

# Atoning Sacrifice

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning. It's good to see you all here. It's our first sticky Sunday of the summer. It's not even hot yet. It's just sticky. But if you are finding yourself needing some air, there's some lovely air moving in front, you feel free to get up and move around. Or if you're really sweltering, you can go downstairs in the live stream in the air conditioning if that's necessary for you to focus.

You know, one of the things that in my pastoral experience is true is that there are many reasons for a crisis of faith. Sometimes it's because we've encountered something new in experiencing the faith of someone else that we've never seen before, and we wonder what's that about, if they believe in a different religion or a different God. Sometimes crises of faith come from suffering and hardship in our own life or in the life of the world, and we wonder, we ask ourselves a question, where's God in the midst of those things?

But one of the reasons why I think sometimes we experience crisis of faith is because we have a misunderstanding of true biblical Christianity. Our view of God and our view of ourselves become slightly warped by a misunderstanding of the truth in a way that then when we press that to its conclusion leads us to a crisis of faith. How could we believe? How can we have confidence that we could believe what we believe? How could we know the God of the Bible if these things are true?

It is in this context in many ways that the letter of 1 John was written. It was written to give confidence to believers by clarifying the truth about what it looks like to actually know God rightly.

And we are starting a series. We started it last week. We hope you're here. If not, Pastor Nick preached a great introductory sermon. You should go back, listen to it on our website or our podcast. But we're going to continue in 1 John at the second half of chapter 1 today because John is teaching us about particular things where he is addressing the false teaching or misunderstandings that have crept in to the Christian church that are causing them a crisis of faith. So we're going to look at John 1, 5 through 2, 2. It's page 959 in your pew Bible. So if you want to turn there, we're going to read that and pray for God's help as we look at his word together. John 1...I'm sorry, 1 John. I keep saying John. 1 John. The letter of 1 John. Not the gospel of John. The letter of 1 John chapter 1 starting in verse 5. Let's read this together.

[ 3 : 1 4 ] This is the message. We have heard from him and proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another in the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and 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 him a liar and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins and not only ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Let's pray.

Ask God's help. Lord, we thank you for this word this morning. We pray that you will help us as we look at it for a few minutes. Lord, I pray for your help that I would speak clearly your word.

Lord, I pray for us here as we gather to sit under your word this morning. Lord, that you would make our hearts receptive and our minds pliable and our wills submissive so that we might receive your word today. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

So you may have noticed I broke this passage up a little differently than the ESV does. Those breaks, the paragraph breaks and the little titles in there are editorial comments, not a part of the Bible themselves. And so we've decided to put it this way because we think there's a hole here where John is addressing these false understandings, particularly of our view of God and our view of sin as it relates to ourselves, to help us see this message, that it is Christ who rescues us from false ideals, ideas of sin that lead us to doubt our fellowship with God.

[ 5 : 43 ] John is addressing false ideas that have crept into the church. And as we look through it, we're going to have a little outline. If you're outline people, here it is, right? We're going to have the premise proclaimed. We're going to talk about God is light and cannot have fellowship with sinners. Then we're going to have the proposals confronted as these false teachings are laid bare, these false views that keep us from fellowship with God. And then the promise established, how Christ is able to keep us in fellowship with God. So that's what we're going to look at this morning. And we'll just walk through it one step at a time. First, verse five, the premise proclaimed, God is light. Look with me again.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you. This is what Nick preached on last week. He's saying, this is a message that we heard from Jesus himself. This is the teaching of the church throughout all ages. And now we make it known to you who at the end of the first century, maybe you who grew up not knowing the original apostles, but now I, as one of the last living apostles, want to make sure you know these things because we were eyewitnesses to them. That's what the beginning of chapter one says. It says, I want you to know this. And his first big declaration is this, God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. Now in the Bible, the light has a number of different, it's an image, right? It's a metaphor that's pointing to a few different things. Light is often seen as a revelation. So your word is a light unto my path. It's a way that God reveals himself, makes himself known by being light. Just like as we walk into a dark room, we can't see anything, but we turn on the light switch and then suddenly, oh, now we can see. This is what God is. God brings light through his revelation so that we can see truly what actually is. But light is more than simply revelation in the Bible. It is also an image of moral purity. It is a picture of perfection. It drives away all darkness when the light is bright enough. And so light is connected with that which is both right and what is true.

