

Confession and Fellowship

by David Guzik

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confession and fellowship with God, and how sin can hinder our relationship with Him, but also highlights the power of confession to restore fellowship and cleanse us from sin.

Duration: 43:52

Scripture: Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:5-10

Topics: "Confession", "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of walking in the light as God is in the light. He uses the analogy of a flashlight projecting darkness to illustrate the concept. The speaker also discusses the price of forgiveness and the penalty for rejecting it. He urges the congregation to get right with God and emphasizes the power and effectiveness that comes from walking in fellowship with Him. The sermon concludes with a call to confession and communion as a means of seeking forgiveness and getting right with the Lord.

Transcript

Tonight, I want to talk to you about confession and fellowship with God. The text I want you to turn to is 1 John 1, beginning at verse 6. 1 John 1, verse 6. Well, as I almost always do, why don't we back up and start at verse 5, reading the text together. 1 John 1, beginning at verse 5. This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him and 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 Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that 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 that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. 1 John, chapter 1, verses 6 through 10, 5 through 10 actually is what I read.

I suggest to you here this evening that many Christians are not aware of their true condition. Do you know that it's possible that you're not aware of your true physical condition? You feel fine. You know, sure, you've been a little tired lately and so forth and so on.

And then you go to the doctor, maybe for some routine checkup, and they find that some disease has been working in your body that you didn't really know about. Now, perhaps you could have known about it because there's there's self-diagnostic things that you can do, but you know, you just weren't too interested in those. And so you didn't do those things.

And now you found out that you could have known, but you didn't know your true condition. I think that's true of many Christians. They know that they are saved.

They have experienced a true and genuine conversion, and they've repented in some time in their Christian experience, yet they're not aware of their true condition because they are not living in true fellowship with God. Now, the reason why they are out of fellowship with God is sin. One of the things we really like about this letter of 1 John is how straightforward it is.

Did you see that there in verse six? If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. There's not a lot of wiggle room in verse six, is there? What is it that keeps you from having fellowship with God? Sin. Now, what is fellowship? Fellowship comes from that great ancient Greek word *koinonia*.

It speaks of sharing a shared life with God. And you might say, well, you know, I share life with God. I mean, I pray before every meal and and I thank the good Lord every day.

That's not what he's talking about in fellowship. He's talking about where you are very aware of the life of Jesus in you and there's a closeness in your walk with him. There's a genuine, close fellowship between you and God.

Now, when I say the reason why Christians are out of fellowship with God is because of sin, some of you might say, and rightly so. You say, now, wait a minute, Pastor, I'm a Christian. And that means that Jesus has covered the guilt of my sin by what he did on the cross and Jesus died for all of my sins on the cross.

Do you believe that? Do you believe Jesus died for all your sins in the past, that he died for all your sins in the present and that he died for all your sins in the future, that the price was paid in completion at the cross? So how can you say that my sin is a barrier to fellowship with God? Well, friends, don't think for a moment that what John tells us here in first John, chapter one, verse six, it is entirely true. Of course, I didn't say that you weren't saved. I said that you were out of fellowship with God.

Now, look carefully at what John says here. Can we look again at verse six? If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth in the previous verse. John told us that God has no darkness at all in him.

Should we read that again? Look at first five. This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you that God is light in him. There is no darkness at all.

Therefore, if you claim to be in fellowship with God and that means a relationship of common relation, of common interest and of common sharing. For example, a married couple can live together. They can share the same checking account.

They can eat meals at the same table. They can share the same bedroom. And there can be no sharing of life between them.

Do you know what I mean? Well, this is what John is saying. If you're in sin, your claim to fellowship with God, if you're walking in darkness, you're not telling the truth when you claim to have fellowship with God. Now, once you've noticed this, John speaks in verse six.

If we say that if we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness. You see, this indicates a pattern of living. He isn't referring to one lapse.

Now, I dare say that every one of us has sinned today. You know, if you define sin in its fullest sense, for example, Paul says in Romans chapter three, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And there are two kinds of sin that we can say.

There are sins of commission and there are sins of omission. For example, if you don't give as you should in the Christian life, that's a sin of omission. It's something that you do that you shouldn't do.

So the offering bag passes you by and you don't put anything into it when God would want you to. That's a sin of omission. A sin of commission is when you reach your hand into the bag and take money out.

You see, there's a difference between the two right now. We have plenty enough sins of omission in our life. We just had a brief time of worship here, and I don't think anybody made a perfect sacrifice of praise to God.

