

(First Baptist Church) #3 - Forgiveness and Confession

by J. Edwin Orr

J. Edwin Orr explores the doctrine of forgiveness, emphasizing the necessity of repentance and the role of the cross in both believer and unbeliever forgiveness.

Duration: 1:04:46

Topics: "Confession"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being specific when confessing sins and seeking forgiveness. He shares a personal story about a child named Dan who initially struggles to apologize sincerely for stealing two bags of potatoes. Through this story, the speaker highlights the need for genuine repentance and the power of confessing specific sins. He also mentions the importance of addressing the harm caused by our words and actions and encourages the congregation to apologize to those they have hurt. The sermon emphasizes the biblical principle of confessing our sins and seeking forgiveness from both God and others.

Transcript

Tonight I want to deal with another forgotten doctrine, but I'm going to begin with one that's not been forgotten to introduce it. I was chaplain of the Hollywood Christian group one time. One of the members was Roy Rogers.

He used to bring his cowboy friends. One of them came to me and he said rather bluntly, How does God forgive sins? I answered with the word of scripture. In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace.

Hmm. He said what you're trying to tell me is that Jesus died for me. I said yes.

Well he said I don't believe that. How could anyone die for me? Look he said the Los Angeles police are holding a man for murder. Supposing I felt sorry for the guy.

And I go to the police and say would you let me take his place? Would they let me take his place? They would not. They would say you didn't commit the crime and you have no right to take the punishment. You heard of Sirhan Sirhan.

He's in jail for the murder of Robert Kennedy. Just you try going to the police and saying will you let me take his place. He said it wouldn't be right.

I had to say something but I said you have raised the doctrine of the atonement. It's a difficult doctrine to explain. In theological seminary we have at least 13 theories of the atonement to consider.

You might say well what's your view? I believe the atonement is greater than every theory of it. But I said I don't know that I could explain the doctrine to you but perhaps I could illustrate. When I was a boy about seven I used to play ball out the back.

Across the lot from our house was the house of a fellow called Albert Mann. And his house was in the way. Every time we hit a ball hard we were sure to break one of his windows.

Among the boys of the neighborhood there was one unanimous opinion. And that was that Albert Mann ought to emigrate to New Zealand. One day I hit the ball hard and there was that clatter of glass.

I didn't stop running until I got home. My longer legged sister got home ahead of me and told mother what I had done. I didn't mind that.

Most boys of seven have learned how to manage mama. But my father was in the kitchen. He should have been at work but I didn't even stop to inquire why he was not at work.

I made it to the back door. I felt that what I needed most of all was a little fresh air and exercise. But my father grabbed me by the wrist.

He said you're coming with me young man. But I said that man will hit me. He said you're coming with me.

I went very reluctantly. My father knocked the old fashioned knocker and Mr. Mann came to the door. He still looked aggrieved.

My father said this is the boy that broke your window. Mr. Mann didn't waste any time with me but he said to my dad look here Mr. Orr I'm not unreasonable. I know that kids can't help breaking windows.

I broke windows when I was a boy. But why is it that every time there's a window broken in this neighborhood it has to be my window. Now I could have explained that to him but I felt a little nervous so he went on scolding.

He said I'm willing to forgive the kids but somebody has to pay for it. Somebody has to pay for it. Somebody has to pay for it.

My father paid for it. And I was forgiven. And I learned the first principle of forgiveness.

When you're forgiven someone must pay. Twenty years later an Irish friend of mine borrowed some money from me. A hundred pounds.

Five hundred dollars in those days. He promised to pay back five dollars a week for two years. I said I won't charge you interest.

Skip Easter week and Christmas week. The other fifty weeks for two years you'll pay me back five dollars. He promised.

He never paid a penny. He used to come to my birthday parties and wish me many happy returns of the day. And I would say when are you going to return the cash? But he didn't.

After bearing him a grudge for a couple of years I forgave him. But which of the two of us suffered the sinner or the sinned against? Not the sinner. He went free.

I could have taken him to court. I could have sued him. And then he would have suffered.

What would he have suffered? What he owed me. But instead of that I forgave him and I suffered. I'm still five hundred dollars short.

No matter what way you look at it. And that taught me the second principle of forgiveness. When you forgive, the one that forgives is the one that suffers.

Has that sunken in? If someday in the meeting came up and punched John Cramp in the nose, I couldn't say I forgive you. I'm not the one that suffered. He would have to say I forgive you.

The one that forgives is the one that suffers. And suddenly I realized that I've not only given an illustration of atonement, but of the deity of Christ. Moses couldn't have died for me.