And John is saying, the premise I want to start with this morning or in this message is, God is this. He is the one who has made himself known and he is morally pure in every way, unsullied, undarkened, and unblocked in the world. There's nothing that mars God's perfection. Now I think we have a hard time wrapping our minds around this because we've never lived in a perfect world. And we have very little idea of what perfection actually looks like, what any kind of perfection looks like. I did some research this week on the USDA on the standards for food production and purity. And I'm not going to ruin your lunch by giving you details. But all I can tell you is that the USDA allows for a percentage of animal parts, mold, or worse, in the production of the food that we eat every day that would probably make us not want to eat anything if we looked at. That's not actually true because when we look at it, we realize God has made us able to sustain this. But my point is, even what we think is pure, even what we think is perfectly good, it's not. We live in such an imperfect world. Nothing is ever 100% pure.

But God is. He reveals himself as being morally perfect in every way. Everything he does is good.

Everything he does is right. Everything he does is true. Everything he does is meant for his glory. And for the good of the world. He is morally perfect. There is no fault in him.

[10:04] I wonder, friends, do we really believe this is true? We wrestle with it. I think our instinct is to make God less pure and holy than he really is.

We really wish God was a little bit more like ourselves. Why is this? Well, have you ever met someone who's really, really, really good at something? Say someone has a beautiful singing voice. And they invite you to sing with them. Or maybe Messi invites you to go play soccer with him. And you think, I don't want to do that. All I'm going to... Do you know who Messi is?

Messi is the best soccer player in the world. Sorry, all you Ronaldo fans. He's the best soccer player in the world. And so, what I'm saying is that when we meet people who are exceptional at something, and they invite us to join in with them, our response is usually hesitation, shame, and a desire to hide from them because we see our inadequacy and our shortcoming.

And one of the things we do with that is sometimes we get mean. And we think, oh, they're not actually that good anyway. Sometimes we do that in our hearts. And I think we do that with God. And sometimes I think we also run from him and want to hide. Because when we see God as he truly is, we know we are not as pure as he is. We feel shame and condemnation.

Because deep down in our souls, our heart tells us we are not perfect as he is perfect. When we see his light, we see the darkness in our own lives. And friends, this is what the Bible calls sin. Now, let's talk briefly about this idea of sin because it's something we want to make sure. We often think of sin as doing something wrong, right? We break a rule. That's what sin is.

[12:14] And that is true. And there are rules that God has given us so that we might flourish in life. The Ten Commandments would be an example of them. And there are things like do not lie. Do not steal.

Do not murder. Do not bear false witness. Do not covet your neighbor's donkey. You know, there are all these things that we're told, right? And these are rules, and we can transgress them or not.

And so, it's true that sin is a breaking of those things. But in the Bible, sin is more than that. It's not just breaking a rule. It's actually underneath that, at its core, it's a disposition. It's a heart stance of rejecting God and choosing, rather than recognizing him as God and allowing him to be God in our lives, which would include telling us how we ought to live, we rebel against him. This is what we saw at the very beginning of the storyline of the Bible in the Garden of Eden. God had created a place where everything was perfect. And Adam and Eve had simply to receive from God and to submit to God in the regulations that he had set about living in the garden. There was nothing that got good that God withheld that was rightfully Adam and Eve's, and yet they rejected, and they rebelled. And they did transgress a command, but more fundamentally, they said, God, rather than receiving from you, we want to be like you. We want to be God's ourselves and to rule our lives and to rule all that we do. We want to be able to say this is what is right and wrong. We want to be able to say what we can and cannot do. This is why the passage that Susan read earlier from Isaiah says, all we like sheep have gone astray. We've gone our own way. This is our transgression, our iniquity, our sin. And John in this letter calls it darkness.

And when you have a light that is so bright and so pure, there cannot be darkness. With light. And so John's premise creates a problem, doesn't it? How can we who have darkness in us because of sin be with God who is light when light drives out darkness?

