

Our Trust is in Jesus

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- [0 : 00] Let's turn to God's Word to 1 John chapter 1. 1 John chapter 1. 1 John chapter 1 and reading from the beginning through to chapter 2 verse 2.
- Let's hear the Word of God. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.
- The life appeared, we have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.
- We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.
- We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you. God is light.
- [1 : 17] In him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.
- 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, purifies us from all sin.
- If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.
- If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.
- But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense. Jesus Christ, the righteous one.
- [2 : 33] He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.
- Amen. May God bless his holy and inspired word. Please turn to 1 John chapter 1.
- Let's turn back to 1 John chapter 1. And looking in particular at verses 8 to 10.
- And I want to begin with the question this morning, When was the last time that you said sorry to someone for something that you had done wrong?
- When was the last time you said those words, I'm sorry? Or I could ask another question. When was the last time that you said sorry to God?
- [3 : 32] Probably you said those words to God more recently than someone else. But the point is we don't always find confessing easy, whether it's to other people or whether it's to God himself.
- We don't find confessing our sins easy. But here in 1 John 1 verse 9, we have one of the clearest and most beautiful promises in all the Bible.
- That if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

In some ways, this beautiful promise seems too good to be true. It's such a wonderful statement of Scripture. And you could think, well, is there a catch?

And there is no catch. There is a condition though. There's a condition in the verse. It is for those who confess their sins to God who find forgiveness.

[4 : 44] That is the condition. And so, as God's people, as Christians, we are those who go back to God again and again and again, hopefully every day, confessing our sins to him.

There's a visual picture of that in John 13 as Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. But after those feet have been washed, the disciples will go back out into the world again and walk around Jerusalem and their feet will get dirty again.

And they will need to wash their feet again and again every day. And so, it is spiritually that we as Christians, we come to God, we ask him to forgive us, and as it were, he washes our feet.

But we have to go back time and time again because as we walk through life, we do lots of things and think and say lots of things that we ought not to do.

But before John in this passage before us deals with confession, he deals with denial in verse 8.

[6 : 00] Denial. And what I want us to do is think about a set of traffic lights this morning. Perhaps because as we were trying to park, we couldn't turn in to get closer to Beclue because of the roadworks, as James mentioned, and because of all the no-right turns, and because of all the blocked-off roads for the marathon, and all these reasons that I was looking a lot at traffic lights this morning.

And as we know, the colors of traffic lights, red, amber, and green. And those are our three points this morning, red, amber, and green.

So, as we begin, point one is red. And as we know, red means stop. Stop making excuses. Stop making excuses.

Verse 8. John 1, verse 8. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

In John's day, there were those, the Gnostics, who claimed that they did not sin. It didn't matter to them what they did in their bodies.

[7 : 21] They thought that was of no consequence. And so, they were in effect saying that they did not sin. They were claiming to be without sin.

That was a long time ago. But today, in 2018, there are many who claim in different ways to be without sin.

And I just want to unpack that for a few moments just now. In what ways today can people, including ourselves, claim to be without sin?

Because verse 8 says we can deceive ourselves. And the first way we can do that, I want to call the blame game.

We blame other people. You could call this Adam and Eve syndrome because it's been going on since Genesis chapter 3, since the very beginning.

[8 : 19] Genesis 3, 12. The man said to the woman, after both Adam and Eve had sinned against the Lord, the Lord speaks to Adam. And what does he say?

The man said, the woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it. So, Adam blames Eve.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done? The woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. And we're all good at that. Even whether you're a Christian or not, here this morning, there is something within us that rather than admit our own wrongdoing, because of our pride, we can blame someone else.

It's not my fault I'm living this way. It was my parents. It's because they brought me up like this. And we blame our parents. Or yes, I lost my temper.

But it's not my fault. You provoked me. It was what you did that resulted in me. What else could I do but lose my temper? And so, we blame someone else.

[9 : 33] And it's true that as human beings, we all have this propensity that we can see other people's sin very clearly. It's in sharp focus.

