

How Does God Forgive Sins?

by J. Edwin Orr

God forgives sins on the basis of the cross, where Christ paid the price for our sins, and repentance and conversion are required.

Duration: 52:47

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:26, Psalm 66:18, Ephesians 5:13, 1 John 1:7-10

Topics: "Revival Theology"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares personal anecdotes and experiences to illustrate the importance of repentance and confession in the Christian faith. He emphasizes the need for believers to acknowledge their sins and seek forgiveness through the cross of Christ. The preacher also highlights the difference between evangelism and revival, stating that while evangelism focuses on conversion, revival focuses on confession and restoration of fellowship with God. He concludes by emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing believers to a place of confession and renewal in their spiritual lives.

Transcript

I think I mentioned already that many years ago I was chaplain, actually founder of the Hollywood Christian Group. We used to have many cowboy people coming, including Roy Rogers and some of his friends. I remember once a cowboy, not a Christian, said to me, How does God forgive sins? I answered him by quoting 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, That's right.

He said, I don't believe that. I don't understand that. How could anyone die for me? Luke, he said, The Los Angeles police were holding a man for murder, supporting I feel sorry for the guy, and I go to the police and I say, Would you let me take his place? Would they let me take his place? He said, The answer is no.

It wouldn't be right. Prince, if someone here felt sorry for a condemned criminal like Charles Manson, would they let you take his place? Now he said, How could Christ die for me? Well, I said, You've touched a very difficult doctrine. In theological seminary we study at least 13 theories of the atonement.

I'm not sure that I could explain the doctrine, but perhaps I could illustrate it. When I was a boy of seven, I used to play ball out the back. Diagonally across the lot from our house was the house of a fellow called

Albert Mann, and his house was in the way.

Every day we hit the ball hard. At any time, we were sure to break one of his windows. One day he rushed out and shook his fist.

He said, The next one of you brats breaks my window, I'll break your ear. Who do you think was the next brat to break his window? I didn't stop running until I got home. But my longer-legged sister got a home ahead of me, and she told Mother what I had done.

Now, I didn't mind that. Any seven-year-old boy knows how to manage his mother. But for some obscure reason, my father was in the kitchen.

I don't know what he was doing there. I didn't even stop to inquire. He ought to have been at work, but I thought, under the circumstances, what I needed most was fresh air.

So I made for the back door. He grabbed me by the wrist. He said, You're coming with me, young man.

But I said, Daddy, that man will hit me. He said, You're coming with me. I went most reluctantly.

My father knocked the old-fashioned knocker. And Mr. Mann came to the door. My father said, This is the boy that broke your window.

Mr. Mann didn't waste a word with me. He turned to my father, and he said, Now listen, Mr. Orr, I'm not unreasonable. I know that kids can't help breaking windows.

I broke windows when I was a boy. But Orr, he said, 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. He had built his house in the wrong place.

All of us kids thought he ought to emigrate to New Zealand or somewhere, you know. But he went on scolding. I'm willing to forgive the kids, but he said, 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 are forgiven, someone must pay.

Now, 20 years after that incident, my sister's husband borrowed some money from me. Every time I tell this story, I strike a sympathetic chord in some brother-in-law's heart. There are different marriage customs in different countries.

In South Africa, a man will save up enough money to buy a wife. They call that lobola, the bride price. In South India, the girl's family will pay you for taking one of them away.

They call that the dowry. If you send her back, she gets the money back, too. But in Ireland, where I was born, as soon as a man marries your sister, he feels entitled to apply for a loan.

He borrowed \$500 from me. I said, Now, you're my brother-in-law. I won't charge you interest.

You can skip Easter week and Christmas week. But the other 50 weeks of each year for two years, you'll pay me \$5 a week. Well, he agreed, but he never paid a dime.

Never paid a penny. He used to come to my birthday parties and wish me many happy returns of the day. I often said, When are you going to return the money? But he didn't pay me.

I bore him a grudge for a couple of years. And then I forgave him. But which of the two of us suffered? The sinner or the sinned against? Not the sinner.

He went free. Now, I could have taken him to court. I could have had an injunction against him.

I could have seized his furniture. And then he would have had to pay. But instead, I forgave him.