Well, I believe that the next part of this section of 1 John is some of the ways in which some false teachers, some false ideas were introduced into the Christian community on how to resolve this.

[14:55] Okay? And so this is verses 6 through the end of our passage. And what you see with John here in this is the proposals, these false ideas are confronted. These false views that keep us from true fellowship with God are exposed. And the way John writes here is not like Paul. Paul writes a good logical argument. If this, then this, therefore this, so that this. And we love all those conjunctions.

John here is actually writing cyclically. He's writing in three times. He says, if this, if we claim this, well then this is going to be the outcome. But what about this? And this is the structure. And he does it three times in verses 6 and 7, verses 8 and 9, and then verses 10 through 2-2. And that's why we went through 2-2, because verses 1 and 2 of chapter 2 are the, but the opposite, the other part of this cycle. Okay? And in each one we see the claim is judged as fault, and an alternative is put forward. So now I want to talk about the false claims that John is exposing.

And I'm going to put them in modern terms. Hopefully that will resonate with some of us as we understand that, oh, we've heard this, and we've even thought this ourselves. Right?

The first view is this. Sin isn't that bad. Okay? Verse 6 says what? If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

And I think underlying this is the idea that sin isn't actually that bad. Even though God is pure, sin, does it really break our fellowship with God? I think I can keep sinning and actually still know God. This is what people thought in the first century. They had a whole complex worldview that separated their body from their soul. And they thought, well, it doesn't matter what I do in my body because my soul is pure and so I can have fellowship with God in my soul and what I do in my body.

[17:06] It doesn't even touch that. So they had a very sophisticated view of it. But they believed that they could worship God while still doing whatever they wanted. Now, we don't have that system today. Most of us don't live with that kind of a worldview.

But man, do we have a world that minimizes sin in so many ways. Here are some ways that I think we do so in our culture today. I didn't mean to. If my intent was good and my actions were wrong, that's not really that bad. How about this one? Well, nobody's perfect. Everybody messes up.

Yeah, okay, so I sinned, but like everyone does it. So why are you holding me to a standard of saying that sin removes us from fellowship with God? Another way that we do it is we sin by saying, I didn't do anything, right? If I didn't actively transgress a law, if I didn't actively do something to harm someone else, then what was wrong with it? But the Bible is full of places where we see the sin of omission, where we don't do what we should do, is just as much sin as when we do do what we shouldn't do. And all of these deflect the significance of sin. We minimize it. We make it small.

And then we walk around like this teaching and saying, well, I can believe in God and still sin because it's not that bad. The second view is what we see in verses 8 and 10.

And that is that if we recognize sin really is bad, if we don't fall into this first one, we say, wow, sin is really terrible. If I sin, there's no way I could be in fellowship with God.

[19:17] But I'm not that bad. I don't actually have any sin. I mean, really, right? And so if the first false view is sin isn't that bad, the second false view is I'm not that bad. I don't have any sin. That's what verses 8 and 10 both say. If we say we do not have sin, if we say that we have not sinned, it's the same idea, I believe, twice repeated. And it says, if we don't have sin, then we're okay with God.

And again, as we look through the rest of the letter of 1 John, we postulate that it seems that maybe some of the false teachers were saying we've had a special anointing from God. We have a special gift of the Holy Spirit that's purified us once for all so that we are unable. We now have like Teflon. Sin doesn't stick with us. So we do not sin anymore. And they claimed a higher spirituality.

And there are some parts of the church that would still say this, that we can achieve a sinless perfection by being the best disciples and being super spiritual people. I love the story. I've seen this in a couple of different forms, so I don't know how much it's true. So this is anecdotal, not true. About Spurgeon and the man he met who claimed sinless perfection. Charles Spurgeon was a pastor in the 19th century in England. And as he was speaking in a conference, another man who publicly proclaimed that Christians could reach a place of sinless perfection where they no longer struggled with sin because they were perfected in the love of God. And the speaker then went on to suggest modestly that he had realized this in his own life and had achieved sinless perfection. So Spurgeon didn't say anything that day, but the next morning at breakfast time, he crept up behind the man and poured a jug of milk on his head and quickly discovered that the man still had a sinful nature. I mean, this is the...