Nor Joshua. Nor Peter. Nor Paul.

Nor Mary the mother of Jesus. It had to be Christ. Because God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

So we are forgiven on the basis of the cross. I sometimes ask my audience, on what basis does God forgive the sins of a sinner? Some people shout love. No that's not the answer.

God loved us. But he expressed his love through Christ on the cross. That's the basis.

I was speaking once in the mayor's parlor in Los Angeles, and a lawyer came to me. And he said I don't get this. If God makes the rules, can't God bend the rules? And just forgive me? I said he couldn't do that and be God.

God must be just as well as loving. You know it's just struck me right now, that's one of the troubles with the legal profession. They're always thinking about bending the rules.

You know somebody gets in a jam, and then they want a smart lawyer to get them off. No, no. But God cannot trifle with evil.

So I said to the lawyer, doesn't law teach us that if you smash up my car, I can sue you and get all the damages? Yes, but there are other cases. He said you could slander me and I could forgive you? I said yes. That's quite true.

But I said in forgiving you, I've forgiven what your slander cost me, because if I didn't forgive you, I could sue you for slander, and you might have to pay \$10,000, \$20,000. You'd be amazed how many people in a Christian country don't realize that the basic doctrine is that Christ died for us. You remember I quoted it on Sunday morning.

The Lord Jesus said it behooved Christ thus to suffer, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. How does God forgive our sins? It's on the

basis of the cross. Now the second question is equally simple.

Is there any condition attached? Well, remember I told you about, or did I tell you about Mickey Cohn sitting in the Hollywood Christian group meeting in front of my wife. I told you he never truly was converted, but he made a profession and then he reneged on it and said if it means changing my lifestyle, I want nothing to do with it. Now supposing Mickey Cohn were here tonight, he's dead and gone now, but supposing you were here tonight and he were to ask the question how does God forgive sins? I would say in Christ we have redemption through his blood.

And then he says well, how much do I have to pay to be forgiven? What do you mean? Well if you're going to arrange for me to be forgiven I can make a very substantial donation to the church. I said there's no price. We're forgiven freely.

Is there any catch to it? I said what do you mean catch? Well am I supposed to do anything? I said well, yes. Repent and be converted that your sins might be blotted out. Now what does the word repent mean? Change your attitude.

What does convert mean? Turn. Change and turn. And he wasn't willing to do that.

So when I ask the question what is the condition of forgiveness? The condition is repentance expressed in conversion. If a man says I will not change my attitude and I will not turn do you think God forgives him? No. God says well then you don't get forgiveness.

It's conditional. A conditional forgiveness. Now keep those two elementary points in your mind.

An unbeliever, a sinner is forgiven on the basis of the cross. But what does God require him to do? To change his attitude and turn to God. That leads to putting his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I'm going to ask a question. I take it most people here tonight are believers already. You are converted.

How does God forgive the sins of a believer? Do you admit that you have committed sins since the day of your conversion? Sometimes I'm afraid to ask the question. Once in the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles I asked the question rhetorically and one man stood up and said Mr. Orr for 14 years I haven't committed any sin whatsoever. Why would you tell a man like that? Of course the Irish are never at a loss for something to say so I said are you married? He said what's that to do with it? Marriage isn't a sin.

I said no, of course it's not. Are you married? He said yes. Is your wife here? He said that's my wife standing over there.

I called her over and I said Madam I don't want to be too personal but it's just to clear up a point. Would you agree with your husband that for 14 years he hasn't committed any kind of sin whatsoever? She said no sir. I left them arguing.

I sometimes do meet these sinlessly perfect people. Now if anyone is sinlessly perfect that must be so extraordinary everyone would notice it but nobody seems to notice it except the person making the claim. So will you agree with me that since the day of your conversion you have missed the mark? You have fallen short? You have disobeyed? You have transgressed? Then I'm going to ask you how does God forgive that sin? Now as good Baptists, of course maybe other denominations here eco-evangelical you

believe what I just said that God forgives us on the basis of the cross and that the price is repent and be converted but can you give a quick answer to how does God forgive the sins of a believer? A girl came to me at Mount Hermon conference grounds up near San Francisco and she said Mr. Orr I don't understand your teaching I was converted 10 years ago and all my sins past, present and future were forgiven.

Right? Well she said I cheated in the examinations at Berkeley last year but I don't let that worry me because that was forgiven 10 years ago. I said to her are you going to cheat in the next examinations? She was honest. Well she said I hope it won't be necessary.

