. A God of mercy. Oh, it's forgiven, it's under the blood. We don't have to be perfect in our memories and recall it all. This is set over against the person who doesn't acknowledge that they, as a rule, are not a good person.

And verse 10, it's a little bit different. Verse 10, "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." If we say we have not sinned; when? well, when we have. It's a picture of a person that's not in the light, they're blind. It's a picture of a person that when they sin, they are like Adam, in the garden there. He's blame shifting. He is saying, "Well, the woman You gave me. The woman and You gave her to me." It's that idea of Saul that says "I was obedient", and Samuel saying, "You were not."

This is the idea, for one in verse 8, We don't recognise the state of Man and of ourselves. Verse 10, We don't recognise our sin, the acts of it, for what it is. You see, that's set over against the person that's very sensitive to sin; that is walking with God and walking in the light and sees his sin for what it is.

Brethren, in verse 9, John is showing us the picture, as he does all through his epistle, of the person whose practice is this, not who perfectly does it. Even when he talks about us practising righteousness, we don't perfectly do that. But as a rule, we do that. As a rule, the Christian can be identified as One who practices righteousness; and as a rule, the Christian can be identified as One who confesses their sin. That's true, habitually, of their life. Over against the person who is in the darkness, and they deny. Why? Because they are not in the light, and the light is not exposing these things.

A second question that arises: Who do I confess to? Listen, to come away from 1st John 1:9 and its context in the first chapter here, to come away from that, saying that I am responsible to confess my sins to a priest is to entirely read something into the passage that is not there. Entirely. There are only two persons in 1st John 1:9 - there's the one doing the confessing and there's the one doing the forgiving.

The first is me and you, and the second is God the Father. Remember what is at stake. Remember what John is pastorally dealing with. What's at stake here is our fellowship with God. That's it.

I mean, did you hear David? His sin is against God and it's to God David confesses. Psalm 51:4, Against You and You only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgement.

Look, I'm not saying that there might not be a time to confess to other people; there may be. There are times when it's appropriate. I'm just saying that 1st John 1:9 is dealing with how we interact with God over our sins.

How about a third question that arises: What does it mean to confess my sins? The greek term here literally means - to say the same thing. To say the same thing. The idea is that when we walk in the light, it's God's light. We see things as they are. And so we say the same thing about things that God says. Why? Because we're in the light. We have the Word. The Word is light. The Word is a lamp to our feet. We say what God says about the way things are; and that includes our own sin. That's what it is. That's what confession is. It's to say the same thing.

Listen to this: in Psalm 32:5, listen to David confess, I acknowledged my sin to You. Sin - we typically hear of that as being missing the mark. David is saying, I missed the mark. Oh, I love that pronoun - my sin. Not like Adam, well it's her sin. You gave her to me, God. None of that. David's saying, It's me. I missed the mark. I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity.

Iniquity has to do with guilt. It has to do with the guilt of an activity that is crooked, that is wrong. I did not cover my crookedness, my guilt of doing wrong. I said I will confess my transgressions. You like this, my sin, my iniquity, my transgressions. You know what that is? You think about transgressing a law, It is rebellion. That's what that word means. It's, I mean, to miss the mark. The guilt of wickedness, rebellion. And he says, It's me. I missed the mark. It's me. I'm the one who has the guilt of this wickedness. It's me. I rebelled against God.

And you know what? That's what God says. It's saying the same thing. He is acknowledging the truth of what his sin is before God. He's not hiding, he's not side-stepping, he's not avoiding this. No excuses, no justifying self. I did it, I did the evil, it's my fault, period. That's the idea of confession.

Now, I want to give you an example from history. I was greatly affected by this some years back when I first heard this. I have been a great admirer of Charles Simeon. Ever since I heard John Piper do a biographical sketch on him, and one of the brethren bought me his biography one year at my birthday.

I want to share a little with you about Charles Simeon. He was an evangelical pastor in the Church of England. Anybody know where he pastored? So you guys aren't very familiar with him. Cambridge, England.

Probably 200 years ago today; 200 years ago, on the first day of the week, He would have been standing in his pulpit, preaching. That gives you an idea about how long ago he lived.

Simeon was a man known for his confession, for his humiliation - i guess in our modern terminology, we may not quite understand that. He was one that really humbled himself before

God. He humbled himself. He was big on the humble and contrite heart; and looking at his sin and confessing it.

Let me tell you something about him. Simeon's biographer says that Simeon saw this confession and humbling of himself as a most glorious path to communion with God. Simeon's biographer says that these two things were the heartbeat of Simeon's inner life - growing downward in humility and growing upward in adoring communion with God.

