

# Confession And Absolution

by Thaddeus Barnum

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of coming out of the darkness and into the light of Jesus, highlighting the need for confession, repentance, and the freedom found in Christ. It discusses the power of the Holy Spirit to convict, reveal, and bring transformation, urging listeners to break free from isolation and secrecy. The message focuses on the invitation to walk in the light, have fellowship with God and others, and experience the cleansing power of Jesus' blood.*

**Scripture:** 1 John 1:5, John 3:19, 2 Corinthians 4:3, Ephesians 1:17, Romans 10:17, Psalms 32:3, Proverbs 28:13, Hebrews 4:12, John 8:12, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Coming into the Light", "Freedom in Christ"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Would you, would you pray with me? Holy Spirit, we have just sung the song of inviting you here with us. The honor of your presence, your heart always to bear witness and to glorify Jesus, whose heart is always to bear glory and honor, Father, to you. Would you help us not distance ourselves from you? Would you help us invite you not on our terms, on your terms? Would you meet with us? Would you dine with us? Would you be with us? You are our longing and you are our heart.

No matter what the circumstances are right now that are so heavy upon us, your invitation, come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden. And so we come into your holy presence, meet with us as we pray this Lord Jesus in your most blessed name, amen. So, we don't really use this word in our language, liturgy.

Try to use it five times this week and it's yours. Liturgy is everywhere. All it means, it's real simple, there's a beginning, there's an end and there's movement and order between.

The first liturgy ever, Genesis 1, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And then there came a day he rested and in between, wow. It's called liturgy, it's called order, it's called movement.

Every time you have a business meeting and an agenda hits, every time you go to a play to a concert, every time you go to a sporting event, every time we do anything where there's a beginning, there's an end and there's a middle, you've got liturgy. That's all. I don't want you to be scared of the word as if it's a kind of a thing that special churches do.

The liturgy I want to appeal to most image wise is the imagery of a restaurant. When you go with somebody you love and you just want to spend time with them. You just want time, that meeting of hearts, that ability to listen and hear.

The job of the restaurateur and all those serving is to facilitate that event. The ambience, the food, all of that plays a part, yes, 100%, but the design of it is to come that this relationship might come alive. That something special happen between you and the one you love and the one you love and you.

In the scriptures it's called reclining at table. It's why Jesus in Revelation 3.20 says the word, behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him and he with me, dine, dine.

It is the entirety of the hearts of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in perfect communion, in perfect relationship. And when they made us in his image, they made us in relationship. We were designed in relationship.

And that's why the appeal of our text, 1 John 1.5-7, if you've got your Bible, stop looking at me. If you've got your Bibles, 1.5-7, what you've got here in this text is an invitation. Invitation.

And that invitation, especially summarized in verse seven, if we walk in the light, but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with him. We have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin. The invitation is walk in the light.

And so verse five begins this passage. This is the message we have heard from him and announced to you, proclaim to you, that God is light. In him there is no darkness at all.

And we know that. We know that from the very beginning of creation, when the Lord God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was formless and void and the darkness was over the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the surface of the deep. And God said, let there be light.

Just as Jesus himself said, I am the light of the world. This is the message that we proclaim. I am, Jesus said, the light of the world.

He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The invitation is come into this meeting, come, dine with him. And you, him, him, you meet with him.

Verse six is the tricky part. Verse six says, if we say we have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, if we say we have fellowship with him, and this is called image-making, because I want you to see who I want you to see, so you like who you see, because I don't want you to see me. It's called image-making.

So if we say we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie and the truth is not in us. We lie and do not practice the truth. But if you walk in the light, and that's the invitation.

But I want to suggest to you this morning, coming out of the dark isn't easy. We are designed in our sin to stay in the dark. Revivals were born on that text.

In the 1930s, the East African revival was born on this text, humility, repentance, walk in the light. It was born on this. The preachers would come up, the revivalist preachers would come up, and they would begin to cry out, and the spirit of God, that makes the difference.

The spirit of God, he moved upon the word of God, come out from the dark. Come out, hide no more, come out from the dark. Walk in the light as he himself is in the light, and you'll have fellowship with one another.

The blood of Jesus, the lamb of God, come, come, and the revival was born. The East Africans who came to faith, this born-again, saving, resurrected, alive faith were called the balakole, the awakened. They had come out of the dark, and the light shone, and revival was born.

I long for those days. I long for those days in our country. I long for those days in our nation, in our world.