Now, I don't think many of us here today believe that we are sinless or could achieve a sinless perfection. But I do think that we still struggle to redefine sin in a way that says, if we define sin is this, then I haven't sinned. This is actually the very heart of legalism. Legalism is saying, here, tell me what the rules are, give me the list, and if I can keep that list, I'm good. Right? I haven't murdered, I haven't stolen, I haven't cheated, I haven't lied, I haven't hated anyone today, I haven't actively sinned in a particular way, so I don't have any sin. I haven't sinned today because I haven't done those terrible things. Or again, sometimes we think, well, I haven't sinned because if what I'm doing is what everyone's doing, it can't be sin. And so somehow we redefine it, we allow the cultural expectation or the societal practices to undermine our view of sin, so we say, well, that's not sin because everybody's doing it. There's an especially insidious kind of way that we minimize sin that is spiritually rooted in pride. I know theology, I know the Bible really well, how could I sin if I'm doing that? This is most heinous where we see it in Christian leaders who are saying, if I'm doing all this good work for the Lord, then I must not be sinning. Friends, this is a terrible distortion.

And finally, there's just a broad view in our culture that's come from 400 years of humanistic thinking. We desperately want to believe that human beings are good. And so we just think, that's not me. Whatever sinners are, that's not me. And that's not my neighbors. That's not the people I know. I'm sure there are people out there who are terrible, but they're not me. And that's why these false teachings are so attractive, because they resolve the problem that verse 5 creates.

[ 23 : 34 ] If God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, and if sin is darkness, and it can't have fellowship with light, then how do we have fellowship with God? Well, we either claim sin that isn't that bad, or we claim we don't have sin at all. But John gives a judgment on all of these. Verse 6, we lie and do not practice the truth. Verse 8, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Verse 10, we make God, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. John says that these false views lead us to a place where we are living in unreality, because it no longer corresponds to the truth. We are living in a place where we are deceived, we are self-deceived, and are deceiving others by the way we proclaim these things. And even worse, we are making out God to be a liar, because God tells us that we are sinful and lost, that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that there is no one righteous, not even one.

And though these teachings promise resolution, they deny reality, and when they deny reality, they don't get us to where we want. Because what we really want, and what the church that John is writing to really wants, is assurance that we can know that we have fellowship with God.

But that assurance comes from reality. And what a beautiful thing it is that the Bible helps us see these tensions that we feel, because we've all felt this. God, how could you accept me when I blow it?

Or we see someone else who says, they're not sinful, and we think, how can that be true? Because I know them. This dilemma might lead us to despair, if God is light, and we are still sinful, if there was no way forward. But John has given us an alternative to all of these, to these views. God has given us a way forward. He says, there's a promise established whereby God is light, and we can have fellowship with him. There are two things that John says about this, and I want to close with this morning.

[ 26 : 08 ] The promise establishes that Christ is able to keep us in fellowship with God. This is verse 7, verse 9, and the second part of verse 1 and 2 of chapter 2, where John gives us hope that we can confidently have fellowship with God. How does this happen? Well, first, we need to see this.

John points to the ultimate ground of our confidence, and it's not us and how we do, and it's not redefining sin, but it's looking to Christ. So, verse 7 says this, 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 us from all sin.

Verse 9, if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In chapter 2, if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. How do we resolve this tension? We don't. We are unable to bridge the gap between our darkness and God's light, but God has done the work that we can't do for us because he sent Jesus for us, right? And you hear the words repeated, he's able to cleanse us from our sins so that what is dark, the impurities of our moral lives become cleansed so that we become pure, so that our unrighteousness, the ways in which we are not like God, become replaced with a righteousness that comes from God. Chapter 2 says we have an advocate. Jesus has gone to be the one who stands between us and God as the propitiation. This is our big \$15 theological word for the day.