And I suffered. And that taught me the second principle of forgiveness. The one that forgives is the one that suffers.

I said this once in the mayor's parlor in Los Angeles. A lawyer came up to me afterwards. Well, he said, Is that always right? If, for instance, somebody slanders you and you forgive him, do you suffer? I said, You ought to know.

Supposing you go to a lawyer and you say, Someone has slandered me. He's telling me the circumstances. Then the first thing he says, Well, I think you ought to get \$10,000 out of this.

There's a price for slander. The moment you forgive the guy, you lose that \$10,000, of course. So, remember the second point.

The one that forgives is the one that suffers. Now, the first point was, Someone must pay. That's why there had to be an atonement.

But second, the one that forgives is the one that suffers. Moses couldn't have died for me, nor Joshua, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor Mary, the mother of the Lord. Only Jesus.

Because God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. After I gave the illustration to this cowboy, it struck me. I have not only illustrated the doctrine of the atonement, but I've also illustrated the deity of Christ.

Up at Forest Home, in the San Bernardino Mountains, I had a talk with a very intelligent Jehovah's Witness girl. You know, of course, the Jehovah's Witness view of Jesus Christ is that he was a created angel. They agree that he had existed before he was born of Mary.

But they say he was an archangel. And I said to her, Would it be right for God to create an angel to suffer for me? Would it be right for anyone else to do it? For example, supposing somebody owed me \$10,000, and I'm much concerned about it, I can take the fellow to court. But finally I decide I'll forgive him.

But I ask George Wood to pay for it. That wouldn't be fair. The one that forgives is the one that suffers.

I was speaking up north in Northern California when a man said, I don't get this. If God makes the rules, can't he break the rules? Can't he just break the rules and forgive us anyway? That's the idea a lot of people have. That God's a good-natured old grandfather, you know, and you just ask him to forgive you.

But they have a wrong idea of God. God is love. We all know that.

But God is also justice. God is incapable of doing a wrong thing. He's incapable of playing unfair.

And his justice as well as his love had to be satisfied. So he said to forgive you. I'll pay for it myself.

Now I'm going to ask some questions. We'll write the answers on the board and see what we learn for tonight. The first question is, on what basis does God forgive the sins of a sinner? Now remember, the word basis means on what grounds.

How is he able to do it? One word would suffice. But would you raise your hand before you speak? On what basis does God forgive the sins of a sinner? Love. But only love? In other words, does he say, I can break the rules? What were you going to say? Grace.

Yes. You said almost the same thing twice there, love and grace. Maybe you're missing the point.

Love, grace, and mercy are the reasons why God is willing to do it. Am I right? But how is he able to do it? Yes, but how did he meet justice? What was the price that he paid? What was the ransom he paid? What did Christ do? Yes, now we're coming to it. The price was the cross.

The basis was the cross. Those of you who say, love, think back a little bit. Supposing about a hundred years before Christ was born of Mary, there had been some kind of discussion in heaven, and the Lord said, scrub the whole idea, and Christ didn't come to die.

Could we have been forgiven? Now, if you think we could, you're like the man that said to me, if God makes the rules, can't he break the rules? But God can't break rules, if it comes to justice. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That means it was God's eternal purpose that Christ would die for us.

That's how we're to be forgiven. Any question you want to ask about this? Anything you don't understand? The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. For instance, a lot of people still think that they can be righteous on their own.

But, by the way, where it says in the New Testament, the law is our schoolmaster, the word isn't schoolmaster, it's a Greek word for pedagogue, and the word peda means foot. You say, how is that for a schoolteacher? Actually, in Greece, when the wealthy children went to school, a slave, a foot slave, a footman, took them to school. And he was called a pedagogue.

Now we use the word pedagogue for a teacher. In other words, it took the law to show us our need. Any other questions before we leave this point? I'm going to answer, go even before the Jews.

Job, about whom we read in the book of Job, was neither a Christian under grace, nor a Hebrew under the law. He was a pagan. But he said, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in my flesh I shall see God.

Job, and Abraham, and everyone else, was forgiven through Christ. In anticipation, just as we look back 2,000 years. So Abraham knew that God could forgive him.

