

Tuesday #2 Forgiveness & Confession

by J. Edwin Orr

God forgives sins on the basis of Calvary, through the blood of Christ, and the price of forgiveness is nothing, but repentance and conversion are required for forgiveness.

Duration: 45:03

Scripture: Leviticus 5:5, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:13, 1 John 1:5-9

Topics: "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares about a series of meetings where he witnessed the power of prayer and confession. He emphasizes the importance of being specific in our prayers and seeking God's guidance to identify our sins. The speaker also highlights the need for love and repentance in our relationships with others. He reminds the audience that God is holy and does not approve of sin, urging believers to confess their sins and maintain fellowship with God. The sermon references verses about God's light and the need for confession in order to have a close relationship with Him.

Transcript

Now following the pattern of previous nights, I'm going to take the remainder of the time dealing with a doctrinal subject that has relation to revival. I spoke to you on Sunday night on repentance. Last night on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Tonight I'm going to talk about forgiveness. When I was chaplain of the Hollywood Christian group, one day Roy Rogers brought a friend of his, a cowboy, who said to me, how does God forgive sins? I answered by quoting scripture. In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace.

Hmm, he said, you're trying to tell me Jesus died for me. I said, that's right. At least I don't understand that.

How could anyone die for me? Look, he said, the Los Angeles police are holding a man for murder. Supposing I go and say, let me take his place, would they let me take his place? They would not. I didn't do it.

It wouldn't be fair to make me pay for it. I said, well, you've laid your finger on a difficult doctrine, the doctrine of the atonement. I'm not sure that I can explain it.

In theological seminary we study at least thirteen theories of the atonement. My own view is that the atonement is bigger than any theory of it, in fact, than all of them together. But I said, perhaps I'll get a little straight.

When I was a boy, seven years of age, 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 time we hit a ball hard, 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 home ahead of me and told mother what I'd done.

I didn't mind that, most seven-year-old boys have learned to manage mama. But for some obscure reason, my father was in the kitchen. I didn't even stop to find out why he was not at work.

I decided under the certain sense what I needed most of all was fresh air. So I made for the back door, but he grabbed me by the wrist, he said, you're coming with me, young man. But I said, that man will hit me that easy, you're coming with me.

I went reluctantly. My father knocked the old-fashioned knocker, Mr. Mann came to the door. He was still looking upset.

My father said, this is the boy that broke your window. And Mr. Mann didn't waste one word with me, he turned to my dad and he said, now 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 Orr, he said, why is it that every time there's a window broken in this neighborhood, it has to be my window? Well, I thought of answering that, because he had built his house in the wrong place.

But I was too scared to say anything. He went on scolding, he said, 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.

I learned the first principle of forgiveness. When you're forgiven, someone must pay. I remember a lawyer in the Mayor's Parlor in Los Angeles said to me, is that always the case? I said, what do you mean? Well, he's taking cases of slander.

Somebody slanders me, I'm forgiven, do I have to pay? I said, you ought to know that as a lawyer. When someone is slandered or libeled, you sue them for damages. That's what you have to pay, and if you forgive them, you give up those damages.

Now twenty years later, an Irish friend of mine borrowed some money from me, one hundred pounds. In those days, a pound was worth about five dollars. I said to him, I won't charge you interest, so you can skip Easter week and Christmas week.

But for fifty weeks, for two years, you'll pay me back one pound a week. He never paid a penny. He came to my birthday party and wished me many happy returns of the day.

I said, when are you going to return the cash? I bore him a grudge, but finally I decided to forgive him. But which of the two of us suffered, the sinner or the sinned against? Not the sinner, he went free. I could have

hauled him into court.

I could have had an injunction against him. I could have seized his furniture. Then he would have suffered.

But the moment I forgave him, I bore the suffering. I'm still five hundred dollars short. And that taught me the second principle of forgiveness.

The one that forgives is the one that suffers. I want to talk about this subject of forgiveness. You may say, but you're dealing with unconverted people now.