But I said if you get behind with your work or you date too much and don't do your homework you're prepared to cheat well she said are my sins forgiven or are they not? Are you telling me that the forgiveness of God is a license to sin? By the way there's a word for that in theology I don't know whether you care to remember it's the word antinomianism anti, against, nomos, the law in other words I'm a Christian doesn't matter how I behave I'm bound for heaven. She said are my sins forgiven or are they not? Well I said what do you make of the verse of scripture which says if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. She said that's the unbeliever obviously.

I said quite the contrary the first epistle of John was written to believers do I need to prove this to you? Behold what love the father has bestowed on us that we should be called sons of God, children of God beloved and he uses the pronoun we that's an inclusive pronoun that means you and me he wrote as a believer to believers I said the first epistle of John was not written to people to tell them how to become saved it was written to people who are saved or if it happens to be a good Methodist here who are being saved yes that tense is in the scripture we have been saved, we are being saved, we shall be saved all three tenses are used of salvation so I said what do you make of that verse? she said that's the unbeliever I said not at all how can I illustrate this if the pastor asked me to speak to the teenagers on love, courtship and marriage I could tell them quite a story I was in Lapland near the North Pole when I proposed to the girl that I finally married she was in Africa I proposed by cable and she turned me down but I sent another cable guy to say I was coming anyway and so I went down and proposed to her every day until she married me to get rid of me I could tell you quite a story and I could talk to the teenager about how to find the right girl or how to find the right fellow but if the pastor asked me to speak to the young marrieds I wouldn't speak on how to find the right girl I take it they are happily married the first epistle of John was not written to tell us how to be saved it was written to people who are saved he said then what is it written about it's written about maintaining fellowship with God the word fellowship occurs all the way through now perhaps we could consider this the girl said when I quoted that verse are you trying to tell me that my salvation depends upon my confessing I said now I see where you are wrong where you are misled it wasn't written about salvation it was written about fellowship so perhaps you remember the verses do you 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 God cannot approve of sin anywhere if Mr.

Gorbachev tells a lie in Moscow the holiness of God abhors that untruth but if a good old Baptist in Dallas tells a lie God doesn't like it one bit better he doesn't say look at that liar over there and look at this sweet little believer who fibs now and again oh no, a lie is a lie is a lie God disapproves of sin now the next verse says if we say we have no sin no, let me, I'm going too fast if, from John's gospel if we say we're walking in the light we're not telling the truth we're out of fellowship with him let me quote you the most modern translation of this particular verse if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not live according to the truth when a believer does something and he knows to be wrong he

grieves the spirit of God and breaks

fellowship with God I remember when one of my sons was a tiny little boy he was rude to his mother at table I said to him sharply leave the table go to the bedroom and don't you come back until you're ready to say you're sorry to your mother off he went a little too cheerfully I thought about three minutes later he came back again rather cockily and he said well everybody I'm sorry now I said tell your mama but he wouldn't I said tell your mother if you're sorry he wouldn't have you ever seen a four year old get stubborn I said go back to the bedroom you're not sorry you're just hungry he went back to the bedroom but it doesn't really take a four year old long to repent I mean they're not filled up with pride or anything like that so he came back another five minutes later and he went

straight to his mother he said mama I'm sorry I was a naughty boy I said now you can go on with your meal instead of climbing on his stool he climbed on her lap and she reached for his plate brought it over and they had turnabout the way mothers and children sometimes do fellowship was restored now while he was in the bedroom he was still my son he was still in my house and he was still in my care but he was out of fellowship with me if he had come to me in the middle of that little encounter and said daddy what do you want to give me for Christmas I would say get away from here he was out of fellowship when you grieve God you're out of fellowship but you're still in his house and still in his care there are lots of people who say yes I do believe in the Lord Jesus I know I'm a Christian

but I'm miserable why are you miserable? you can generally trace it back to some act of disobedience but the point I'm making is this it concerns fellowship and not salvation but mind you keep in mind you remember I mentioned that word antinomianism I had a baptist minister come to our Hollywood Christian group now those converts were converted from a very Corinthian life liquor, sex, money, popularity and I heard this minister tell them now listen if you should wake up in Las Vegas with a woman in the cabin with you that's not your wife and a half empty flask of whiskey on the dressing table don't let it bother you you're still saved I felt like interrupting him then I remembered it was my turn to speak next Monday so I said I would like to begin where our brother left off last week if

you should wake up in Las Vegas with a woman in the cabin with you that's not your wife and a half empty flask of whiskey on the dressing table ask yourself could I possibly be saved and live like this and immediately a converted actor said but David sinned I said yes, David sinned a lot of people get a lot of mileage out of that I said but David repented Saul sinned and refused to repent and went to perdition so I'm not talking about gross sin here I would say if you're an adulterer or if you are making your living by false by misrepresentation you should go and talk to someone about whether or not you're truly a Christian I'm speaking about the average Christian who falls short in these little but important things we grieve God what does this verse say but if we walk in the light as he

is in the light we have fellowship one with the other what does it mean to walk in the light walk in the light of conscience walk in the light of the word walk in the light of fellowship walk in the light of prayer walk in the light of godly counsel if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with the other You say, well what does it really mean to walk in the light?