And of course they were taught that Messiah would come. It's very interesting, none of them even knew his name. When King David wrote, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He used the words that Christ used, but he never even knew the name of Jesus.

However, get the main point. The ground, the basis, the first fact, is that God is able to forgive us because of the cross. And if Christ hadn't died, he couldn't do it.

Now by the way, this is Baptist doctrine, Methodist doctrine, Presbyterian doctrine, Episcopal doctrine, Congregational doctrine, Salvationary doctrine, Pentecostal doctrine, Roman Catholic doctrine. It is not Unitarian doctrine, it is not Job's Witness doctrine, but this is Orthodox Christian doctrine. And it's amazing how many Christians have never taken it in really.

Oh, they sing at the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light. Did I mention yesterday, back in my mind that I did, on Friday I conducted a funeral, husband of a dear friend of my wife's, and she was in need of comfort. And I quoted an old Sankey hymn.

Oh yes, I quoted it to the soloist. Do any of you know an old Sankey hymn? It goes like this, My faith has found a resting place, not in device nor creed. And the chorus goes, I need no other argument, I need no other plea.

It is enough that Jesus died, and that he died for me. We are forgiven not because God says, Look, forget it, I'll forgive you anyway. But because the price was paid.

It would change our attitude to sin, when we realize what sin cost the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the second question, what price does a sinner pay to be forgiven? I think I mentioned yesterday that, in a meeting of the Hollywood Christian group, who did I see sitting in front of my wife? But Mickey Cohn, the gangster. Supposing Mickey Cohn were here tonight, and he raised his hand and said, How is God able to forgive my sins? I would say, In Christ we have redemption, through his blood shed on the cross.

So he can do it. Well, how much do I have to pay? What do you mean? Well, I have \$375,000 stashed away, but the government can't get it. If you could arrange for me to be forgiven, I'll make a very substantial donation to the church or whoever should get it.

How much do I pay? How much does a sinner pay to be forgiven? Someone tell me. Hmm? Everything. How much does he have? Nothing.

How much did you pay? Oh, well, I'm coming to conditions, but I mean, how much did you actually pay? In other words, you said, Lord, you're going to give me eternal life, you're going to forgive me. Now, my life's worth all that, so I'm going to pay my life. Oh no, your life's not worth all that.

There isn't anyone here whose life is worth eternal life, or whose life is worth forgiveness. How much do you pay? Yeah, but then how much do you pay? When somebody gives you a birthday present, how much do you pay? Nothing. I remember, I preached all over Latin America.

I used to ask, I used to write the word preso, and I'd ask, what is the preso? The answer is nada. I like that word nada. It sounds like nothing, doesn't it? Nada.

You got a question? The price to Christ was infinite, but I mean, when I said how much do you pay, the cost is nothing. But I mean, I didn't make an infinite sacrifice to accept. Christ paid an infinite price.

I want to ask a third question. Supposing Mickey Cohen were here tonight, and he said, well now that's good to know. Is there any catch to it? What do you mean catch? You mean any conditions? What do you mean conditions? Well, can I go on shooting policemen, robbing banks, and running rackets? I'll write down the word condition, then you tell me, what is the condition attached to? Pardon? Repentance.

Yes. We'll give you an A for that. Repentance.

But what kind of repentance? Repentance expressed in conversion. You'll find it in the words of the Apostle Peter. Repent and be converted.

For what? Yes, that your sins may be blotted out. If you refuse to repent and be converted, will your sins be blotted out? No. That's why I spoke so strongly on repentance on Sunday morning.

But this is repentance expressed in conversion. By the way, the word repent means to change. I explained that to you.

The word convert means to turn. You're headed one way, turn the other way. I have one other question to ask.

What object does the sinner have in seeking forgiveness? You know, supposing God said, okay, I forgive you, I never want to see you again. Is that what He wants? Shall we call it salvation? Now let's recapitulate. The sinner is forgiven on the basis of the cross.

The price he has to pay is nothing. But the condition is that he repent and be converted. And if he doesn't, he remains unforgiven.

Like for instance, a lot of people are praying, a lot of people are interested in Larry Flint, who professed to be converted. We'd like to know whether it's genuine or not. Supposing he doesn't change a bit, do you think he'll be saved? No, we'll write him off, won't we? We'll say he made profession but it didn't amount to anything.