Yes, but I'm going to deal with a very important doctrine regarding revival. We'll use the blackboard or the overhead projector. And I've put here the word forgiveness, and I've written three other words.

Now, remember what I told the cowboy, and I'm going to ask a first question. On what basis does God forgive the sins of a sinner? On the basis of Calvary. I'll write the word cross.

You'll understand the blood of Christ, the sacrifice on Calvary. In other words, Christ died for us. Now, this is not only Presbyterian doctrine, but Baptist doctrine, Methodist doctrine, Congregational doctrine, Lutheran doctrine, Episcopal doctrine, yes, and Roman Catholic doctrine.

Christ died for us. We're forgiven on the basis of the cross. That's how God's able to do it.

Now, the second question is equally simple. Remember I mentioned Mickey Corn the other night, how he was sitting in front of my wife in one of the meetings of the Hollywood Christian group? Supposing he were here tonight, and he raised his hand and said, well, I have a lot of sins. How does God forgive my sins? I tell him, on the basis of the cross.

Supposing he said, I have \$350,000 stashed away where the government can't get it. I'm willing to make a substantial contribution to the church if you're going to arrange for me to be forgiven. How much does a sinner have to pay to be forgiven? What would you say? Nothing.

Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling. I had sometimes people say, my life. As if Mickey Corn said, Lord, I'll make you a deal, even, Stephen, if you forgive my sins I'll give you my life.

You think his worthless life is equal to the forgiveness of God? Not at all. So, we'll use the word nothing. The price is nothing.

Then Mickey Corn says, is there any catch to it? What do you mean? Any condition. I mean, can I go on running rackets and robbing banks and so forth? Is there any condition to it? Is there anything that we must do to be forgiven? Would you raise your hand to reply? What do we have to do? Repent. That means to change.

But it's a special kind of repentance. Repent and be converted. That means make a 180 degree turn.

If you're traveling in that direction, you travel in that direction. That's conversion. The word convert means to turn.

So although repentance is what we're after, we'll write the word conversion because this is what is expected to be done. Mickey Corn refused to do it. I talked about that already on Sunday night.

He said, I want no part of it. He wouldn't change his lifestyle. But this is the condition of forgiveness.

Now supposing a sinner refuses to turn, does he face any penalty? Could you give me one word? Death. It is appointed unto man once to die. That's the end of everything, isn't it? But after death? Ah, we'll use that word.

This is what we call the great white throne, the judgment of all. Scripture teaches clearly that all the dead, small and great, face judgment. Now observe.

A sinner is forgiven on the basis of the cross. The price is nothing. He can't buy it.

He can't earn it. He can't bargain for it. It's offered free.

But there is a condition. Repent and be converted. And if he doesn't, he faces judgment.

So far, so good. Now once at Mount Hermon, an inter-varsity girl came to me and said, I'm not sure I understand your doctrine. She said, I cheated in the last examinations at Berkeley.

I said, I'm not going to let little things like that bother me. I was converted ten years ago, and all my sins, past, present and future, were forgiven. I said, yes, and I'd like to ask you a question.

Are you going to cheat in the next examinations? She said, well, I hope it won't be necessary. I said, you mean if you get behind with your work, you're going to cheat again? I said, are my sins forgiven or are they not? She said, young lady, you're in great darkness. What do you think of the verse which says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins? She said, that's the ungodly, of course.

I said, quite the contrary. The first epistle of John was written to believers. The word we occurs fifty-three times.

The salutations make it clear, behold what love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called sons of God. Beloved, my little children, obviously the first epistle of John was written by one believer to other believers. Then she says, are you trying to tell me that my salvation depends on my confessing? I said, no, I see why you're in difficulty.

The first epistle of John was not written to tell people how to be saved, it was written to people who are saved. It doesn't deal with salvation. It deals with fellowship with God.