We have 20-20 vision when it comes to the sin in other people. But often, we have a great blind spot when it comes to seeing the sin in our own hearts, including myself.

We all have those blind spots. We just don't always see the sin in our lives. And we can deceive ourselves in that way.

As well as blaming other people, we can blame other things. That's another way to do it. So, nowadays, sin is no longer the wrong things that people do.

But sin is an internal weakness that we just can't help. So, we blame our genes. Or perhaps sin is a result of external forces outside our control.

[10 : 35] We just can't help it. And that's our environment. So, I might have a terrible temper. And it's just because I've got red hair.

And that's why I've got a fiery temper. It's my genes. Or it's because I grew up in Cumbernauld. What do you expect? And I blame my circumstances.

Leon Morris says this. Modern fallacies claim that sin is a disease or a weakness. Something due to hereditary or environment.

Necessity or the like. People come to regard sin as their fate, not their fault. Such people deceive themselves.

And so, we are part of a culture these days where we don't even like to use the word sin anymore. And many people would say, there's no such thing as sin.

[11 : 34] And so, we deceive ourselves. Or we can deceive ourselves another way, not just by blaming others or other things. But we can think of ourselves more highly than we ought.

We can have an inflated opinion of ourselves. We see that in the Bible in the rich young man where Jesus brings before him the commandments, the Ten Commandments.

And these commandments should make us conscious of our own sin. They should operate like that when we even hear the Ten Commandments read. We should be thinking, these are like an x-ray exposing the gunk and garbage in our hearts.

But what does the rich young man say? He says, all these I have kept since a boy. He has that blind spot.

He thinks more highly of himself than he ought to. Even over the last few weeks as I've been speaking with people in Fife, I remember visiting an elderly lady and we were talking about the things of salvation.

[12 : 52] She's heard the gospel for over 60 years. But she still thinks she is a good person. And she said to me quite openly, I don't swear.

I've never really done that. And I've always brought up my children the best that I can. And all these things are good. But she has a blind spot to the fact that she has done many wrong things in her life.

Ordinary people. And yet they just can't see. And we can't see without God. Without God's spirit at work, we can't see our great need of salvation.

Or a man in a shop I was speaking to who I've known for quite a number of years. And he opened up and started talking about all these wrong things he'd been doing in his life.

I won't go into details. But then immediately he started almost justifying these things by saying, But I do this and I do that and I'm kind to people and I help people.

[13 : 59] And as if one would wipe out all the other sins that he had committed. And so within us all, sometimes we think we're much better than we actually are.

Another woman whose life was falling apart. And yet she kept saying how good a person that she was. So we can have an inflated opinion of ourselves.

And finally, another way we can make excuses and deceive ourselves is by no longer calling sin, sin. We no longer call sin, sin.

I came across an interesting quote from David Jackman. He says, It happens all the time in our culture and in the church. Adultery is called having an affair.

Theft is helping myself to perks. Selfishness is standing up for my rights. The last thing, says Jackman, the last thing we human beings will admit is that we sin.

[15 : 05] So euphemisms is another way of explaining away sin and covering sin in a wrong way. Other euphemisms include pro-choice, termination, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, living together.

And so we try to sanitize, if you like, the sinfulness of sin in the language that we use. Let's go back to the traffic lights.

Red. Stop making excuses. Don't claim to be without sin. Don't deceive yourself.

Well, the Bible clearly says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Perhaps some of you here aren't Christians yet. And maybe you think, well, I'm quite a good person. I have not done too many wrong things.

[16 : 10] I'm not as bad as he is or she is. And while God would say from his word to you today, well, you're deceiving yourself. You've lost touch with reality.

Because the reality is that all have sinned. And we're all sinners in God's sight. As Jesus said, out of the heart comes all kinds of evil.

Not only that, but if we look at our passage in verse 10, God says to us here that if we claim we have not sinned, we're making God out to be a liar.