The object is salvation. Now the second series of questions is likely to disturb you much more. How does God forgive the sins of believers who are already converted? Now I must explain this to you.

I'll try to illustrate. I was speaking at Mount Hermon in Northern California. An inter-varsity girl came to me and says, I don't understand your teaching.

I was converted ten years ago. All my sins, past, present, and future were forgiven. Now, said she, I cheated in the last examinations at Berkeley, but I'm not going to let a little thing like that worry me.

That was forgiven ten years ago. I said to her, are you going to cheat in the next examinations? Well, she said, I hope it won't be necessary. I said, but if it is necessary in your eyes, if you get behind with your homework, are you going to cheat? She wouldn't face it.

Which is, are my sins forgiven or are they not? I said, young lady, you're in great darkness. You're trying to tell me the difference between a Christian and an unbeliever is this, that the unbeliever goes to hell for his sins, but the Christian can sin sort of freely and get away with it, like a spoiled brat in a family. You know the way some parents spoil their children.

I said, what do you make of the verse that says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins? That's the unbeliever, of course. I said, quite the contrary. The first epistle of John was written to believers.

Look at the salutations. My little children, am I right? I'm writing this to you. Children, this is the last hour.

See what love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. The pronoun he uses is we. If I were to say, we Canadians ought to be glad for all this rain.

I can say that because I'm a Canadian. I should say, we Californians. We Californians should be glad of all this rain.

I live in California. So do you. So I use the word we because we're both included there.

But if I were speaking in Vancouver, I wouldn't say, we Canadians ought to be glad of all this snow because I'm not a Canadian. When the Apostle John wrote, children, my little children, and we, and so forth, he was writing as a believer to believers. Now this is most important.

It's always important to know to whom a thing is addressed. When I was 20 years of age, I was asked to speak at a women's meeting. I was scared.

I'd often talked to women, one at a time, but I'd never spoken to a group of women. So I went to an old Methodist minister, a friend of mine, and I said, what would you say to a bunch of women? Did you want a message? I said, yes. How about Elisha's word to the Shunammite woman? Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? I said, that's a good topic.

I thought, I'll begin with the children first. Everyone knows that women influence children more. Then I'll get them on their husbands because, you know, so many women marry and say, I'm going to change him, but it doesn't work out, you know.

And then, is it well with thee? My message went over like a lead balloon. They didn't tell me it was a meeting for women in a retired spinster's home. And the dear sisters didn't appreciate my emphasis upon their influence with children and their influence with husbands.

If Pastor Wood asked me to speak to the teenagers in this congregation on love, courtship, and marriage, I think I could give a fair talk. But if he asked me to speak to the unmarried couples, wouldn't it be rather silly to talk about courtship? I could talk about marriage. Now, the Epistle of John was not written to people to tell them how to be saved.

It was written to people who are saved. Or if there's a Methodist here, who are being saved. By the way, the three tenses are all used in Scripture.

We have been saved, we are being saved, we shall be saved. We do use words in a sloppy way. For instance, a lot of people use the word saved for converted.

Conversion is an act. Saved. We have been saved, we are being saved, we shall be saved.

So I'm going to quote to you. By the way, this girl in Mount Hermon said, when I said about confession, she said, are you trying to tell me that my salvation depends upon my confessing? Isn't that a Roman Catholic doctrine? As I see now, where you're in darkness. In Scripture, the first Epistle of John was not written about salvation.

It was written to people who are saved. She said, then what's it written about? It's written about fellowship. You find the word fellowship running all the way through it.

It's not written to tell people how to be saved. It's written to people who are saved to tell them how to maintain fellowship with God. Now let me quote the words to 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. What does that mean? It means that our God is a holy God. He hates sin.

Now that's not the Hindu idea of God. When the Hare Krishna people talk about God, they're not thinking of God that we think about. Their idea of God is that God is good and God is bad.

God is nice and God is nasty. God is kind. God is cruel.

God is day. God is night. God is good.

God is evil. God is everything. When they speak of God, they mean the sum total of things.

They say you can't fight God. They really mean fortune or you know, what is. The Hindu idea of God, which you find in some of the cults, Western cults too, is not that God is a holy God, but that God is just what experience is.