Well there is an obscure verse of scripture, is it Ephesians 5.18, I'm not quite sure. It says, for that which is revealed is made manifest by the light. Or in the more modern translation, light is capable of showing things up for what they really are.

Well, that's easy to understand English. Light is capable of showing things up for what they really are. If you walk into, well as I do sometimes without walking into anything, you know there was a film called, if it's Tuesday it's Belgium, sometimes I waken up in the middle of the night somewhere and I think, where am I? Is this Toronto or Dallas? And if I were to have to go say across to the bathroom, I think, what motel am I in? You know, in total darkness I can't see anything, but switch on the light I see everything.

Light shows you what things are. Remember I told you that I had a bad temper, boy? I never called it that, I called it righteous indignation. But God said to me, it's bad temper, out of control.

And when I admitted, yes, it's a bad temper and it's a hindrance to my witness, then I had put things right. When you walk in the light as he is in the light, you fellowship one with the other. Fellowship's restored.

But how? The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us. Notice the present tense, keeps on cleansing us, the Greek says, from all sin. Then it says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us.

It says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now could I ask you two more questions? Let me recapitulate. You told me, on what basis does God forgive the sins of an unbeliever, a sinner? Tell me.

On the cross, Christ hadn't died, we couldn't be forgiven. We're forgiven through the blood of Christ. Then I'm going to ask the other question, on what basis does God forgive the sins of a believer that offend him and break fellowship? The blood of Jesus Christ, the cross.

Remember a woman coming up to me with her face lighted up, she said, you know I used to sing that hymn, at the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, I always thought of the cross as a way behind me in my Christian experience. In other words, twenty-five years since I was at the cross and the burden of my heart rolled away, which is now I realize every time I say, Lord forgive me for Jesus' sake, I'm pleading the blood of the cross. Andrew Murray has a book called The Blood of the Cross.

I'm going to ask the second question. Is there any catch to it, any condition to forgiveness? Now let's take the unbeliever first. What does God expect an unbeliever to do? He must repent and be converted.

That means he must change his attitude and turn. Is there any condition attached to the believer when God forgives him and restores him to fellowship? Yes. He must repent and confess.

Well why doesn't he need to be converted? Well, you don't have to be converted every Tuesday and Thursday. Or if you sin more often than that, as probably many people do, you don't have to be converted five times a week. You are converted, that means you've turned.

But you must repent and confess. It's as simple as that. Maybe I could put it even more strongly for you.

It says if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Put it in the negative. If we do not confess our sins, he will withhold forgiveness.

Now immediately your mind jumps ahead and says, then you're telling me that I lose my salvation. We're not discussing salvation. You remain out of fellowship.

There are Christians who have been out of fellowship with God for years. They're unhappy, but they still come to church. They try to get worldly.

They go to a bar, for example, and they feel miserable, they can't stand it. So they come back to church, they try to go through the forms, but they've got unconfessed sin in their heart. They've been out of fellowship because they simply won't put it right for whatever reason, pride or any other reason.

So let's make it very plain. What does a believer need to do to be restored to the joy of salvation? He must repent and make confession. Now that doesn't end the problem.

People say, what's it mean to make confession? Well, the scripture teaches us, of course. But if you ask a question, to whom do we confess? Well, I remember a young lady come to talk to me at Forest Home in Southern California in a conference, summer conference. And she says, well, I've confessed, but I don't feel forgiven.

I said, well, I don't know your circumstances. I said, but I've no doubt about God's word. He says, if you confess, he will forgive.

I believe God will do his part, so maybe you're not doing it right. But she says, I've confessed, and I just don't feel forgiven. Well, I said, I don't mean to pry, but what was the offense? Well, she says, I told a lie about my roommate.

And you confessed? Yes. But you don't feel forgiven? No. Well, I said, what did she say to you? Oh, she says, I didn't confess to her.

I confessed to the Lord. But I see you told a lie about her. Maybe she wondered who started this lie, this gossip.