You made a good one, but you fell short in some way or another. Now, let's say that there is a sin of omission in your life. You fail to say a kind word to somebody when God prompts you to.

And for some reason, you fail to do that. Does that mean that at that moment of that sin of omission, the spirit of God flees from you and an iron wall comes down between you and God clanging as it shuts? And God says, I can't touch this man. He's impure.

There's sin in his life. No, if that were the case, we would never fellowship with God at all. You see, it isn't as if after one lapse, God's spirit flees away from someone as soon as they sin.

This is a walk in darkness, a rejecting the call, the conviction of the Holy Spirit telling us to come back and get it right. So, here's the thing. There are Christians who look at their Christian lives and say, yeah, that's all right, sure.

You know, I'm not Billy Graham, but, you know, I'm not the worst Christian in the world either. You just sort of measure yourself on that relative scale. Well, let me come back and ask you a very serious question.

Are you harboring conscious sin in your life? There's an error of your sin and it's conscious sin. And this and you have not yielded it to God. I'm not saying that you have complete victory and it may be an area of struggle for you that you have yielded to God.

Are you making excuses? Are you harboring it? Are you covering it up? And look, I'm just going to be very straight with you. If that's you, you're not in fellowship with God. That almost sounds too blunt for me to say, but I only say it on full scriptural authority.

I better read it again just so I know I'm on solid ground. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. Now, I have to say, friends, that this is this is sobering for me.

It looks back, makes me look back on times in my life where I thought, well, of course, I'm a good Christian and all and I look back on my life. Then I say, you know what? I was not in fellowship with God. Thank heavens God didn't turn his back on me.

Thank heavens that he was more faithful than I was. Thank you, Jesus, for your goodness and faithfulness to me. But you know what? I would have to honestly say in light of this scripture during that period of my life, if somebody would come up to say to me, honestly, David, are you in fellowship with God? If I were to answer truthfully, I'd have to say no.

But, you know, Satan kept me from ever even really asking that question, right? That question just puts it a little too bold, a little too plain. Now, John does not say that a Christian may not temporarily walk in darkness. You can temporarily walk in darkness as a Christian.

But if you do your claim to fellowship, well, it's a sham and a lie. You can be a Christian and be out of fellowship with God. Is that clear enough by this text? Now, look at what he says here going on.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin if we walk in the light now. Maybe I can bend your mind with the illustration just for a moment, if you could, in your mind, because I have to sort of play against the nature of darkness and light. You can't carry around darkness with you, but you can carry around light with you, say, like in a very bright flashlight.

So just for the sake of this illustration, flip around darkness and light in your mind and pretend that you could have a magic flashlight that could project darkness, just like a real flashlight projects light. Well, there you are in the light, walking around the light, but you have your flashlight that's spreading darkness everywhere. And you're saying I'm walking in the light.

No, you're not. You're not walking in the light until you get rid of that flashlight, that flashlight that spreads darkness in our imaginary illustration. You see, if we walk in the light, having fellowship with him in our lives and walk after his ways, then we also will have fellowship with one another.

And that's heavy right there, isn't it? Listen, I want to believe that the reason you and I don't get along is because you're such a stinker, you know, and that's just evident now, isn't it? Come on, we all know that. Can't we just agree on, you know, my whole effort is given to get us to agree on that essential point. If you would just realize how wrong you are, then we could get along.

Isn't this sobering to realize that it may very well be the reason you and I don't get along is I'm out of fellowship with God. So what do I do? I take a rigorous look at my life. Am I tolerating sin in my life? Am I excusing sin in my life? Is there some area of sinful compromise or sinful indulgence that I'm just carrying on in my life and I'm tolerating it, I'm excusing it? Now, if I'll put that away and walk in the light, look at the precious promise.

Verse seven, the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. You know, the idea there is a continual cleansing and we need a continual cleansing from God, don't we? All the time. We live in a dirty world.

I love the illustration that Jesus gave at the Last Supper. Remember when Jesus came around to wash the disciples feet? And there he is washing the disciples feet and he comes and he's coming to wash Peter's feet. And what does Peter say when Jesus comes to wash his feet? No, no, no, Jesus.

You'll never wash my feet. Peter was probably thinking, well, this is what Jesus was expecting us to do all along. I'm the spiritual one.

So I'll get the point where all these other dummy disciples didn't get it. We're supposed to refuse to let Jesus do this. Jesus probably sighed really big.