It's so important to know to whom something is addressed. When I was twenty years of age, I was asked to speak at a women's meeting. Frankly I was scared.

I got along right with my mother and my grandmother and my sister. But a bunch of women scared me. So I went to an old Methodist minister, a friend of mine, and I said, what would you say to a bunch of women? If you want a text? I said, yes.

He said, how about a luscious 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 good. So I worked a nice little talk on women's supreme influence with children, women's influence on menfolk, and women's responsibility to themselves. It went over like a lead balloon.

They didn't tell me it was a home for retired spinsters. And I think they were offended when I said, is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? Now if the pastor asked me to speak to the teenagers on love, courtship, and marriage, I think I could give a good talk. I proposed to the girl I married

by cable.

I was in Lapland and she was in Africa. And she sent me back a cable saying no. But it was quite a story.

I can tell you a thrilling story. I could tell you all about love, courtship, and marriage. But if the pastor asked me to speak to the young marrieds, wouldn't it be silly to talk about how to win the girl of your choice? They are married.

Now in the same way, the first epistle of John was not written to sinners to tell them how to be saved. It was written to believers who are saved. Or if there's some good Methodist here, we'll accommodate the language and say who are being saved.

Oh yes, the scripture mentions we have been saved, we are being saved, we shall be saved. All three tenses are used. So I said to this young lady, you're a great difficulty.

If we confess our sins was written to believers, but telling them how to fellowship with God. You know the verses well enough, I can quote them from memory, I'm sure you can too. It begins by saying, this is the message you have heard from Christ and proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

God does not approve of sin. If Mr. Andropov tells a lie in Moscow, the holiness of God abhors that lie. But if a member of a Baptist church in Maryland tells a lie, God doesn't like that lie any better.

God does not like sin. In him is light, no darkness at all. Then it 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? Well I illustrate from experience. I remember once my younger son, he's now a lawyer, he had been a pilot in the United States Air Force, he's taken up aviation law. But when he was four years of age, he was rude to his father 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.

Well he came back, looking up at the ceiling, he says, well everybody I'm sorry now. But he didn't look a bit sorry. I said, if you're sorry, tell your mama.

But he wouldn't. I said, if you're sorry, tell your mama. Have you ever seen a little four-year-old get stubborn? Finally I said, go back to the bedroom, you're not sorry, you're just hungry, go back.

But it doesn't take a four-year-old long to repent. He came back after a few more minutes, he went straight to his mother and 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 had been restored.

Now while he was in the bedroom he was still my son and he was still in my house and still in my care, but out of fellowship. If during his meditations in the bedroom he had come running in and said, daddy what are you going to give me for my birthday? That would have been the wrong time to have asked about it. I think I would have canceled the order.

Now in the same way when a believer, one who sincerely loves the Lord, who has turned and is walking in the heavenly direction, does something to offend God, he breaks fellowship. Just try losing your temper and then trying to pray. Then the next verse says, but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his son continues to cleanse us from all sin. What does that mean to walk in the light? There's a verse, is it Ephesians 5.13, where it says, for that which is reprov'd is made manifest by the light. You all understand that? No you don't.

That's old-fashioned English. A modern translation would be necessary to understand that light is capable of showing things up for what they really are. In 1959 the churches of Ireland asked me to come to my native land and help them celebrate the centenary of the 1859 revival.

I even preached in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. Now we were having a campaign in Dromore, County Down, in a big Presbyterian church. They wanted to go on with the meetings, but I said, I'm sorry, next week I'm going to be . . . no, excuse me, I was in Vanbridge.

I said, next week I'm going to be in Dromore. I can't be in two places at once. They said, but look, the people are so keen, we could meet at seven, and then you can go to your other campaign.

Well, I said, it's just ten miles. They said, get them to have a song service for half an hour, and we guarantee you'll be there at 8.30. So I broached this to the committee in Dromore, and they were rather pleased. As a matter of fact, it was a talking point that the people in Vanbridge would hardly let me go sort of thing.