But it says here, this is the message we've heard from Christ proclaimed to you. God is light. In Him is no darkness at all.

There's no evil in God. Now the next verse says, if we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. What does that mean? It simply means if a Christian disobeys the light that he has, stumbles in darkness, he breaks fellowship with God.

Could you imagine someone saying in prayer, oh God, I'm going to rob the first national bank. Grant that the cops won't catch me. And I promise I'll give you a tithe of all that I get.

God won't touch that with a 40 foot pole. God is light. In Him is no darkness at all.

My boy David, well, he's now a doctor of law, studying over at University of London. But when he was four years of age, he was rude to his mother at table. I said to him sharply, David, 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. He came back very cheerfully. He says, well, everybody, I'm sorry now.

I said, all right, tell your mama. But he wouldn't. I said, if you're sorry, tell your mama you're sorry.

But he wouldn't. I said, go back to the bedroom. You're not sorry.

You're just hungry. So he went off to the bedroom. Well, it doesn't take a four-year-old long to repent.

He came back again, this time much more subdued. 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 dinner. Instead of climbing on his stool, he climbed on her lap. And she reached for his plate, and they had turned about the way mothers and children sometimes do.

Fellowship was restored. Now, while he was in the bedroom, he was still my son. And he was still in my house.

And he was still in my care. But he was out of fellowship. If, during his meditations in the bedroom, the thought had occurred to him, I wonder what Daddy's going to give me for Christmas.

That would have been the wrong time to have asked about it. In other words, when you sin against the light, you break fellowship with God. You may still be a believer.

You may still come to the house of God. You're still in his care. But you're out of fellowship.

Do you find it easy to pray after you've had a row with someone? No. Think of that verse, If thou regardest iniquity in thine heart, the Lord will not hear thee. That word regard bothered me until it means if you contemplate iniquity in your heart, if you're planning to do something you know you shouldn't do, the Lord's not listening to you.

Your prayers are not being heard. You've broken fellowship. And the next verse says, But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses, the Greek says, continues to cleanse us from all sin.

If we walk in the light. What does it mean to walk in the light? There's an obscure verse of scripture, I think it's Ephesians 5.13, which says, That which is reprov'd is made manifest by the light. Now that's old fashioned English.

The modern translation says, Light is capable of showing things up for what they really are. My wife said, Well how did they get that out of it? How could they get both those verses out of that original language? That which is reprov'd, that means the thing that's shown up, exposed, is made manifest, is shown up by the light. I was preaching in 1959 in Ireland.

We had a week of meetings in a town called Banbridge. The good folk wanted to go on for another week. But I said, Next week I'm preaching in Dromore.

I can't be in two places at once. They said, But Dromore is only ten miles away. But I said, Even so, you can't preach two places ten miles apart at the same time.

They said, But look, we're so keen to have another week of meetings. We could have our meetings at seven, and they could have their meetings at eight. I said, That's too much of a rush.

They said, But they could have a song service. You wouldn't need to be there until about 8.30. So I took it up with the Dromore committee, and they said, All right. They were quite pleased that the other people liked the meetings so much.

So I had two campaigns running simultaneously. Like having meetings, say, in Garden Grove and Costa Mesa. I drove up one day, one evening, to the big second Presbyterian church, the largest church in Dromore.

It was a bit of a rush. And I just preached. I was tired, but I was ready to preach again.

The minister of that church was standing at the gate waiting for me. So I said, I'm out of time. If you've got plenty of time, they're going to sing another hymn, they're going to take up an offering.

I said, You know, I'd give a lot for a cup of coffee. Oh, he said, My wife's in the meeting. Now, the only good coffee in the house is what? Nescafé.

That'll do. I jumped into his little car with him. We raced up to the manse.

Then he said, I'll lock the front door. I said, Let's go in the back. You don't mind? I said, Not at all.

Now, he was wearing a black clerical suit. I followed him, but he disappeared into the darkness. I couldn't see him.

I could hear him. He knew the way through his own rooms in the dark. I didn't.

I was afraid of stumbling over something. And sure enough, I kicked my foot against what appeared to be the leg of a grand piano parked right in the middle of the room. I thought, That's a funny place to park a grand piano.