Well, she said, I didn't confess to her. I didn't want her to hold it against me. Now, it's wonderful just to think I can put things right by confessing to God, but that isn't enough.

There's scriptural teaching in this. But by the way, I always give this as a maxim that's worth remembering. Let the circle of the sin be the circle of the confession.

If you've sinned against God and nobody else knows anything about it, you can put things right by confessing to God. But if you've sinned privately or you hurt someone by your sin, put it right with the person concerned. But if you've sinned openly and other people know about it, put it right as far as it's known.

That's the maxim I give. You say, well, your opinion isn't any better than anyone else's opinion. I would like to establish it from scripture.

Leviticus 5 and 5, he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing. This referred to a believer in the Old Testament coming to get right with God. It says, he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing.

It must be specific. We commit specific sins. We must make specific confessions.

Christians aren't inclined to do that. They're more inclined to say, I need to be a better Christian. Well, anyone who couldn't say that, Billy Graham would have to say that, wouldn't he? Is there anyone you know that couldn't say, I need to be a better Christian? That's not being specific enough.

During the revival times in Brazil, we used to see the churches filled at 6.30 in the morning for prayer. And it was open prayer. Perhaps someone would get up and say, please pray for me, and be very specific

about what they needed.

Some ask for prayers for other people, like one mother said, my boy has gone to Rio de Janeiro and he hasn't written to me for two years. Somebody got up and prayed for her. One lady got up and said, please pray for me, I need to love people more.

This was in Portuguese, but I could follow the language. In fact, I was able to preach in Portuguese before too long. And I stopped her.

I said to her in Portuguese, Irmã, não é que fação. Sister, that's not a confession. I need to love people more.

Who doesn't need to love people more? But I didn't draw attention to her. She just sat down. I rebuked her very gently.

About 20 minutes later, the meeting went on. She got up and she said, please pray for me. What I should have said is that the Lord has shown me that my tongue has caused a lot of trouble in this congregation.

Her pastor was sitting beside me on the platform. Do you know that pastors can talk out of the side of their mouth just like gangsters? The pastor said to me, now she's talking. What do you mean now she's talking? Now she had named the sin.

It's so easy to say, I need to love people more. What she needed to say is, I've been a troublemaker in this congregation. She was apologizing to the congregation.

That's what I mean by being specific. In the Republic of Ireland, the town of Mullingar, there was a man who went to his parish priest and said, Father, I hear you're going to Dublin tomorrow. He said, that's right, Dan.

What can I do for you? He said, I'd like to confess before you go. Well, said the priest, we hold confessions on Saturday night before mass on Sunday morning, but if this is something special, let's go to the confessional now. So they walked across to the church.

And Dan began, he said, Father, I want to confess that I stole two bags of potatoes. The priest knew the gospel of the town. He said, do you see those from Mr. Riley? He said, how did you know, Father? He said, I was talking to Mr. Riley this morning.

And he said, someone had broken in and stolen two bags of potatoes. Oh, excuse me, I didn't tell her. He confessed that he had stolen two bags of potatoes.

And the priest said, someone had broken in and stolen one bag of potatoes. And Dan said, that's right, Father. But it was so easy.

He said, I was going to steal the other one tonight. But saying you're going to Dublin, I want absolution. No priest would give absolution in such terms.

When you confess, you have to have done those things. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsaketh them shall have mercy. I heard an excellent message in New Orleans from Jack Taylor on that very verse.

Our tendency is to cover up. I meet old friends who served World War II. I find it's always true, they remember the happy things about the war, the comradeship, the humorous situations.

They tend to forget the unpleasant things. And we especially cover up unpleasant things because we don't like to live with them. We'd rather forget.

Whoever covers his sins won't prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. You have to have done with it. So no good confessing that you lost your temper if you intend to lose your temper.

I remember a man in Belfast saying to me, boy, I apologized, but if he ever says a thing like that to me again, I'll punch him right in the nose again. No, no, you have to have done with it. Now, I don't know what things are like in Garland, Texas, but I've lived in California for thirty-six years, and I just find that lots of Christians who can get along fine with the Lord can't always get along with each other.

Maybe you don't know anything about that, but personally I think it's a general problem. Does the scripture say anything about confessing in that respect? Yes, the Lord Jesus says, if you're offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar and go. First be reconciled with your brother, then come and offer your gift.

What gift? I always thought it was some farmer coming in from the country with some foodstuffs for the pastor. You know, a gift like that? No, no. That takes you back to Leviticus 5 and 5. In the Old Testament dispensation, when a believer wanted to get right with God, he brought a lamb or a dove.