Propitiation. You may have heard of it. You may know of it. You may have never seen it before in your life. It has overtones of two different things. One is that a propitiation is one that removes the sin of the offender, and it also has the idea of appeasing the wrath or the justice of the one offended, right? And so this is the idea of propitiation. And in the ancient world, it was often used in context of pagan religion, where you're taking your child and you're sacrificing it to Molech so that he won't cause you great harm. And so you're appeasing a pagan God who is whimsical, capricious, and not good. And so on the basis of that, there has been in the 19th and 20th century a whole movement to say, that can't be what this means, and to say it must mean something else.

And it is true that the God of the Bible is not a capricious God whose anger needs to be appeased because he might lose it and fly off the handle because he's upset with you about something.

[ 29 : 23 ] But it is true that the God of the Bible is a God of justice, a God who sees that sin is not just an offense against him, but it is something that is fundamentally wrong. It is a violation against the universe and what is all that is right and good. It is evil. Sin is evil. And therefore, it must be dealt with. It must be punished. It must be addressed. And the difference is that in the pagan religions, you had to provide the sacrifice to appease the God that you were worshipping. And in the Christian gospel, God himself provided the sacrifice for us.

This is how God bridged the gap between his light and our darkness, not by calling us to do something, but by doing something for us in Jesus. Jesus comes and he lives the life of sinless perfection that would allow humanity to have fellowship with God. He was the human being who was the perfect one, who did live in perfect fellowship with God. He then goes to the cross saying, I will bear your sins upon my body. I will bear the wrath against the justice exerted against your sin on myself. For me, I'm going to go and die for you to remove that sin by having it be justly dealt with so that you might then in me be able to approach God who is light, not in your sinfulness, because I've taken that, but in my sinlessness, which I give to you by faith. This is the amazing news of the

Christian gospel. We can never bridge this gap, and yet God has done it for us. And he gives us his righteousness so that when God looks at us through the veil of Christ in whom we have faith, he sees us as righteous the way Jesus was righteous. That is, he regards us that way. He's not foolish.

He sees our sin. He doesn't, it's not that he's blind to what we actually do, but in the courtroom of God, in his judgment seat, he sees Christ, not us, when we go before him.

This is the amazing hope of the gospel. God sees our sin. He's addressed our sin so that we might be rescued. And you might be wondering, okay, what's the end of chapter of verse two? What is that all about? That not only our sins, but the sins of the whole world. At first blush, it seems to say, well, what God did in Jesus covers everybody, no matter who they are, no matter what religion they believe, no matter what time they, it seems like, but we know from the rest of the Bible that is not true.

[ 32 : 42 ] We know that there is a clear delineation between those who by faith are in Christ and therefore can stand before a God who is light and those who are outside of Christ and therefore will be judged on the merit of their own righteousness or lack thereof. So we know that's true more broadly in the Bible.

So it can't mean simply universalism, right? Everybody gets saved because of what Jesus did. So what does it mean? Well, I think it means this, and this is why I think, you know, as John was addressing a church where there are certain people who are separating themselves out and saying, we're the super spiritual people that God is really going to save. John says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

There are only two categories, in Christ and not in Christ. And this hope that he's presenting for us, this work of Christ is available to all, the whole world. John uses the world as a, almost a semi-technical term to say the world in rebellion against him. So this is John inviting the world that has rejected him to come back to him and take hold of this offering, Jesus Christ, the righteous one, and saying, if you come and believe in him, then you will be able to have fellowship with God.

So salvation is not just for particularly spiritual people, but it's for all people who come in faith and confess their sin. And friends, this is the second thing. This is the second way in which we see John helping us gain, because based on what God has done for us in Christ, there is then a second thing that this passage exhorts us to, so that we can have confidence that we have fellowship with God. And it is in verse 7. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship. And it's fascinating, because he says fellowship with one another, not even with God, but fellowship with one another. So he's talking about this as a communal activity. But we have this with one another, and with God, I think is implied, when we walk in the light. Now, when you hear that phrase, when we walk in the light, what do we think? You better be perfect. You better be sinless. You better never blow it. You have to do everything right. But look at the parallel of verse 9. Verse 7 says, if we walk in the light, what does it say in verse 9? The parallel is, if we confess our sin.

Walking in the light according in the Christian gospel is not perfection, but it is living in light of the truth of the gospel. And so what it means is, when we walk in the light, we have an ongoing pattern of confessing our sin to God. This is the pattern that we had when we entered into a relationship with God. We came to God and said, I have nothing but my sin. I have no right to claim anything before you.