Because God says, I've given you my laws. Of course you break them every day. Are you calling me a liar? Are you saying that you're not a sinner? That you don't need me?

And so the Bible very clearly says, don't deceive yourselves. Don't think of yourselves more highly than you ought. Don't think, I'm a good person. Stop making excuses.

[17 : 15] Don't blame someone else. But own up to the fact that we all have sinned. And if we claim to be without sin, and if we deceive ourselves, we're making God out to be a liar.

And we're mocking what Jesus has done on the cross. Because we know, and we've been singing this morning very clearly in the hymns, that the blood of Jesus was shed so that sinners could be wiped clean of all their sins.

And if you say, well, I don't need Jesus, you're basically saying to God, Jesus didn't need to do that for me. I don't need your salvation. And that also is a terrible thing.

So the first point is red. Stop making excuses. Then we'll move to the next color. And it gets more positive.

Even when you're at traffic lights, you like to see the amber. So let's move on to amber. And amber, of course, means get ready. Instead of deceiving yourself, instead of making excuses, get ready to confess your sins to God.

[18 : 24] Verse 9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

So instead of denying that you have so many wrong things in your heart, confess. That is a much better pathway.

The pathway of denial leads to hell. It leads to lostness. But God says here, rather, confess your sin.

Remember in the lost son, the parable of the prodigal or the lost son, he has that amber moment, doesn't he?

Because he's there feeding the pigs and the penny drops. God is working and he realizes, I have sinned against heaven, against God and against my father.

[19 : 24] I'll go back. He's stirring within himself. He's coming to that point of confession. And he wants to go back and confess his sins to his father.

And that's exactly what he has done. And it is amazing, isn't it, that the simple fact that whenever we sin, we always sin against God.

So if we lose our temper with someone, we're sinning against that person, but also against God because it's his commands we're breaking. Or if we tell a lie, or if we have a lustful thought, all these things, we are always sinning against God because it's God who makes the rules.

Well, let's look at this word confession and what does that word confession mean? We use it a lot. We need to confess our sins. And literally, this word means to say the same thing as God does about our evil.

To say the same thing as God says about our evil. To agree with God. And that's what confession is. And so if we're feeling proud, we come and we confess that to God and we say, yes, this is wrong.

[20 : 46] You say it's wrong, God, and I agree with you. I'm confessing it to you because I know that you're right, Lord. This is wrong. So confession means to say the same thing as God about our sin.

Who decides what's right and wrong, of course, is God. This is God's world. He makes the rules. He sets the parameters. He tells us what's right and what's wrong.

And he is the one to judge that. 1 John 3 verse 4. Sin is lawlessness. What is God's attitude to sin?

Very briefly, even reading through the children's Bible with my children recently, it's so clear what God's attitude to sin is.

Because as Adam and Eve rebel, they're thrust out of the Garden of Eden. Or you come to Genesis 6, which isn't in the children's Bible about lifespan, but lifespans reduced to 120 years.

[21 : 55] That's what God thinks about sin. Or then we come to Noah and the ark and the flood. That's what God thinks about sin. He judges sin. He will punish sin.

Then there's Genesis 11 and the Tower of Babel. And God scatters the people and confuses their language. And so we know God's attitude to sin is that it's very serious indeed.

And he cannot and will not leave sin unpunished. Genesis screams that at us as we read through the first book of the Bible.

It tells us again and again, sin is serious. My sin is very serious. Your sin is very serious. And so this is why we mustn't be casual or flippant about our sin.

We see in verse 9. If we confess our sins. And this is written in the present tense.

[23 : 01] This is something we should habitually do. We shouldn't be just confessing our sins to God once in a blue moon, once in a while, once a week.

No. This is a mindset we need to have continually that we apologize to God day by day. That we run from sin, flee from sin.

And that every day we confess to God our pride, our jealousy, our greed, our selfishness. We confess these things to God. If, verse 9, we confess our sins.

Not just sin, singular, sin plural. All our sins. And so to be practical, it's very good for us. Just to go over this basic point, it's very good for us.