I long for those who are hiding in the dark to be able to see the light of life. Jesus our Lord, that's what revivalists have always preached, Jesus our Lord. And that's why what I suggest to you is that when we come talk today, and in this series on liturgy, no, this is coming out of a world that's in chaos right this moment, and coming with all that's going on in our darkened worlds, and walking into a place like this, and honor begins, the worship begins, eyes off of you, eyes upon him, eyes off the dark, eyes upon Jesus.

Come, come, come, the prayers, they begin to set the tone for us. And then the hearing of the word, and the preaching of the word, and the praying of the word, that our eyes begin to behold the Lamb of God. There's nothing like it, when in the preaching of the word, Jesus Christ is lifted up, and you begin to meet with him, you begin to hear from him, he's speaking to you, no, no, the preacher, whatever, it's not the preacher, no, no, because you start seeing the one who stands in front of his word.

You begin to behold him, you begin to behold his glory, you begin to see, and he's speaking with you. Hebrews, chapter something, Hebrews, it's in the Bible, Hebrews in chapter four, Hebrews in chapter four, stop looking at me, Hebrews in chapter four, there it is, Hebrews in chapter four, this is what happens when the spirit of God begins to move in the word of God. Verse 12, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of your heart, of the heart, he sees you, it begins to pierce you.

And then verse 13, as it follows, nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. We just prayed it in our liturgy.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, from you no secrets are hid. What does that mean? I know we say it, but does that scare you? I want it to scare you. This passage that we're looking at in verse seven of first John chapter one, if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, has a derivative imagery back in Old Testament, back in Genesis, when sin first entered into the world through one man, Romans 5, 12 teaches, through one man, sin entered into the world and death through sin.

And the moment sin entered into the world, the moment, the moment they were changed, the cataclysmic change in the very being and structure and composite of the person, once immortal, now mortal, once in the image of God, now in the shattered image of God, immediately when sin began to take hold of the

soul, break happened, relationship divided, first between the man and the woman hide behind fig leaves, then behind trees, when the Lord God came in the midst and then betraying themselves, because the first thing that happened is that Adam, who could not take responsibility, immediately blamed. It's what sin does. It's never my fault.

I will defend myself, justify myself, protect myself and blame. It's the woman. It's always a woman.

You gave me her, your fault, your fault. I'm just a victim. And so we hide, betraying the love we have for the Lord by blaming the love we have for our honored wife, blaming, betraying ourselves.

It's just relationships divide and break. It's what sin does. We hide, we have dark corners.

I want you not to see me. This is why Jesus would say it in this way in John 3, 19 and 20, John, the gospel, chapter three, 19 and 20. This is the judgment.

The light has come into the world. And men love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. And everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come into the light lest his deeds be exposed.

You see, there's a fear in this passage. Come, come out of the dark. Come, come out of the dark.

Don't, don't stay. Come out of the dark. If you walk in the light as he himself is in light, come.

Not only does sin keep us hiding, but we also have an adversary who keeps us hiding. Did you know that? The devil also does this. He also works against us to keep us in hiding.

There's a power that keeps us in darkness. Listen to how it said in second Corinthians chapter four, verses three and four, where the apostle says, even if our gospel is veiled, it's veiled to those who are perishing in whose case the God of this world, Satan, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving. So they may not be able to see the lights of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

He blinds our eyes. He deafens our ears and he steals our hearts so that we don't come into this relationship. He's got power.

He is the one who isolates us, the lost sheep and gives that lost sheep this unusual confidence that no matter what happens in the world, I can make it. I can make it on my own. I don't need anybody.

I can handle all things myself. That's what the devil does. He isolates.

Just like you see it on National Geographic when you see all the herd of animals and the predators come and all of a sudden they find one that's weak and they divide it off. They isolate. They divide.

They isolate. They circle. They taunt and taunt and mock and then they destroy.

It all happens when we keep to ourselves and walk alone, hiding things in the dark. And what we need is intervention. We need revelation.

We need the Lord to do what only he can do. The prayer, Paul prays, Ephesians 1, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him. This is why Paul said when the devil blinds us from the light of the gospel, what we do, chapter 5, 2 Corinthians 4, 5, what we do is we preach Jesus Christ as Lord.

That's what we do. That may sound like not the right antidote, but I'm telling you something happens to the soul when we preach Jesus Christ as Lord in the power of God, the Holy Spirit. Something happens.

I can't explain it. The Bible says in Romans 10, 17, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of Christ. Something dawns on the soul.

It breaks into the soul. He's speaking to you. That's what happens.

The Holy Spirit makes his word so alive that you realize he's not just talking to us or hearing something academic, conceptual. He's piercing the soul. He's speaking to me.