So I used to drive after one service right over to the other one. The biggest church in town was the Second Presbyterian Church. There was a minister in clerical garb standing by the gate, waiting for me each evening.

I said, look, I've been speaking for an hour, do you think I could have a cup of coffee first? Oh, he said, my wife's in the meeting. But I said, could you make a cup of coffee? Well, he said, Nescafé. I said, that's all right.

So he says, jump in. We got into a little car. We drove up to the Presbyterian manse, and 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. But I said, hurry, we've got a meeting. Oh, he said, they've still got to sing a while, take up an offering.

So we went in the back door. You know the way in some rooms they have the light switch in the wrong place? He had to go right across the room to get to the light switch. I followed him.

He knew his own back room, but I didn't. 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, this is a strange place to park a piano, but of course, you can never tell with Presbyterians.

Well, he switched on the light, and then I thought, well, it's not a grand piano. It was a big, old-fashioned, carved dining room table. 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 for what it is. And that scripture is very clear. Light is capable of showing things up for what they really are.

The light of the scriptures, the light of the Holy Spirit, the light of prayer, the light of godly counsel. So if we walk in the light as he is the light, we do a fellowship one with the other. And it says, the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, continues to cleanse us from all sin.

Then it comes to three challenges. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar. His word is not in us. Now, I'm going to ask four more questions, and we'll take one word each time for an answer.

On what basis, I've already quoted the scripture, on what basis does God forgive the sins of a believer? Would you raise your hand to suggest? The blood of Christ, the blood of Christ, his Son, continues to cleanse us from all sin. We tend to forget that. We say at the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away.

We think of the cross as something way behind us, but every time you say, Lord forgive me for Jesus' sake, you plead the blood of the cross. That's the title of one of Andrew Murray's books, The Blood of the Cross. So I'll put in the word, cross.

How much do we pay to be forgiven? Nothing. I will heal your backsliding, I will love you freely. We don't buy it? We can't earn it? We can't bargain for it? You can't make a deal about it and say, Lord, I'll give money to the Missionary Society if you forgive me.

No, no. We're forgiven on the basis of the cross and the price is nothing. But is there any condition attached? Is there something for us to do? If we want the Lord to forgive what we've done that we shouldn't do? What are we supposed to do? Confess, yes.

Confession. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's what he expects believers to do, to confess that what they did was wrong.

You say, well, suppose we don't do it. Remember, we're not discussing salvation. We're talking about those who are saved or those who are being saved.

I don't mind where you put it. But if you want to maintain your fellowship with God, you ought to be ready to confess anything that you do that you shouldn't do. You say then, well, what will happen to me if I don't do it? You remain out of fellowship.

But you know, the scripture says, if we were to judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. It's so seldom today you ever hear anyone preach to believers on the judgment seat of Christ. As I came in from Gettysburg, where I was visiting the Lutheran seminary today, I was listening to a Christian program.

And I said to my host who was driving, you know, that's one side of the truth. You know, there's no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. That's true.

My sins are forgiven. When I stand before God, the Lord Jesus Christ will claim that I'm one of his, and I'm forgiven, I'm clear. But that has got nothing to do with fellowship.

Fellowship is for this life. And the scriptures teach that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive rewards for the deeds done in the body. Read it for yourself.

Some will receive a great reward, and some will receive no reward at all. They'll be saved by the skin of their teeth, or as it says, so as by fire. So when I write the word judgment, I'm not referring to a judgment with reference to salvation, but a judgment with reference to reward.

It's clearly taught in scripture. Now please look at this diagram for a moment. A sinner is forgiven on the basis of the cross.

You can't change that. The price is nothing. You can't buy it.

You can't bargain for it. You can't earn it. But you can repent and be converted.

That's what you're expected to do. If you don't, you face judgment. In the same way the believer is forgiven on the basis of the cross.

You can't buy it or earn it or bargain for it. It's free. But you're expected to repent.