He laid his hand upon the offering, and that's where it says he shall confess his sin in that thing. Now we don't bring a lamb or a dove, we have the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Therefore, to put it into New Testament setting, if we come and say, Lord forgive me for Jesus' sake, but we remember that our brother has something against us, go and put it right with him first.

It's a fair question. Is it more important to be right with God or with man? I would say with God. With whom should we put things right first, with God or with man? Lord Jesus says with man.

Why? Well God knows whether or not you have sinned. Your brother doesn't know until you admit it. God knows whether or not you have repented.

Your brother doesn't know until you tell him. So the Lord says, if you are earnest, put it right with him. I told you about that girl at Forrest's home.

She was willing to put it right with the Lord, but wasn't willing to apologize to the person that she had hurt. That's clear teaching in Scripture. Put it right first with the person you have wronged.

Now someone might say, yes, but supposing it's a church quarrel or a quarrel between believers and it's the other party that's done the wrong. I remember speaking in a Baptist church in Portland, the chairman of the board of deacons said to me, I agree with you heartily, he said, if I do someone wrong, I think it's my job to go and apologize and confess it to him. But he said, by the same token, that sounded very like a deacon.

Deacons always say, by the same token. He said, by the same token, if he does something wrong against me, let him come and apologize to me and then I'll forgive him. Am I right? I said, no, you're wrong.

But he said, if I have to go and apologize when I do wrong, shouldn't he have to apologize? Well, I said, he should, but if he doesn't do it, the Lord Jesus said, this is Matthew 18, 15 to 17, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him it's the fault between you and him alone. Why alone? Give him a chance, you don't want to rub his nose in the dirt. Maybe he'd be very glad to apologize because he showed a nice attitude.

But if you want to make a big fighting issue of it, you've got to back up. I remember, it says in that scripture, if he listens to you, you've won your brother. I remember a very famous preacher came to Hollywood and criticized me from the pulpit.

I shrugged my shoulders, I thought, well, what he said isn't true anyway, so. But I heard about it six times, and then I thought, well, I better do what the scripture says. I phoned up, he had left town, so I wrote him a letter.

I'd like to say it by word of advice, don't write letters if you can go and see people face-to-face. Isn't it a Texan saying to say, you better smile when you say that? People can take things face-to-face, but they won't take in a letter. Letters rankle.

However, I wrote him a nice, sweet, Irish letter. I said, you ought to have known better. If you'd taken the trouble to read my book, Full Surrender, you'd realize I hadn't said anything like that.

In fact, the very opposite. It wasn't a matter of character, it was a matter of doctrinal teaching. And I ended the letter by saying, I don't expect a big shot like you to apologize to a small fry like me, but please allow me to say you were misquoted or misinformed.

I got back a letter, graciously apologizing. He said he had been told that I had said this. But the following night, a lady came to him and said, here's Edwin Orr's book in which he says in print the very opposite.

And he said, I've learned to take a man's printed word over hearsay. So he said, I withdrew the criticism from the Pope and said I was quite wrong what I said last night. But he said, bad news travels twice as fast as good news, and you never heard about this.

And now I was convicted. I wrote and apologized to him for not expecting him to apologize to me. Now the scripture says, if he listens to you, you've won your brother.

Shortly afterwards, he wrote to me and said, I hear you're going to India. I know how desperately poor the people are there, including the churches. So I'd like to send you \$500 from our evangelical fund towards your expenses.

Had I won my brother? He remained my friend until he died. By the way, that was Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse of Philadelphia. One of the world's great preachers.

And he was my friend until he died. By the way, the pastor should remind me to tell him a sequel to that story. Maybe I shouldn't have said that to tantalize you, but it was a fascinating sequel.

Never mind. Now the scripture says, go and tell him his fault face to face. Why? Because you want to be friends.

But there's some people who don't want to be friends. They enjoy being insulted because they feel better that, especially if it wasn't true, it inflates their ego. You know, somebody's church says, oh, did you hear what Mrs. Jones said about you? I'm using popular names so you don't think I'm, I hope there are no

Jones's here, but you hear what Mrs. Jones said about you? No.

What did she say? She said, thus and so, out comes an ugly bit of gossip. Now what does Mrs. Johnson do? Does she go to Mrs. Jones and say, Mrs. Jones, there must be a misunderstanding. No, no.

She meets Mrs. Peterson. She said, did you hear what Mrs. Jones said about me? And Mrs. Peterson says, no. Well, however, Mrs. Peterson says, if you tell me about it, I can pray about it.