And what we know is this, he sees us. When somebody sees us, it is kind of a two things. It's on the one hand, it's what we've been longing for.

On the other hand, it's what we've been hating. We don't want really somebody to see us, not the real us. We don't want that to happen, but we also don't feel seen.

We don't feel loved. We don't feel cared for. I don't have to tell you this, but we live in a world where people are hiding, longing to be seen.

Just the sound a few minutes ago, there are foster children who are seeking to be seen. Come, come, listen. There are foster children needing to be seen.

Come to the well, come to those who are poor and don't have, they're not seen. There are places all over the world where people are isolated and marginalized and pushed down. There's all kinds of divisions in our culture of people who have and people who have not, and all the talk we've got of our divisions because people don't feel seen.

But when that happens, something special happens. I always go back in my mind to that moment that Jesus saw the woman at the well, this woman of ill reputation, a Samaritan woman, an immoral woman, a woman who went to the well by herself, and yet Jesus saw her and she saw him seeing her. He not only sees us, he knows us.

Dear woman, go call your husband. The woman at the well said, I have no husband. And Jesus said, you've had five, and the one that you have now isn't your husband.

He knows us. You might not want him to know you. And you might think you've got the charade with everybody else.

You don't have it with him. You don't have it with him. He doesn't go, oh, I didn't know that.

Oh, oh, that's news for me. Thank you for sharing. Peter, I know you and I see you.

And before the night is out, you're going to deny me three times. Peter, no, you're not. I am not doing that.

And when the rooster crowed, did you catch that in the gospel of Luke? It's the only time it's mentioned in the gospel of Luke here. When the rooster crowed, Jesus turned and looked at Peter. And Peter saw Jesus looking at him, and he went out to weep.

In the scriptures, this is called the conviction of sin. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is what he does.

John chapter 16, verse 7, Jesus said, when he comes, when the helper comes, he will convict the world concerning sin. And righteousness and judgment. This is what he does.

He convicts us. He arrests us. And we are known.

It's in the preaching of the word of God on the day of Pentecost, as Peter lifted up Jesus and the Holy Spirit ministered to the crowd that the people came up and said, we are cut to the heart. That's what conviction is, cut to the heart. This movement, cut to the heart.

That's what happens to the soul. And right there, I have to say to you, we're between two things, because it is our greatest fear, our greatest fear, not our greatest. I think death is the greatest fear, but it is one of the greatest fears we have is that somebody will see us and somebody will know us.

And what we will feel is our guilt. We'll feel fear. We'll feel shame.

And all we're going to get is rejection again. Isolation again, pushed aside, laughed at again. We have a choice.

We either hate the light, squash it, act like it never happened, push it away and run back into our darkness. Or this conviction leads us to confession. It leads us to saying, Lord, you see me, you know me.

I'm not running anymore. Everything inside of us wants to go back to the dark. Everything inside of us wants to go back to the dark.

We're going to come and confess. Listen to Psalm 32 verses three and following. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away.

No doubt this is written in a time when David had that piercing conviction from Nathan of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. That whole story. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away.

So am I groaning all day long. For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Selah. I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

There it is to acknowledge it and to confess it. And you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Again, Proverbs chapter 28, verse 13.

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper. But he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. And that's the joy of it.

We have got an avenue of confession. We can come and speak it and we speak it on two platforms. The we and the I. First John chapter one, verse nine.

If we confess our sins, there's that public confession. We do it together. We do it as a body of people.

Each of us knowing us, knowing us as a people and knowing us individually. We confess our sins before the Lord. It's also private and you see that in chapter two and verse two.

But if anyone does sin, if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And this is where the glory and the thunder of the gospel comes to us. And it is just that dear friends.

Oh, but if we could hear it, listen to this. This is the glory and the thunder of this gospel that we preach. When he sees us, when he knows us, he does not turn away from us.

Can you imagine? He doesn't turn away. He doesn't reject us. This is what I say.

This is the word of the Lord to us. Come out from behind your tree because there's another tree to cling to. There's another tree to cling to that tree of Calvary's Hill, where the Lamb of God went to take our sins upon him, bear our sins.

The punishment that was due us was upon him and by his wounds, we are healed. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. You see, this is the point.

He not only sees us and knows us, he loves us and he's come to change us. He wants us to hear that sound of 2 Corinthians 4, 6, for God who said, light shall shine out of darkness is the one who has shown in our hearts to give the light to the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of his son, Jesus. He spoke to our hearts.

He wants that light in our hearts. And that's why the absolution piece of this is so beautiful. It's so beautiful because what you're hearing is this.