That means to change and make confession. Now perhaps some of you have been in the military service, and you've heard a bunch of guys talking around a campfire, bragging about their sins. That's confessing, but that's not repenting.

It has to be a repentance expressed in confession. And if we refuse to do it, we suffer a judgment now. It's amazing how much the scripture requires us to judge things.

For instance, the scripture says if you deal with people in this world who are adulterers or extortioners, you're not supposed to leave this world. But if any man calls himself a brother and is an adulterer or an extortioner, don't even eat with him, because you're endorsing him. So that's the diagram.

Let me show you something else. I said there's nothing we can do about the cross. Christ has died.

We can't change the price. It's free. But we can repent and be converted.

And as far as believers are concerned, we can repent and make confession. Conversion is the key to salvation. Confession is the key to revival.

Do you remember 1970, there was a remarkable revival broke out at Asbury College? What were the students doing? At first, confessing their faults, putting things right with the faculty and with one another. Conversion is the first step in evangelism. Confession is the first step in revival.

If there's a revival, one of the first things that happens is when believers start putting things right with one another. Now let me continue a little further, because someone will say, well, to whom do we confess? When should we confess? Is it always necessary? Could it not be unwise? Well let me give you a maxim first of all. Let the circle of the sin be the circle of the confession.

If you've sinned secretly, nobody but God knows about it, you're not under obligation to put it right with anyone else but the Lord. Perhaps you could testify to someone that I promised the Lord I'd give a thousand dollars but I didn't keep my word, and only yesterday I decided I'd keep my word. That's testimony, but you don't owe that explanation to anyone.

If you've sinned privately, confess privately. Put it right with the person who's been hurt. If you've sinned openly, in other words, people know about it, put it right as far as it's known.

You say, well now you've just given us your opinion, well let me give you scripture. Leviticus 5 and 5 says, he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing. In Old Testament days, when a believer wanted to get right with God, he brought a lamb or a dove.

He laid his hand upon the head of the offering, and he confessed specifically what he had done wrong. When we sin, we sin specifically. We need to put things right specifically.

But Christians love to beat around the bush, don't they? I remember in Brazil, during the revival of 1952, which swept the evangelical community, in the Campinas Presbyterian Church, we had 6 o'clock morning prayer meetings. They were crowded out. What wonderful meetings they were.

One man got up and said, I've just had a telegram from Goiania to say that my brother-in-law, whom I thought was too hard ever to be saved, has just been converted. Graças a Deus! Glory to God. Another man got up and said, Oh God, I haven't prayed for my brother-in-law the way I should have.

And people all said, Amen, when he finished his prayer. Then a lady got up and said, I need to love people more. I said to her very gently in Portuguese, Irma, no é confissão.

That's not a confession, sister. Everybody needs to love people more. Billy Graham needs to love people more.

John Paul needs to love people more. Everybody needs to love people more. You're not really saying much when you say that.

The meeting went on for about 20 minutes, then the lady got up and said, Please pray for me. What I should have said is that God has shown me in these meetings that my tongue has caused an awful lot of trouble in this congregation. Her pastor was sitting beside me.

Do you know that pastors can talk out of the side of their mouth just like gangsters? He said to me, Now she's talking. Now she's named it. We must be specific.

You say, but supposing I don't know what's wrong? Then pray, search me, oh God, and know my heart. He'll show you. And if he doesn't show you, then there's no need to confess.

But you must be specific about it. Proverbs 28, verse 13, He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Our tendency is to cover up anything unpleasant, anything we don't like to live with.

That makes it very clear. Whoever covers his sins won't prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. I was charge clerk of an engineering shop in Ireland.

Two of the men came to blows. They didn't speak to each other for several days, until the other men ganged up on them. They said, Come on now, you've had your fight.

You're spoiling the whole atmosphere of this workshop. Come on, shake hands and apologize. And the 28 other fellows brought a certain amount of pressure on these guys, and they finally apologized, formally.