Especially at night time, as we pray, to be very specific in our apologies to God our Father. So easy just to tag it on the end of our prayers.

[24 : 03] Forgive me my sin, Lord. Amen. And that's it. And we're not really thinking about how we've offended God that day. So let me encourage you, even though it's a basic thing, let me encourage you to go back to these basics.

And as we pray prayers of confession, to be really specific. So that we can pray, Lord, I've lost my temper with my wife or my husband today, and I shouldn't have.

Lord, I'm sorry for that. Or I was embarrassed to share my faith today. Father, forgive me for that. Or Lord, I know that I've just been so caught up in finance and money and not really thinking about your kingdom.

Or my heart, Lord, it's lukewarm to you. Forgive me for that. We need to be specific as we confess our sin.

So amber is get ready. Get ready to confess your sin. Are you ready to do that? Are you ready to confess, to say the same as God says about your sin?

[25 : 15] Again, perhaps you're not yet a Christian here today. Will you go to God and say the same thing about sin as he says?

Will you confess your sin to him today? Will you swallow your pride and not think that you're a good person, but admit that you are in great need of God's forgiveness because you've broken his rules?

So red is stop. Stop making excuses. Don't deceive yourself. Amber is get ready. Get ready to confess your sin to God.

And green, of course, is go. Our favorite color in the traffic light. Sequence. Green is go. Go where? Go to God.

Go to God. And what happens when we do that? We receive forgiveness and cleansing. Verse 9.

[26 : 22] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

What a thrill. What a thrill to sing the hymn that it's the blood of Jesus that washes us as white as the snow. What an astonishing, astounding fact that as Christians, God views us as white as the snow.

It is a wonderful, wonderful promise that we have here in 1 John 1 verse 9 that we can go to our Father in heaven and we can unburden ourselves.

We can take that burden of guilt off our shoulders and lay it at the cross and find forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Why will God forgive us? Why is God, if he's so just and if he hates sin and if sin must be punished, why is it that God is able to forgive us?

[27 : 30] And we're told in verse 7, because the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

And it's so wonderful to sing in the Psalms and in the hymns, in both. We have really focused this morning on the cleansing which comes from the blood of Jesus Christ.

He forgives our sins. Our sins are so many. They're like that massive, enormous debt that we can never begin to pay off.

And yet God in Christ cancels the debt. He wipes out the whole thing. Such is his grace. Such is his love.

He says, I will forgive your sins. And I will purify you from all unrighteousness. That unrighteousness which is like filthy garments, clothes that are so stained and awful and ugly.

[28 : 40] And we can't get rid of the stains. We can't wash them away ourselves. And yet God is offering us this green light. He's saying, He's saying, Come to me and my blood will wash your clothes clean so that they will be as white as the snow.

I will remove the stains from your life. If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.

And purify us from all unrighteousness. All of it. Not just some of the sins that you have done and that I have done.

But even the greatest of sins. The things you are most ashamed of in your lives. God says, I will forgive you these things.

All of it. I love the hymn. It is well with my soul. And I particularly love the lines. My sin. Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought.

[29 : 50] My sin. Not in part. But the whole is nailed to the cross. And I bear it no more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Oh, my soul. And so, in a short time, we'll be having bread and wine together. And as we break bread together and remember the body broken for us and the blood shed for us.

Let's remember the freedom that we have in Christ. That he has forgiven all our sins. All of them. And he has set us free by his grace to live for him.

Green. Go to God for forgiveness and cleansing. But verse 9 doesn't just say, if we confess, he will forgive our sins.

It says a few other things in the middle of verse 9. It says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and he is just.

[30 : 53] Now, John didn't have to say these things. He could have just said, if you confess your sins, then God will forgive you. And that would have been true.

But John, as it were, makes this green light shine more brightly to encourage us. God gives us every encouragement this morning to come to him for cleansing and forgiveness.

And part of that encouragement is in these words, he is faithful and just. First of all, God is faithful. God is faithful.