So now Mrs. Peterson learns about it. They're all ganging up on Mrs. Jones until Mrs. McGregor, a Scotswoman, says, when my baby was sick, it was Mrs. Jones who came to help. She takes Mrs. Jones' side.

Now you have a church feud, all because Mrs. Jones didn't fulfill the scripture. Go and tell him face to face first, before you tell anyone else. Give him a chance.

Then it says, if he won't listen to you, take one or two others with you, that every word may be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. There are people, for instance, if you go to see them personally, they'll twist what you say. So now take witnesses.

Whom should you take? Your wife and your mother-in-law? Well, you might think you're ganging up on him. Now, if I had a quarrel with Billy Graham, by the way, I have not. Billy has been a good friend for 45 years.

But if I had a quarrel with Billy Graham and wanted to be friends, whom should I take? Carl McIntyre? He objects to Billy Graham. Pick a couple of Billy's worst enemies? Don't know. Billy wouldn't be very impressed.

I would say, let's see, Bert Shea. He's a sweet old fellow. Billy loves him too, and I love him, and how about Cliff Barrows? Billy, let's settle this.

That's the way we do it. Take one or two others with you. If he won't listen to them, it says, tell it to the church.

I should have consulted the pastor before saying this, but would the pastor advise that you get up and tell it to the church just after the response of reading? Or would you say before the announcements? That doesn't mean that. The word church there is the word ecclesia. I would say, if you're both members of the choir, surely there's enough spirituality in the choir to find someone who would help you settle the difficulty.

If you're both ministers of the gospel, you don't have to consult a lawyer. Try and get some ministers in your association or in the minister's fraternal to settle it for you. And if he won't listen to them, it says, treat him like a heathen and a tax collector.

And I remember a big Irishman in Toronto saying to me, that means you give him one, two, three chances to put things right, and if he doesn't, then you can really go to town on him. I said, no, no, it doesn't say that. Treat him like a heathen.

You ever eat Chinese food? I said, some Chinese restaurant owners are Christians. Not a majority though. Perhaps someone has just come from Taiwan or Hong Kong.

And you meet him, he says, good morning. You say, I only speak to Christians. No, you don't.

You speak to heathen too. If he falls downstairs and breaks a leg, do you say, which convention do you belong to? Southern Baptist or American Baptist or General Baptist or Regular Baptist or Two Seat and One Spirit Pre-Desk Marian Baptist or what? No. He's your neighbor.

I find that if some brother who does you an injury doesn't treat you like, right. Don't stop being civil to him. Be kind to him.

I used to wonder about that verse, by being kind, you pour coals of fire in his head. That sounds like strong retribution, doesn't it? Now that's a figure of speech. It means you make him blush with shame.

That's coals of fire in the head. That's a figure of speech there. Treat him like a tax collector.

I don't know how you treat tax collectors. But don't ever try to get your own back on the IRS. Don't try and fight with City Hall unless you're very sure of yourself.

I got a letter from President Roosevelt once that said you will report for active duty on the 24th of December 1942. I was there all right. I wasn't a bit burnt.

Otherwise, I'd have been absent without leave. The thing is this. Treat him as a heathen.

Treat him as a tax collector. In other words, pay everyone as due, even though he didn't treat you right. Those are the rules that the Lord Jesus gave.

But it can all be summed up. Every time there's been a great revival, every time there's been a great revival, there has been confession of sin. I don't know what Robert Coleman said on Monday night, but I've heard him talk about the Asbury College revival.

I would say half the time in that chapel, the students were confessing their sins. The other half, they were rejoicing in forgiveness. That's a mark of revival.

I've heard occasionally a Baptist pastor tell of a local revival in his church. Sometimes it began when two deacons who hadn't spoken to each other for twenty years came up and were reconciled. There is confession in revival.

What's the basis of scripture for that? Therefore confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that you may be delivered. Notice the next phrase, the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. In plain English, the prayers of those who are right with God can help a lot.

You say, well, wouldn't that lead to a lot of scandal, you know, to confess all sorts of things? No, no, let me give it to you very clearly. You confess in order to be delivered. That's your object.

How much then should you confess? It says very plainly, you confess your faults one to another and pray for one another. It's to get prayer that you confess. Therefore the confession is best stated as a request for prayer.

Like a man standing up and saying, I've lost my temper so often in the meetings, business meetings here, I must confess it to you, ask God to deliver me from bad temper. Then you can pray for him. Is that what he needs? Yes.

But you confess in order to get prayer, in order to be delivered. How much should you confess? Just enough to get prayer. You don't need to confess the details of your sin.

You don't need to say, I had a big row with my wife this morning. That doesn't concern the congregation. Go and put it right with your wife or your husband, as the case may be.