I'll apologize for what I said, and I'll apologize for what I said, and so forth. When William Buick turned away, Joe Kelly said 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. He had apologized, but he hadn't forsaken the sin.

In Mullingar, in the Republic of Ireland, there was a priest who was very popular with the people. One of his parishioners went to see him, and he said, Father, I hear you're going to Dublin tomorrow. He said, That's right, Dan.

Could I confess before you go? Well, said the priest, we have confessions on Saturday night. If it's an emergency, we decide rather you let me, Father. Well, all right, we'll go to the church.

So they went across to the church, and Dan began his confession. He said, Father, I want to confess that I stole two bags of potatoes. The priest knew the gossip of the town.

He said, Did you steal those from Mr. Riley? He said, How did you know, Father? He said, I was talking to Mr. Riley this morning, he said somebody had broken in and stolen one bag of potatoes. He said, That's right, Father, I only stole one, but it was so easy, I was going to steal the other one this evening. Now no priest is authorized to offer absolution on such terms.

You must have done with the thing that you confess. In other words, when you confess your bad temper, you mean, I won't do it again. You must repent of it.

Now, I don't know what people are like in this part of the country, but I find in California, whatever the denomination, if there's trouble in a congregation, it's generally because people who can get along with the Lord can't get along with each other. Social friction. Is there any teaching about this? Oh, yes.

Our Lord Jesus himself said, So if you're offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave the gift before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. What gift? Well, I used to think it meant like making a donation to the parsonage or giving something to the work.

No, no. This goes right back to Leviticus 5 and 5. The lamb or the dove. That's the gift.

Nowadays, we have the Lamb of God. So when you come to God and say, Lord, forgive me for Jesus' sake, but you remember that your brother has something against you, leave that business first and go and get right with your brother. 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've sinned. Your brother may not know until you admit it.

God knows whether or not you've repented. Your brother doesn't know until you say so. So the Lord says, I'll wait.

Put it right with him first. Someone might say, but suppose it's the other way around. Well, it says if your brother sins against you, go and tell him it's fault between you and him alone.

Why do you do it alone? Well, give him a chance. He might be glad to put it right, if you don't rub his nose in the dirt over the whole thing. If he won't listen, you take one or two others with you.

If he won't listen to them, tell it to the church. Now, should you get up and tell the church about it just after the response of reading? No, no, it doesn't mean that. The word church there is the word ekklesia, which means a gathering.

I would say if you're both members of the same choir, surely there's enough spirituality in the choir to help settle your little difficulties. If you're both members of the same minister's association, surely there's enough spirituality among your brethren to help you settle a difficulty in the ministry. Then it says, if he won't listen to the church, treat him like a heathen or a tax collector.

A big Irishman in Toronto said to me, that means you give him one, two, three chances, and if he won't take it, then you can really take him to town. I said, no, no. Supposing you meet a Chinese, and he says, good morning.

Do you say to him, are you American Baptist, Southern Baptist, General Baptist, regular Baptist, or what kind of Baptist are you? No, no, it's got nothing to do with that. He's your neighbor. Treat him like a tax collector.

How do you treat the IRS? Pay all of them their due. Don't try to get your own back. Pay your due.

But don't treat him as a brother anymore. If he won't behave like a brother, you're not compelled to confide in him anymore. He's out of fellowship with you.

You can always say, I remain open for reconciliation. Now, these are rules. I've mentioned, given by the Lord Jesus.

But the one that ties them together is, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. You say, was there any place for this, for open confession? Think of James, chapter 5, verse 16. Therefore confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that you may be delivered.

The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. That's open confession. Confess your faults one to one other.

Doesn't say that in the Greek. In the Greek, it's a peculiar Greek construction. It says, confess your faults among yourselves.

Actually, it's in the verb. Share your faults and pray for one another that you may be delivered. You say, couldn't that lead to scandal? Not if you take the scripture to heart.

