

Garland, Texas - Forgiveness and Confession

by J. Edwin Orr

God forgives sins on the basis of the cross, through the blood of Christ, and the condition of forgiveness is repentance and conversion.

Duration: 1:04:50

Scripture: Matthew 18:15, James 5:16

Topics: "Confession And Repentance", "Seeking Forgiveness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of confession and repentance in maintaining fellowship with God and others. It highlights the need for sincere confession of faults to receive prayer and deliverance, focusing on the biblical principles of seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. The speaker shares personal anecdotes and biblical teachings to illustrate the power of confession, repentance, and seeking forgiveness for restoration and revival.

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 at one time. One of the members was Roy Rogers, who 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. He said, What you're trying to tell me is that Jesus died for me. I said, Yes.

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've heard of Sirhan Sirhan, he's in jail for the murder of Robert Kennedy. Just you try going to the police and saying, Would 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'd 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 for 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. Moore, 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 some day in the meeting he 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 had 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? Somebody will 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. 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. 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. Somebody gets in a jam and then they want a smart lawyer to get them off. 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? He said, 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 or \$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 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. Supposing Mickey Cohn 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.

Then he said, 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. 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. 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 fourteen years I haven't committed any sin whatsoever. What 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 got 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 just to clear up a point, would you agree with your husband that for fourteen 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.

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 there may be 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 ten years ago, and all my sins--past, present, and future--were forgiven. Right? I said, 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 ten 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? I said, 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--it's the word antinomianism, anti, against, nomos, the law. In other words, I'm a Christian, it doesn't matter how I behave, I'm bound for heaven.

She said, Are my sins forgiven or are they not? 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? 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? I said, 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 there 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're 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's 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're wrong, for you're 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. The next verse says, If we say we have no sin, no, I'm going too fast.

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, you know. So he came back another five minutes later, and he went straight to his mother and 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. 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. Those converts were converted from a very Corinthian life--liquor, sex, money, popularity. I heard this minister tell them, 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, saw sin 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 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? It says, But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowshiped 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 fellowshiped one with the other. What does it really mean to walk in the light? There is an obscure verse of scripture, Ephesians 5.18, 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.

That's easy to understand English. Light is capable of showing things up for what they really are. If you walk into, as I do sometimes without walking into anything, there was a film called If it's Tuesday, it's Belgium.

Sometimes I wake 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? 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 a bad temper, it's 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 is 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. 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 are 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? 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. Why doesn't he need to be converted? 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.

Immediately your mind jumps ahead and says, You're telling me that I'll 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 forums, 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.

That doesn't end the problem. People say, What does it mean to make confession? Well, the scripture teaches us, of course, but if you ask a question, to whom do we confess? I remember a young lady come to talk to me at Forest Home in Southern California in a summer conference. She says, Well, I've confessed, but I don't feel forgiven.

I said, Well, I don't know your circumstances, but I have 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.

She says, I've confessed, and I just don't feel forgiven. I said, I don't mean to pry, but what was the offense? 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. I said, I didn't confess to her.

I didn't want her to hold it against me. 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 sin 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. 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 630 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 asked 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. I stopped her. I said to her in Portuguese, Irma, não é confissão, 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, and I rebuked her very gently. About twenty minutes later, the meeting went on.

She got up and 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, in 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. Reilly? He said, How did you know, Father? He said, I was

talking to Mr. Reilly 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 anything like that to me again, I'll punch him right in the nose again.

No, no. You have to have done with it. I don't know what things are like in Garland, Texas, but I've lived in California for 36 years, and I 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. 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 that he has sinned 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? The Lord Jesus says, with man.

Why? 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're 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 she had hurt. That's clear teaching in scripture. Put it right first with the person you've wronged.

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. He 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. Well, 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. He said, the Lord Jesus said, this is Matthew 18, 15 to 17, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him it's a 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 who came to Hollywood and criticized me from the pulpit. I shrugged my shoulders and thought, well, what he says isn't true anyway.

But I heard about it six times, and I thought, well, I'd better do what the scripture says. I phoned up, and 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'd 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 had 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. 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. 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.

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 are 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 Joneses here, but you hear what Mrs. Jones said about you? 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 said, 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? Oh, 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. Take a couple of Billy's worst enemies? Don't know.

Billy certainly wouldn't be very impressed. I would say, Let's see, Beth 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? 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 Mardin Baptist, or General Baptist, or Regular Baptist, or Two Seed in the One Spirit Predestinarian Baptist, or what? No.

He's your neighbor. I find that if some brother who does you an injury doesn't treat you 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? 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 moved. 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 has 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 have heard occasionally a Baptist pastor tell of a local revival in his church.

And 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 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, wouldn't that lead to a lot of scandal, 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 business meetings here, I must confess it until 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 armartear*, 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'd 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, I meant to ask you about this.

It's a very personal thing. My wife and I are happily married, but 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, it led just to indiscretion, nothing more. Well, I said, 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 the other 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 at his 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. Had I ever 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. 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? I had to tell him he didn't fail me, it was just my waywardness. He said, We're so happy, both of us. It was in a month he called me up again to say, I've been asked to head up one of the biggest departments of our denomination.

He said, This has prepared me spiritually for it. If I mentioned his name, some folks here would recognize it. I 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 wisdom, let him ask of God who gives liberally to all men without scolding. God will guide you. For there is 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 is 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 about prayer.

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