You know, he said, OK, Peter, look, if you don't let me wash you, then you have no part with me. And Peter scratches his head now. Now, how can I impress my friends? Because I know because, well, then, Lord, just don't wash my feet.

Wash all of me. And Jesus sighs again. There's Peter grandstanding again.

And what did Jesus tell Peter? He said, when you've already been cleansed, all you need is your feet clean. And I think this is the idea. We get dirty from our daily contact with the world.

And when we're walking in the light that that that just little dirt that gets on our feet, it's continually cleansed. And friends, that continual cleansing is ours. How? It's by the blood of Jesus.

Look at it there in verse seven. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. Now, not his literal blood, but his literal death in our place and the literal wrath of the father that he endured on our behalf, his blood paid for all of our sins past, present and future.

Then why do we need to confess our sins and get it right with him to maintain fellowship? Not to be saved, to maintain fellowship. You see, the work of Jesus on the cross doesn't just deal with the guilt of sin that might send you or I to hell. It certainly deals with that, but it also deals with the stain of sin that would hinder our continual relationship with God.

We need to come to Jesus often with a simple plea. Cleanse me with the blood of Jesus, not because we haven't been cleansed before, but because we need to be continually cleansed to enjoy continual relationship with God. And I love what it says in verse seven, one of the great three letter words of the Bible.

The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. See, there's not a sin that you brought in here tonight that you can't be cleansed from. It doesn't matter.

We can be cleansed from the sin we inherited from Adam. We can be sin cleansed from the sin we committed as kids. We can be cleansed from the sins of our teenage years and growing up.

We can be cleansed from the sins against our father, the sins against our mother, the sins against our brother and our sister, the sins against our husbands or wives or against our children. You can be cleansed against the sins you've committed against your employer or your employees. You can be cleansed of the sins you've committed against your friends or your enemies, lying, sin, cheating, sin, stealing, sin, adultery, sin, swearing, sin, drug, sin, booze, sin, promiscuity, sin, murder, sin.

They can all be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. You can be cleansed of that sin that haunts you every day and you can be cleansed from the sin that you don't even know you have right now. I mean, you know it, but you're not aware of it.

You're not vitally in touch with it. All sin can be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Now, look at how this happens.

Verse eight. If we say that 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.

Now, John has introduced the ideas of walking in the light and being cleansed by sin. But please understand, John does not believe for a moment that we as Christians can be sinlessly perfect. No.

That can't happen on this side of eternity. That can't happen until we receive our resurrection body. You can have unhindered fellowship with God, unhindered by harbored sin.

But you won't be sinlessly perfect. No, no, no. Not until that day that we are resurrected.

Now, to think of yourself as sinlessly perfect is to deceive ourselves. And I don't see many people today claiming to be sinlessly perfect. That's usually not where we mess up in this.

The way what we usually mess up is by saying, well, I have sin, but it just doesn't really matter that much because other people have a lot, too, and nobody's perfect. But there's very few of us who think that they're sinlessly perfect. But how many of us think that we really sin? S I N sin.

What do we like to say? Well, everybody makes mistakes. I'm not perfect. I'm only human.

I'm only a sinner, a sinner. Usually we say things in such a way to excuse or defend ourselves. That's very different than knowing and admitting that I am a sinner and friends to say that you have no sin.

It puts you in a very dangerous place to say that you only have mistakes to say that you only have trip ups or boo boos or problems or this or that. No. Well, find refuge in saying that you're a sinner.

Do you know why you should find refuge in saying that you're a sinner? Because God's grace and mercy is extended to sinners, not to mistake-ers, or I'm only human-ers, or nobody's perfect people, but sinners. You need to come to the place of great victory and triumph that comes by realizing I'm a sinner. I'm even a great sinner, but I have a Savior who cleanses me from all sin.

Now look again at verse 9. If we confess our sins, though sin is present, it doesn't need to remain a hindrance to your relationship with God. You can find complete cleansing, cleansing from all unrighteousness as we confess our sins. What does it mean to confess? Well, to confess means to agree with or to say the same as.

Now, very important point here. It doesn't merely mean to agree with what God says about sin in some intellectual sense. In this sense, let me say, in this sense, it doesn't mean just to say, well, here's something.

God says it's bad. I say it's bad. I'm going to go ahead and do it.

I'm agreeing with God. It's bad. We both agree it's bad, and we both agree I'm going to go do it right now.