In other words, he is true to his word. When God says he's going to do something, he will certainly do it. He never lies.

We can always have complete confidence in God and his promises. So when we come to this promise, because God is faithful, we can be assured that we can confess our sin to him and he will forgive us.

[31 : 57] And that's true of all these wonderful promises of forgiveness in the Bible. Isaiah 38 verse 17. You have put all my sins behind your back.

Isn't that wonderful? That God takes our sins and when we confess them because of Jesus dying for us, he puts them behind his back. Or that amazing Psalm 103 verse 12.

As far as east is from the west. That's how far God has removed our sin from us. You can't get much further than the east is from the west.

And so God wants to encourage us and say, you can trust me. I will bury your sins in the depths of the sea.

And so when we come and confess, know for certain that God will do it. Why? Because he is faithful.

[33 : 02] And so if he's given you this promise, the faithful God will certainly forgive your sins. But it doesn't just say faithful. It says also he is faithful and just.

And just. Why will God forgive you when you come and confess based on Jesus Christ? Because he's just. For God, it's a matter of justice that he has to forgive you.

God cannot ignore sin. He can't ignore my sin. He can't ignore your sin. But as Christians, if we're Christians already, then Jesus Christ has already received the punishment of our sin.

And therefore, when we come and confess our sins, God says, as it were, it would be unjust for me not to forgive you. Because my son, the righteous one, the advocate, has already paid for your sin.

We see that, don't we, in chapter 2, verse 2. We see it so clearly. That Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

[34 : 15] Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. The removal of the wrath of God. That's what propitiation means. God's wrath has been removed.

And God doesn't just ignore our sin. We all expect people to be punished for the sin that they do. If someone steals your car, you want them to be punished.

Criminals, we expect to be punished for their crimes. And we, too, ought to be punished for our sins. That's why the psalm says, Lord, if you were to count my sins against me, I could not stand.

Who could stand? None of us could stand. But God doesn't just let us off. Our sin must be paid for. And it has been through the cross, through his body broken and his blood shed.

That's what the physical torture that Jesus experienced for us was all about. That he experienced that physical suffering because he was paying for our sin.

[35 : 27] He experienced that spiritual suffering. Abandoned, forsaken. For my sin and for your sin. His friends ran away from him. He was left for my sin and your sin. Jesus was punished so that you and I would not have to be punished.

He died for us. He died instead of us. I've got a pile of letters in the house.

It's about this thick. And it's from a parking company. And they keep writing to me and saying, please give me, it was like £80, then £160.

Then you're going to appear at court if you're not careful. And it all started when, sorry Sarah to reveal your flaws here.

[36 : 29] But when Sarah paid her £3 in an Inverness car park. And then she came out the car park. And instead of typing, your car registration.

I think just there was one little mistake. By accident. And so for that reason, the company wanted to give us quite a hefty fine.

And it went against my sense of justice. And we'd already paid her £3. Why should we pay £50 just for a little mistake in our car registration?

That doesn't make any sense. Surely, if you've paid for your parking once, you shouldn't have to pay for it again. That's not just.

You know, that is exactly what we have in the gospel in Jesus. Because it is justice. That if something's paid for once, it shouldn't be paid for again.

[37 : 27] And as Christians, we can celebrate today that Jesus has paid for our sin. So it doesn't have to be paid for again.

You don't have to pay for it. I don't have to pay for it. Because our trust is in Him. Not in ourselves and what we have done. But our trust is in Jesus.

So Red, stop making excuses. For your sin. And Amber, get ready. Get ready to go to your Father to confess your sin.

To admit them to God. Every day, say sorry to Him. And Green, go. Knowing that your Father has promised, because He is just, because He is faithful and true, He has promised to forgive you your sin.

And purify you from all unrighteousness. And if you're not a Christian yet, you need to do exactly the same.

[38 : 37] Go to Jesus. Go to God. And tell Him you're sorry. And say, I need you to save me. Please forgive me.

Please be my King in my life. Please be my King in my life.