[ 36 : 07 ] But I put my faith and trust in Jesus and what he has done. And I forsake my life of sin, and I give myself and trust myself to you and the salvation that Christ has given us. This is how we enter into being a Christian when we say that. And friends, this is how we walk as Christians. This is how we live.

Continuing to say, I am a sinner, and God is holy, and Christ is righteous, and Christ has done what I can do. And so now Christ is empowering me and calling me to forsake sin that he died to overcome, to forsake sin so that I might move towards the light that is God and all of his moral perfection.

This is what chapter 2 verse 1 says. I write this so that you may not sin. The truth of what God has done for us in Christ doesn't give us license to do whatever we want.

Instead, it frees us to pursue the things that we really want, which is fellowship with God who is light. And as we do so, we will move further and further towards righteous living, rightly submitting to God, loving the things that God loves, and hating the things that God hates. It is a call to obedience.

It is a call to holiness. And it is a beautiful and glorious thing. And it's painful to us because of our sin nature. We still want to hold on to things. And God says, I'm going to prime your fingers off of that one.

[ 37 : 37 ] Can you let go of that little idolatry? And that little pet sin? And that little pleasure that's not good for you? And he gets into our lives and he does that kind of hard work. And it's hard, isn't it? But the pursuit of holiness is not meant to be a duty and a burden, but a delight and a joy because it moves us towards deeper and greater fellowship with God. And friends, it is not towards perfection. One of the things that I have seen is that the old saints who have walked with Christ for 40 or 50 years, do you know what's true about them?

They know they're more sinful than they were when they were 20. Because they've seen their hearts. And they've seen the ways that even though outwardly they've become more and more holy, you look at them and you just think, oh my gosh, you are so gracious, so perfect, so holy, so committed to God. You don't have any sin. It looks like that on the outside. And they will tell you, no, no, that's not true. I see how much more of my pride and my selfishness and my independence that I really have. And this is why the way of the cross, the way of the gospel is the way to have fellowship with God. It's not confession of sin the way the Catholic church frames it as in a particular place that absolves us of particular sin. It is an ongoing attitude and a perspective that though I have been saved by Christ, I am being saved by Christ now and I will be saved in the end.

And so I'm going to continue to confess my sin that is acknowledged that I am not righteous yet. Only Christ is. But when I see my sin, I take it to Him and I say, God, I hate this sin, but I love You.

And I thank You that Your forgiveness means that I don't have to live in the bondage of guilt and the slavery to the burden of what I have done wrong, but instead I have the freedom to move out of it, away from it, towards You. This is what God tells us. This is the way of the gospel. And this is what John tells us allows us to have confidence in our fellowship with God. God is light and we are not.

But because of Jesus, we not only are able to enter into a standing with Him where we are forgiven, but we have an ongoing pattern of confessing our sin and appropriating this forgiveness for us.



[ 40 : 11 ] And when we do this, we have confidence. We are able to have confidence that we know God and to walk with Him. Friends, if we fail, if we stop confessing our sins, if we think that in our pride that we have somehow overcome that, then our confidence will shrivel because our sense of being with God will be based on our performance.

But when we see this happening, this is then what God has for us, this pattern of walking in the gospel. And it is a gracious provision, a way that sinners like us can have fellowship with God.

This is good news. Let's pray together. Lord, I thank You for this passage, and I thank You for all that it teaches us. And I pray, Lord, that You would help us.

Lord, I pray that You would, by Your Spirit, humble us so that we would be willing and able to see and confess our sin. Lord, for as we do that, Lord, we see the greatness of what You have done for us in Christ.

We take hold of the forgiveness that You have secured for us that is ours for certain. Lord, we see Christ standing before You as our advocate, having taken away our sin and given us His righteousness.

[ 41 : 43 ] Lord, so that we might be free from sin and pursue righteousness more and more. Lord, we know we will never make perfection until the day of glory. But Lord, let us run this race towards You, towards deeper and richer fellowship with You, with confidence.

Thank You, Lord. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.