Now think about this: He says that the remarkable thing about humiliation and adoration in the heart of Charles Simeon is that they were inseparable. Simeon was utterly unlike most of us today who think that we should get rid, once and for all, of feelings of vileness and unworthiness as soon as we can. For him, adoration only grew in the freshly ploughed soil of humiliation for sin. We need to get this.

Now look, we can fall into error in this. I understand, and I want to give some cautions at the end. But you listen to this. Listen to this man. He says Simeon, I quote him, I have continually had such a sense of my sinfulness as would sink me into utter despair, if I had not an assured view of the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to save me to the uttermost. He says, and at the same time, I had such a sense of my acceptance through Christ. He had such a view of Christ and his acceptance in Him that he says it would have upset my little bark. A bark is a little boat. He says, It would have turned me over.

In other words, I had so much of the glory of God saving me; Christ, what He did for me on the cross. I was so overwhelmed by that. It filled me with such joy, it lifted me up so high, as if it would have destroyed me if I had not ballast at the bottom sufficient to sink a vessel of no ordinary size.

In other words, what he is saying is, I'm just this little boat, and then I experienced so much glory that it would have capsized me and gone down, if in the bottom of my boat, there wasn't ballast. That which keeps the ship stable, low in the water. What was that? That was the sight of his sin.

Ezekiel 16 seemed to grip Simeon. Now listen to this; you might want to jot this down and look at this later. But just listen to this text: Ezekiel 16: 62, in speaking of the new covenant that God is going to make with Israel, "I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord; that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord God." And Simeon lived on this reality that you know what, God atones, but He atones for my shame so that my mouth is shut when it comes to boasting.

And if there is going to be any boasting, it is going to be in Jesus Christ. And you know what helps us keep balanced that way? You know what helps us keeps our eyes on Him is a sense of our shame; a sense of the wickedness that God has saved us from.

Simeon said this, "There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these 40 years to behold. The one is my own vileness. The other is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And I have always thought they should be viewed together.

Just as Aaron confessed all the sins of Israel whilst he put them on the head of the scapegoat. The disease did not keep him from applying to the remedy; nor did the remedy keep him from feeling the disease.

A friend of Simeon entered Simeon's room and found him so absorbed at one time in the contemplation of the Son of God. Simeon was so overpowered with the display of God's mercy to his soul that he was incapable of pronouncing a single word, till at length he exclaimed "glory, glory."

But the same Simeon, a few days later, he was found scarcely able to speak again; but this time, from a deep humiliation and contrition over his own sins. And Simeon's biographer points out that these two experiences are not the alternating excesses of an ill-balanced mind. Rather, they are the two poles of a sphere of profound experience. For Simeon, adoration of God grew best in the ploughed soil of his own contrition, and his lowness, his humility.

It comes to recognising our sin and confessing it before God. Simeon had no fear of turning up every sin in his life, and looking upon with great grief and hatred because he had such a vision of Christ's sufficiency that this would always result in deeper cleansing and adoration. --very consistent with the text we have before us: 1st John 1:9.

Simeon said, I would have the whole of my experience, one continued sense, first, of my nothingness and my dependence on God. Second, of my guiltiness and my desert before him. Third, of my obligations to redeeming love, as utterly overwhelming me with its incomprehensible extent and grandeur.

As an old man, he says, "I have had deep and abundant cause for humiliation, but I've never ceased to wash in that fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness; or to cast myself upon the tender mercy of my reconciled God.

And Piper comments this way, He says Simeon actually fled for refuge to the very place which we today try so hard to escape. Simeon said repentance is in every view so desirable, so necessary, so suited to honor God, that I seek that above all.

The tender heart, the broken and contrite spirit are to me far above all the joys that I could ever hope for in this veil of tears. I long to be in my proper place. This is reminiscent of the text there in Ezekiel 16. He says, I long to be in my proper place; my hand on my mouth, and my mouth in the dust. I feel this to be safe ground. Here, I cannot err. I am sure that whatever God may despise, He will not despise the broken and contrite heart.

In the last months of his life, he wrote in truth, I love to see the creature annihilated in the apprehension and swallowed up in God. I am then safe, happy, triumphant. Piper concludes with this, "He grew downward in the pain of contrition and he grew upward in the joy of adoration; and the weaving together of these two experiences into one is the achievement of the cross of Christ, and the deepest secret of Simeon's great perseverance."

Look, I would just say this, brethren, I believe that what we are looking at in 1st John 1: 9 is the practice of the true Christian; and it's one of being in the light, recognising our sin. Your prayer life, we should be honest. We should take spiritual inventory. Men, how're you treating your wives, how're you raising your children. Women, how're you submitting to your husbands, how're you raising your children. Single people, how well are you doing in the purity in mind, not just in action, in your thoughts.

We need to do these spiritual inventories and take them, because I think what we'll find is, This will pull us closer in our fellowship to God. And I think Piper is dead right. We've got too many people thinking today that we need to escape this. All this self-esteem garbage where you don't want to think about guilt.