That's not confessing your sin. You see, to confess your sin means that you're willing to say and believe the same thing about your sin that God says about it. You see, confessing your sin means that you hate it, or at least you want to hate it and you want to push it away from you.

You see, the idea of confession of sin, of agreeing with God about our sin has inherent within it the idea of repentance. Don't you think it's interesting here in verse nine, there's no mention of the word repentance.

It's bound up inside of the word to confess, because when you agree with God about sin, you're saying, God, I hate it just like you hate it.

You see, if we say we are sorry about our sin, but do nothing to stop doing it, it shows we really don't agree with God's opinion about our sin. So there's a man who has trouble with drinking and the Holy Spirit is convicting him and says, listen, you need to put this away. Maybe other Christians have the liberty to drink without becoming drunk, but not you, my child, the Holy Spirit says to him, you must put it away out of your life.

And the man has an emotional experience and he's very broken before God and he says, OK, God, this is what you want for me. It doesn't matter if you don't require it of other people. You're saying this to me and I need to clear this out of my life.

And he weeps great tears, you know, at an altar and in a prayer time and all of that. And then when he goes home, he opens up the kitchen cabinet and there's the liquor bottles and he just leaves them in there. He didn't confess.

He didn't agree with God. I mean, if he believed that God was telling him to do something about this, then he has to do something about it, not just feel sorry about it. Now, I do have to stress the point here that our sins are not forgiven because we confess, if that were the case, if forgiveness could only come where we confess, then we would all be damned because it's impossible for us to confess every sin that we commit.

No, no, no, no. We're not talking about forgiveness here being the matter or salvation. Confession is vital to maintain relationship with God.

And this is the context that John speaks from as God convicts us of sin, sin that hinders our fellowship with him. We must confess it and receive forgiveness and cleansing for our relationship with God to continue without hindrance. Now, what kind of confession do we need to make? Well, I will speak much more about this in coming weeks.

I think that that's a topic that merits a night all on its own. Let me just make a couple remarks on it right now. First of all, I would say that confession, it's absolutely essential that it be personal.

Let me put it to you this way. Oftentimes, a confession goes something like this. God, if I've done anything wrong in this, please forgive me.

That's not confession. It isn't convinced if I've done anything wrong. What's that? Look, you are not under the conviction of sin when you say or you're not responding to it properly when you say if I've done anything wrong.

Come on now, either you have or you haven't. If you haven't, why are you just playing the spiritual person by pretending to confess your sin? If you have, then come right out and confess it. Oftentimes, people say things like, God, if we have made any mistakes, forgive us.

Well, that's not personal, right? What are you talking about? We. Honestly, I would love to confess your sin. It's much more entertaining.

It's a lot more fun for me. But forget about that. You're called to confess your sin before God.

Confession of sin has to be specific. It has to be honest. It has to be convinced.

You see. The promise of First John, chapter one, verse nine should be very precious to us. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But it should never, ever, ever lead a believer into sin because they say this. Hey, I'll go ahead and sin. God will forgive me that that is embarrassingly familiar to us, isn't it? You you know that phrase in your own mind, don't you? Well, I'll just go ahead and do it.

I mean, I can always ask for forgiveness later. Friends, if we understand what it says here, it should lead us out of sin, knowing that God will be faithful and just to forgive us our sins because the wrath that we deserved was poured out on Jesus Christ. Every sin we commit carries its own measure of wrath and judgment, and every sin we commit increases the agony of Jesus on the cross.

Now, let me add this. I would say that there is no more certain evidence that a person is out of fellowship with God than for them to contemplate or to commit sin with the idea I can just ask for forgiveness later. I'm not going to say that such a person is not saved.

But I will absolutely say that such a person is not in fellowship with God. How could that thinking come from somebody who's in fellowship with God? You see, since God is light and in him is no darkness at all, we can rest assured that the person who commits sin. In this thinking, I'll just ask for forgiveness later, they are not in fellowship with God.

Now. I think we have to be honest with ourselves. I think there has to be a real heart searching among believers.

To say, you know what? I don't know what I've been doing in my Christian life. But lately or for too long, I have not been in fellowship with God and I need to get it right before him. I want to know what that's like again.

Friends, don't you understand that this probably happened in your life very subtly? The transition from walking in fellowship to not being in fellowship with God, it didn't come in a moment, it didn't come in a thunderbolt from heaven or hell, it came very gradually. But as you find yourself today, you say. With this sin that I'm harboring in my life, how could I possibly be in fellowship with God? And then we want to excuse it.