But, of course, you can never tell with Presbyterians. He switched on the light from the other side of the room, and I thought, It was not a grand piano. It was a big, old-fashioned dining room table with carved legs.

Now, in total darkness, one may be excused for mistaking the leg of a dining room table for the leg of a grand piano, but not in the light. The light shows it up for what it is. Now, it speaks here if we walk in the light, for instance, the light of conscience, sometimes quite sufficient to tell us right and wrong, the light of the Word, much more so, the light of prayer, the light of the Spirit, the light of godly counsel.

I was a chaplain. Sometimes a GI would come to me with some problem, and he would tell me, Is that okay, chaplain? I said, Tell me the rest of the story. What do you mean? You've just told me your side.

Let me hear the other side. There are some people who don't want to discuss certain problems. They only want to discuss problems with people who would agree with them that what they've done is right.

Now, if we walk in the light of conscience, the light of the Word, the light of prayer, the light of the Scriptures, the light of the Spirit, the light of godly counsel, we have fellowship one with the other. Why? Because the light shows things up for what it really is. It shows a thing up.

And generally, we've got enough gumption to say that's all right. But Christians don't act that way. You know, I'm Irish.

What are the Irish noted for? Good temper. That's right. Good humor and bad temper.

And I had my share of both. I remember trying to commit suicide at the age of eleven. You might say that was very young to contemplate self-destruction.

Yes, it was. But Mother had thrashed me. And I thought, they don't appreciate me here.

I'll throw myself in the river. In the headlines, I could see the headline, Boys' Body Found in River, Home Difficulties. And I thought, they won't treat me like that again.

It's all over some trivial little thing. Mother thrashed me for taking two pennies out of her purse and buying a box of matches and trying to set fire to two other boys. So I went down to the river to commit suicide, but the water was too cold.

Now, I had a bad temper. And I remember in the office where I was working, some of those unconverted girls, knowing I was a professing Christian, when I lost my temper, they say, ha ha, look at the Christian

now. Temper, temper, temper, temper.

Look at the Christian. And I said, it's not bad temper, it's righteous indignation. You don't expect me to let you walk on me, do you, and so forth.

I justified it. But it's bad temper when it's out of control and you're trying to hurt somebody. The light shows up.

So it says here very simply, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one with the other. And then this remarkable verse, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, continues to cleanse us from all sin. In the three verses, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His word is not in us. Now if you want to open your New Testament to those verses before you, I'm going to ask another four questions.

This time, not the unbeliever, the believer. Now remember what I said about the word basis. It means the ground.

On what basis does God forgive the sins of a believer? One word would suffice. Would you raise your hand? That's what we do, but how is He able to do it? He doesn't confess. Yes, the cross.

How much do we pay to be forgiven? Don't we have to make a substantial donation to have someone say masses for the repose of our souls? The price is nothing. Is there any catch to it? Can we go on deceiving, criticizing, shoplifting, or whatever the fault was, losing our temper, raging at people? Is there any catch to it? What's the condition? Repent. But what kind of repentance? Do we need to be converted all over again? Do we have to be converted every Tuesday and Thursday? No.

We repent and make confession. And what's the object? So it will be saved? No, we are saved. Fellowship.

Now, if you take in this lesson, you will have learned at least one half of the secret of Revival. Has anyone in this congregation ever heard of the Asbury College Revival? Will someone tell me, what happened there? You read about it? I don't suppose that anyone was there. I've been to Asbury since then.

What happened? Prayer meetings. That's right. It began with prayer meetings.

Then the chapel was filled night and day for a week. But what were the students doing? They were confessing their sins. That's the very first thing that happens.

Now, if you take this in, you'll learn a secret. I'll stand on the other side. The unbeliever is forgiven on the basis of the cross.

The price is nothing. The condition is conversion. The object is salvation.

The believer is also forgiven on the basis of the cross. And the price is also nothing. But the condition is confession.

The object is fellowship. Now, conversion is the climax of evangelism. But confession is the climax of revival.

When Billy Graham conducts an evangelistic campaign, then what's he trying to do? To get people converted. But in the revival of the church, the Holy Spirit has to bring people to the point of confessing whatever they know to be wrong with their lives. Let me illustrate something further.