Listen, if you come into seasons of your life where confession is little or missing, you are not spiritually well. That is a sign of sickness, not of health. It's a caution. When you stop confessing, it's as much as saying, I have no sin. That's the comparison. Remember the comparison here. I have no sin, over against confessing sin. I have not sinned.

Another caution: Beware of the feeling rotten complex. Too many people walking around, "Well have I lamented enough, have I seen myself vile enough?" Away with that. Away with that. "Am I like Simeon?" Don't compare yourself to others.

Listen, if you see sin in your life, run to the Lord and confess it. You say "What if I don't feel so like you just described" Who cares? Sometimes you will. Sometimes the degree of your sin may be like that of David's. You've come out of a season of dryness for months; sometimes, it's different. Don't look for certain feeling here. Beware of this penance mentality. Beware of having this idea like the catholic who confesses their sins as though now they are meriting something.

Listen, you have to recognise what Simeon did and what 1st John is all about. It's not going to God and confessing so that now I have some merit there. It's recognising that in myself, the vileness, and even the amount of sin that's still there in my life; that I'm wretched without Him, I'm nothing without Him.

Seeing your sin is not leading you to boast in the fact that you confess it, and now you've got some in with Him, and some notch on your belt. Seeing your sin is to drive you to see that you're nothing before Him. That you're emptiness, you're perfect nothingness before Him. Remember, it's to bring your hand to your mouth, and your mouth to the dust.

And I would say this lastly, Beware of any type of confession that does not lead you immediately to the cross. You have to hear that in Simeon. I bring Simeon up not because he is a biblical example, David is. But because he is a historic example that I think demonstrates this reality well. That when we're humbled by our sin, and we're broken by it, and we're low because of it, and we confess it to Him; Oh brethren, there's glory to be had.

And we can fear this, we can run away from it. Why? We don't want to admit it. Why? Because if we admit it, then it's out there on the table; and somehow, that's going to create issues between you and God? No, this is the very healing thing. This is the very kind of thing that you can see in the life of somebody like Simeon or in the life of David.

I mean, David goes and he confesses his sin, and what does he find? God breaks fellowship with him and stiff-arms him and moves off? That's not what you find. You find, if you read the ends of those Psalms, Psalm 51 and Psalm 32; what do you find? You don't find God condemns him, you don't find that God just grinds him, and God pours out his wrath upon him. You find that there is forgiveness and there is healing and there is joy.

That's what this is all about; John is being pastoral here. And he is saying, child of God, we're going to fall. Oh, I write to you that you don't. We need to strive to not. We need to strive to live in righteousness. But when you fall, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And there is blood, and it cleanses, and God is faithful to forgive. Confess your sins. Brethren, let confession fill your prayer life more.

Young believers often have a real tendency to ask for stuff. As you mature - the two big indications of maturing in the Christian life is maturing in your prayer life. You will find more praise, more confession, and more praying for others. Let confession be more part of your

prayer life; not in a penance mindset, but in humbling yourself before God... The cleansing and the forgiveness and the healing that is found in the blood of Jesus Christ.

We need to live on this reality brethren. We're going to fall (the righteous man does fall seven times.) I'm not talking about walking in the darkness. I'm talking about those who walk in the light, and they sin. And they see it, and they hate it. They know it's vile.

Don't fall for the devil's temptations when he says, "You can't go to God, you're not fit to go to God." You say, "That's right, I'm not fit; but Jesus came to heal those that are sick, and I'll go to Him." Brethren, any that have gone to Him have found Him faithful and just to forgive. Oh you go to Him. Time and again, the Christian knows. They go to God, fearing, "He's going to strike me, I deserve to be struck." That's what David said, "God is going to be right when He judges." And then He just smothers him with His love.

Why? How can God do that? Is God being just? Yes, He's being just because One hung there on that cross and paid that price and took that wrath. And God's wrath has been absorbed, it's swallowed up, Christ drank the cup.

And now you can go, and you can go with that confidence in that blood that was shed, confidence in that God that keeps His promises. Those promises that have their Yes and Amen established on the very person and work of Jesus Christ. You can go with that confidence that He will indeed forgive and cleanse and wash, and commune with you. That's what we're after. I mean, don't you guys want that? You want what Simeon had. Don't you want somebody to find you in your room, barely able to speak, And then when you can, the only words that come out are "glory, glory." I want that. Perhaps, a more maturing of the confessing of sin in our Church will bring greater amounts of that very thing.

[Prayer] Father, we commit ourselves to You. We commit ourselves to You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We're thankful that we have such a Saviour, that when we do sin, oh we have One that pleads our case. One who stands ever, ever there to save us to the uttermost, interceding. We thank You in Christ's name, Amen.