Well, you know, we all have our sin, don't we? You have yours and I have mine and she has hers and he has his. And we just kind of tell ourselves everybody must be harboring some secret sin. And so, you know, no, it doesn't have to be like that for you.

I know it doesn't have to be like that for me. We can put it away. Now, are we talking about walking in sinless perfection? No, no, no.

This is not a teaching on perfectionism. What we're talking about is, well, how do you know what to confess? Let me put it that way. How do you know? You say, you know, there it was, I ran a red light on the way to church today.

I guess I'm out of fellowship with God, huh, pastor? Well, let me give you two ways that you can judge this. Number one. You need to confess anything that is obviously sin, according to the scriptures.

Anything if if somebody is living in drunkenness, if somebody is living in sexual immorality, you do not need a special word from God tonight to tell you that you're in sin and you need to confess. Don't think like, well, you know, Lord, if somehow they put my name and my picture up on the PowerPoint saying sinner, then I'll know it's from you, God, tonight. No, you don't need that, my friends.

If you have anything in your life that's obviously sin, according to scriptures, and this is just a practice in your life. You confess it, you need to break with it. But secondly.

Confess anything that the Holy Spirit tells you is in the way of fellowship with God. There may be something in your life, you know, it's just in the way and it may not be in the way for this person, but it's in the way for this person because God has spoken to their heart about it. Put it away.

Now, honestly, if you're not willing to put it away, what do you have to say about that? In light of what we've heard tonight. You love your sin more than you love fellowship with God. Boy, that's blunt to say, isn't it? I can't see how you can cut it any other way, though.

Now, why is there such an urgency in my heart about this? Because, friends, I think that there is a crying need. I won't even say that it's for the body of Christ in general. I just think it's for us as much as anything.

Why not? Why pawn it off on anybody else? But God has spoken to me in my own life personally. And given me a passion to exhort and to teach on this. We need to get right with God.

Think about 150 people gathered here on a Sunday morning. And there they all are. And let's say that a hundred of them are really not walking in fellowship with God.

And let's say 50 are. How much more power, how much more effectiveness, how much more of the glory of the Lord could be manifest among them? If it was a hundred people walking in fellowship with God and 50 people not. And that, again, is very relevant to the idea of confession of sin, as we'll talk about in coming weeks.

Remember how many people walking in sin it took to defeat the work of God in the days of Joshua, when they went up against the city of Ai? One. Look, if you don't want to get right with God and walk in fellowship with him for your sake, then do it for the sake of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Because your lack of fellowship with God holds them back.

Let me conclude with just sort of looking over an outline very quickly. I want to make a distinction here between the work of forgiveness in the believer and the unbeliever. I think you'll see what I mean by this.

I've sort of helped out with some things up on the PowerPoint here. You can see it up on this side. First of all, what is the ground of forgiveness towards the unbeliever? Well, it's the cross, isn't it? Does anybody have any doubt about that? This is very plain to us in Colossians chapter one, verse 20, and by him to reconcile all things to himself by him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

Very simple, isn't it? That's the ground of our forgiveness of anybody's forgiveness. The unbeliever finds forgiveness on the ground of the cross. Well, then there's a next aspect.

There is the price of forgiveness. And what is the price of forgiveness towards the unbeliever? Well, the price is nothing. What does Romans chapter three, verse 24, tell us being justified freely by his grace

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Right.

It's free. The ground of forgiveness for the unbeliever, the ground of forgiveness is the cross. The price of forgiveness is nothing.

Now, what's the penalty for the unbeliever for rejecting forgiveness? Well, the penalty for the unbeliever in rejecting forgiveness is judgment at the great white throne judgment described in Revelation chapter 20. If the unbeliever rejects God's offer of forgiveness, if they refuse to come on the ground of Christ, there's nothing to pay, but they have to receive it in faith. If they refuse it, they're going to face judgment at the great white throne, which tells us very plainly Revelation chapter 20.

I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it from whose faith the earth and the heaven fled away. There was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great standing before God and books were opened and another book was open, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books. That's a fearful penalty. Right.

To refuse unforgiveness. Now, what is the condition of forgiveness for the unbeliever? Is there any condition upon them at all? Well, I would say, yes, there is. I would say the condition of forgiveness is conversion and repentance.