The unbeliever can do nothing about the cross. Christ died already. He can't change this.

He can't change the price. He can't buy it. He can't bargain for it.

He can't earn it. The price is nothing. There's only one thing he can do.

He can repent and be converted. Nowhere in the scripture does it say, Oh God, convert me. We must repent and turn.

Now, in the same way, the believer can do nothing about the cross. He can't change the price. He can't say, Oh God, will you forgive me if I start tithing? No, no.

It's not a matter of bargaining. He can't say, well now, if I work hard, will you forgive me? You can't earn it. There's only one thing he can do.

He can repent of his sin and confess it where needed. Do you see the point? So, if there's an unbeliever here tonight and he's disturbed about the fact that he has unforgiven sin, very simply, he must repent and be converted. If there's a believer here out of fellowship with God, he must repent and make confession where necessary.

Any questions? You've raised a very, very interesting question. It's a question of perseverance. I suppose we could devote a whole week to it.

You know, once saved, always saved, or do you believe in the security of the believer? Now, I'm a Baptist by upbringing, and sometimes I startle my Baptist friends and they say, do you believe in the security of the believer? I say, what do you think of the verse that says, these are they that believe for a while? Well, the Lord Jesus said that. On the other hand, if I were asked the question, do you believe in the security of the regenerate, those who are truly born again? I think I could subscribe to that. But, who am I to say who's born again? For instance, you were to ask me, do you believe Billy Graham is born again? I'd say, oh, I'm sure of that.

Well, do you think President Carter is born again? I say, I don't know him so well, but I have reason to believe that he is. Do you think Larry Flint is born again? I'd have to say, well, I hope so. I don't know.

I'm waiting to see. I can't tell who's born again. Do you know, when I was preaching with Billy Graham, Billy Graham received the fullness of the Holy Spirit at Forest Home in 1949.

The other speaker, among the other speakers, Billy Graham spoke in the mornings, I spoke in the evenings. Another speaker was Charles Templeton. He was head of Canadian Youth for Christ.

Today he's an atheist, or at least an agnostic. Yet at one time he was evangelist for the National Council of Churches. He was stated evangelist for the Presbyterian Church in the USA.

You ask me, is he born again? Well, if I heard tonight that Charles Templeton had been killed in a motor smash, I would call Paul Smith in Toronto, and I would say, did anyone talk to him before he died? And if he says yes, he came back to the Lord. I'd say, thank God for that. But if he didn't, I would take it that he

was never truly regenerate.

Yet he was a believer at one time. Now what you're referring to, and what I think it should be much more concerned to is this, is what we call antinomianism. Now most lay people don't understand that theological term.

Ante means against. Nomos, the law. That's the attitude of that girl that I talk to.

I'm saved, therefore it doesn't matter what I do. I don't need to keep the Ten Commandments because I'm saved. Now there are three forms of antinomianism.

There is Calvinistic antinomianism. I'm elect. Doesn't matter what I do, I'm going to heaven.

That's dangerous. Then there is Wesleyan antinomianism. I'm sanctified.

I've had the second blessing. Therefore what I did couldn't have been sin, it was just a mistake. And then there's Pentecostal antinomianism.

Well I still speak in tongues, so it couldn't have been too serious. I think we've got to learn to be afraid of antinomianism. Now any other question about this matter of forgiveness? I would say yes to the first half, no to the second half.

I'll mention one man. Mohandas Gandhi, the Indian, had a deep religious experience. He changed completely.

He lived a life that put many Christians to shame. But he never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well he did in one way, but he said it doesn't matter whether Christ lived or died, it's his teachings that I like.

You know, he liked the Sermon on the Mount. Yes, I would say that many a man for the sake of ambition, for instance, I put it this way, there's many a communist who when he commits himself to revolution gives up all the fooling around just for the sake of being efficient for the revolution. And that's a kind of repentance or rethinking.

But it's not being born again. That's the difference. I think we ought to sing a verse of a hymn and then I'm going to deal with what is highly controversial.

What do we mean by confession? To whom do we confess? How much do we confess? How much confession should be public? Those are very important things. Can you suggest a hymn we could sing?

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