Dear friends, as you repent of your sin, there is forgiveness found in Jesus. We have no one else to teach about. No one else to speak about.

No one else to preach about. It is just Jesus, our Lord. He is the one who comes.

He's the one who rescues. He's the one who heals. He's the one who doesn't reject us.

He's the one who comes to save us. Oh, thank you, Jesus. This is the gift that he comes with the absolution to be able to say, you are accepted.

The veil is rent. I have come to bring you to my father because I am the way. This is his longing that we might come have fellowship and be accepted and be forgiven.

And the absolution declares it. In Jesus, we are forgiven. And this transaction happens to the soul.

A transaction that's deep inside of us that comes from his heart to your heart. This movement of him that suddenly we know it's ours. For when the sun sets us free, when the sun sets us free, when the sun sets us free, we are free.

We are free. There's no reason to hide in the darkness. I don't know what's going on in your world.

But all of us, all of us have got this secret place that's inside of us. And it's hurting us. There's not a generation since the days of Calvary and Easter morning that this message of first John has not been preached.

And it's not brought revival to the land. Come out of your dark into the light. Confess your sins.

Break from the habits that have so bound you. Come break. There's forgiveness found with the lamb.

That message of this freedom, this new born again life has been preached for 2000 years. But our generation, our generation has got a difference to it. There's something about the dark that is deeper.

Jesus said in the last times lawlessness will be increased and the love of many will grow cold. And many of us now have these little things in our hands, these things in our hands. Some of them have little apples bitten, which I think is very significant because it's an invitation for so many to go into the dark.

I am so tired of watching our teenagers suffer in the dark. I was talking to a pastor this week in New York City. And his daughter, his teenage daughter came to her mother and father and said, I'm in trouble.

I need to see a counselor. I need help. When I heard those words, I just, tears just began to come because I serve pastors whose children didn't say that and perished in the dark.

No one is to walk alone. This is what Satan does to us. He isolates us.

We think in that isolation, we've got control. We don't. We think of that isolation as long as nobody knows, even our spouses may not know.

Even though those most closest to us won't know because it's hiding inside of you. That's what Satan does. He wants you to hide the secrets, the secrets.

Nobody has to know. Nobody has to see your shame. Nobody has to know your guilt.

Nobody has to know you. Hide it, cover it over, makeup, facelift, present your image to the world. Nobody will see.

It's poison to the soul. It's poison. Too many are walking in the dark.

I deal with too many who are in the dark. And I'll tell you when freedom begins, when suddenly they have the ability to confess it. And if you confess it, you've got to find somebody safe to confess.

Somebody safe. Say the word safe. I'm so sorry to do that.

Preachers do that. It's boring. It's just, I can't stand it.

But I couldn't have you miss it because there are people in our world that are not safe to us. They're just not. You've got to go to somebody safe and share it.

We've got to end the tyranny in people's hearts. We just have to. This generation is being sucked dry by sensuality and immorality and things that should not be done.

No, no, should not be done. And especially when there is freedom possible. When the spirit of God has come to set us free in Jesus, our Lord, and cleanse us and wash and heal us and make us new.

And that is why we've got liturgy. You thought I'd never get there, but I did. And I'll tell you why I did.

Because you've just come off the streets of this world. You've gone through the culture. You know what's going on and you know the secrets.

And there David comes up with a band and we begin to worship. Eyes off of us, eyes on to the Lord. And we sing together.

We process. We come into the presence of the Lord by his invitation. And we begin to hear the prayers, set the tone.

And then we come, Holy Spirit, open your word. We've come to see Jesus. He's our only hope in this life.

And can you imagine it? That when he moves upon us and showers his love upon us, that you and I can come and know. I mean, know, know inside of us, deep inside of us. We are loved.

We are seen. We are new in Jesus, born again to new life. And we can come now because we have peace with God and have peace together in fellowship and share the peace.

And we can come to the table and dine with each other and dine with him and he with us. And then you and I can go back out in the world and see with new eyes those who are not seen and bring them to the one who can see, who does know and who has come to save. Stop it.

Stop living in the dark today. Come out of the dark. Your savior waits.

Walk in the light as he himself is in the light. Have fellowship with one another. Let the blood of Jesus cleanse you.

So just now, I'm just gonna ask the Holy Spirit just to continue. Just bow your heads. Just gonna have a moment of quiet before the prayers of the people.

Oh, would you invite the Holy Spirit to do what only he can do. Prepare your hearts to make confession. Don't hide from the light.

Come into the light. To Jesus, the lamb of God.

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