What's your object? You say, to be delivered. Supposing you've got a bad temper. Now, I'm Irish.

What are the Irish noted for? Good humor. And bad temper. I had my share of both.

I remember trying to commit suicide at the age of 11. Mother thrashed me. I thought, they don't appreciate me around here.

I'll throw myself in the river. In my imagination, I could see the headlines in the paper. Boy's body found in river.

Home difficulties. I thought, they won't treat me like that again. So, I went down to the river to commit suicide.

It was all over some trivial little affair. 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.

You know, I tell people out in California. I've known of people to end it all by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. I've never heard of anyone committing suicide in Lake Superior at Duluth.

You confess in order to be delivered. How much then should you confess? Just enough to get people to pray for you. Therefore, if you've got a bad temper.

You can stand up and say, please pray for me. I do want to witness for Christ. But my bad temper has really hindered my testimony at work.

And we can pray for you. But you don't need to say, my wife and I had a big row yesterday. And she said to me, and I said to her, and so forth.

Go and put that right with her. So, I say, let the circle of the sin be the circle of the confession. Now, if this is true regarding ordinary social affairs.

It's ten times more true regarding matters of sex. If I were to say, in the first two weeks of April. Please pray for me.

Maybe I've not always been completely honest in my income tax return. That might have a salutary effect on anyone who's preparing his income tax return. But if I said, please pray for me.

I have discovered a fail-safe method of cheating the income tax. They couldn't possibly discover it. Let me tell you how it works.

I have now presented you with a temptation. Not a request for prayer. And because we're all male or female.

Because we all have glands. Details of sex are tempting. Even to people who consider themselves far removed from such temptation.

Even some who tut-tut over things. They can still get a bit of a kick about hearing them. Therefore, the scripture says, let not fornication be even named among you as it becometh saints.

I would say to someone here with a sex problem. Go and seek out someone, preferably of your own sex. Preferably an older person.

Ask their counsel. I heard John Stott at Fuller, a couple of years ago, speaking on Titus. Where it says, teach the older men to be sober.

And so on. To be an example to the younger men. Teach the young men, thus and so.

Teach the older women not to be gossips, not to be given to whine. That they may teach the younger women. And John Stott said, hitting them right between the eyes.

Those young theological students. It says nothing, brother, about you counseling girls. I had a good friend in the ministry.

But I knew his weakness. Even in evangelism. If you wanted to find him after a meeting, you looked for the prettiest girl who had waited behind.

He was counseling her. I say, leave that to the older sisters. We ought to have people trained for that.

Because human nature is very deceitful. Very deceitful. Now, how do we sum it all up? How does an unconverted sinner find forgiveness? He must repent and be converted.

How does a believer restore fellowship with God? He must repent and make confession where necessary. But he'll get more than forgiveness. If we confess our sins, there they are.

He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins, there they're gone. But the verse isn't finished. And cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Your car won't go. You suspect it's the carburetor. You get somebody to push you into the garage.

The mechanic says, I'm too busy this morning, I'll call you later. He calls you in the afternoon. He says, your carburetor was very dirty.

I've boiled it out. But by the way, when did you have your points replaced? What mileage are you getting? You've got dirty points. You need new spark plugs.

Your right rear tire is about to blow out. You want me to go ahead with the job? You took it in just to have the little carburetor fixed. But you get an overhaul instead.

And I find in times of revival, when Christians humble themselves enough to put right what's been bugging them, the Lord says, now that I've got you here on your knees, I'm going to do a lot more for you. That's revival. And that's how it comes about.

Let us stand for prayer. Let us all pray. You're here because you do have a concern about a great revival in the United States.

Now are you willing to pray? Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any grieving way in me.

Then lead me in the eternal way. Purge me and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Then shall I teach transgressors thy ways. Then shall sinners be converted unto thee.

Lord, send a great awakening to this nation. Send a great revival to all who name the name of Christ. Lord, begin in me.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be our portion, now and always. Amen.

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