Go and put it right with someone you've had a quarrel with in the church. But if you have a fault, you confess your fault. By the way, the Greek does say *tas armatios*, that's their sins.

Confess your sins one to another and pray for one another that you may be delivered. You don't need to give detailed confessions, especially I would say there are warnings against confessions that lead to temptation. If a young fellow got up and said, since I enlisted in the army, I've suffered a lot of temptation, would you pray for me that I might be pure? Could you pray for him? Of course you could.

But if a young fellow got up and mentioned some girl that you know, now he's shamed her reputation. He's caused scandal. You don't need to give the details to everyone.

Confess to God, confess to the person you've wronged, but ask for prayer from the congregation. I think this is quite clear. I remember, I better not mention what part of the country I was in, the pastor of a very big Baptist church invited me for a week of meetings.

On the Tuesday, I think it was, of the week, he said, I'd like to have lunch with you. So we had lunch together. I had a funny feeling that he wanted to tell me something, but he never got to the point.

So we just enjoyed a good lunch and fellowship together. Next day, I had an appointment, but had to cancel it. My friend had to leave town.

So I called the pastor, I said, you know, I told you I was busy today, but I'm free. I enjoyed your company so much yesterday. How about having lunch again? Good, he said, I'll come.

Then he told me, he said, I meant to ask you about this, it's a very personal thing. He said, my wife and I are happily married, but he said there was a time when we were a little cool towards each other. I made the mistake of telling my secretary, and she was very sympathetic.

And he said, well, I can assure you, and so on, it led just to indiscretion, nothing more. Well, I should mind as well tell me, was it serious? Well, he said, I kissed her, and then I realized I was playing with fire, so he said I quit. She was a good Christian woman.

Finally, I said to her, look, either I'll resign from this church, or you'll resign as secretary. If you feel that that's what I should do, I'll resign. She said, no, pastor, you do a wonderful work here.

I know this wasn't right. I'll resign. Well, he said, we'll give you a letter of recommendation because you've been a wonderful secretary.

He said, she went to another side of the country. Now, he said, should I tell my wife? So I said, why do you ask me? Well, he said, why hurt her? She doesn't know anything about it. I said, you've got a point there.

But I said, you can trust this girl? He said, yes, I have every reason to believe she's a deeply spiritual girl. I said, does anyone else know about it? He hesitated for just a moment. Then he said, nobody knows about it.

I said, why did you hesitate? He said, I'm not trying to deceive you. He said, I sometimes wonder if one of my deacons knows about it. I said, why would he know about it? Well, he said, he came to the office just after that incident.

And he said, whether it's my guilty conscience or not, I often wondered if he saw me kiss the girl. So I said in the vernacular, if he knows about it, why hasn't he spilled the beans? He said, I know a lot worse about him. He said.

So I said, you're trusting with this discretion. Now if you know a lot worse about him, supposing he really gets into trouble, and if you or the church take any action, he'll get up and say, well, you think the pastor's a saint? Now let me tell you. The pastor turned white.

He'd never thought of that. He said, what do you advise me to do? I said, I won't advise you to do anything. I'll leave it to your conscience.

Next night, I was preaching, and I don't know what I was preaching on, but it was a revival message. The pastor was sitting in the very back seat, and he knelt there sobbing. The congregation was deeply moved.

I noticed one man just looked as if he was cornered, and then he got up and he came forward. The next man forward was that deacon. We had a landslide of repentance in the church.

And next day, the pastor called me, and he said, well, I told her what a wonderful woman she is. The first thing she said was, how did I fail you? And I had to tell her, you didn't fail me, it was just my waywardness. And he said, we're so happy, both of us.

Within a month, he called me up again to say, I've been asked to head up one of the biggest departments of our denomination. And he said, this has prepared me spiritually for it. If I mentioned his name, some folks here would recognize it.

Now, put it this way. I don't tell anyone what to do about confession. But the scripture does say, quite simply, if any of you lack of wisdom, let him ask of God who gives liberally to all men without scolding.

God will guide you, but there's a time for everything. The first time is when God is moving your heart, both of you, in times of revival. What's the sum and substance of this? You talk about revival, you tell me you're praying for revival, the Lord's willing to revive you, willing to bless you with the fullness of his fellowship.

But if you've broken fellowship by disobedience, the condition is to repent and to confess. The word confess comes from the Greek roots, ek homo logos, ek means out of, homo, the same logos word. You say the same word with God, what the Holy Spirit tells you, that becomes your confession.

That is all bond prayer.

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