Now, conversion isn't something they can do in themselves, but it is something they must receive from God. Repentance is something that they receive, and that's sort of the reception of conversion is to repent. I mean, after all, look at it in Acts chapter three, verse 19.

Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. Very plain, isn't it? That is the condition of forgiveness. Does God grant forgiveness to unrepentant, unconverted sinners? No, there will be nobody who's forgiven, who's not also converted.

Now, what is the object or the goal of forgiveness in the life of the unbeliever? Well, it's salvation, right? Very plain there to be saved. How about this? Second Corinthians 7:10, for godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation. That's what it leads to.

So we have the ground of forgiveness, the cross, the price of forgiveness. That's nothing. The penalty of rejecting forgiveness, that's judgment at the great white throne.

We have the condition of forgiveness, which is conversion and repentance. And the goal or the object of forgiveness, that salvation. Now, are all of those things the same for the believer? I don't believe so, though many of them are the same.

After all, what is the ground of forgiveness for the believer? What do you think? What is that ground of forgiveness for the believer? It is, of course, the cross. Is there a different ground of forgiveness? No. Again, Colossians 1:20, and by him to reconcile all things to himself by him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

So the ground of forgiveness is the same between believer or unbeliever. Well, what about the price of forgiveness? Do you think there's a difference there in the price of forgiveness between the believer and

the unbeliever? Anybody? What do you think? Difference? No, it's free. The price of forgiveness is the same.

It's free for everyone being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. That's Romans three twenty four. Very simple, right? That is the price of forgiveness.

Now, what is the penalty for a Christian of rejecting forgiveness? Is it judgment at the judgment seat of Christ? No, you're already saved. And so I would suggest to you that the penalty for a Christian rejecting forgiveness is judgment at the judgment seat of Christ, not at the great white throne described in Revelation. Second Corinthians five ten says this, for we must all impose writing to believers.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad. If you've lived your Christian life in sin and rebellion against God, unconfessed sin, you're going to have to answer for it at the judgment seat of Christ. That's the penalty of rejecting this forgiveness.

Now, what's the condition of forgiveness for the believer? Well, for the unbeliever, it was conversion and repentance. For the believer, I think we would say that the condition of repentance, the condition of forgiveness is confession. Here's the question.

Sixty four thousand dollar question from First John, Chapter six. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Was that written to believers or unbelievers? Believers.

Now, I'm not saying that it might not be good as an evangelistic appeal, but that's not how it was written. This was written to believers. You and I need to confess our sin before God.

Now, what is the object of forgiveness? The goal of forgiveness for the unbeliever was salvation. What's the goal of forgiveness for the believer? It's fellowship with God. Do you want that? Do you want it enough to put away your sin? That's the question.

Let's remember First John, Chapter one, verses six through nine, where we read. We say that we have fellowship with him and 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 Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That's the point of it, to bring you and I back into fellowship. Now, I think that perhaps the trouble with many Christians is honestly. Sincerely, we don't care all that much about fellowship with God.

We don't hunger for it. It's like someone who's malnourished. Starving, losing the hunger pains.

And they're just not hungry, they're starving, but they don't feel hungry. There's something wrong there. Honestly, friends, maybe that's where some of us need to begin in confession.

God, my heart has been hard towards you. I've been out of fellowship and it doesn't seem to bother me much. Forgive me, Lord.

Forgive my cold, hard heart. Wherever you need to begin, begin there tonight. I'm going to conclude in prayer and then John and Denise are going to lead us in worship.

During this time of worship, any time you please, you come up right over here to the cross. You stoop down or kneel down and take some of the cup, pour yourself some and then some bread and you have communion. You have a time of confession and getting right with the Lord.

Now, again, if you say, honestly, in my life, I don't see anything scripturally that I'm wrong, then you ask the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, show me. Is there anything you want me to put out of the way? And, you know, if he doesn't show you anything tonight, that's OK.

Just keep that line open to the Lord. Keep it open. God, whatever you want to show me, show me.

And let the Lord bring his cleansing and healing power into your life. I want us to be a group in totally tight fellowship with the Lord. How that will change things.

Father, we give you our hearts. We bless you here tonight, Lord. And we ask, Lord God, that you would help us to receive the work of Jesus on our behalf.

We know the ground of our forgiveness is on the cross. But, Lord, when we're holding on to our sin, when we're harboring it, then, Lord, we're rejecting what Jesus did for us on the cross. We want to embrace it tonight as we receive communion.

We thank you, Lord God, and praise you tonight in Jesus name. Amen.

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