

# The Spirit 01 - 1 John 1: Grieve Not

by Alden Gannett

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God and with fellow believers, and the need to walk in the light in order to have this fellowship.*

**Duration:** 42:32

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 1:1-21, Hebrews 4:12, 1 John 1:1, 1 John 1:7

**Topics:** "Grieving"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the issue of living a lie and pretending to be a Christian when one is not truly born again. He urges anyone in the congregation who is living a lie to confess their hypocrisy and call upon Jesus Christ for salvation. The cure for walking in darkness, according to the preacher, is to walk in the light of God. He emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God and with other believers, and highlights the message that God is light before God is love. The preacher also shares a personal story of a woman who realized she was living a lie and took steps to walk with God and restore her testimony.

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## Transcript

We remember with great joy the times together before in this place hallowed by the presence of the Lord and his blessing. And I trust these days will also give to us a continued ministry of God the Holy Spirit through his word to each of our hearts. Looking forward to renewing our fellowship with you and trust this long weekend will provide opportunity to greet you and to share with you one with another.

I didn't come from Birmingham just to preach. I love to preach, rather preach than eat. You can see I've been doing a lot of eating since I've been here.

But I love to preach. I want God to deal with us while we're together. And so let us come with open hearts to his word that the Spirit of God shall deal with us personally as we have need.

Let's start tonight with 1 John 1. Every so often it's good to take inventory, and John gives us such an occasion in these opening verses of this very familiar chapter. May we pray together. Our Father, we rejoice in thy word.

Now open it to us. We count upon the faithful ministry of the Holy Spirit of God. May he teach us.

May he bring to our remembrance things which are old. May he give us new truths from thy word tonight and this weekend as we share together. Minister to our hearts through it in Christ's name.

Amen. John's great word is fellowship. Fellowship with the Father, fellowship with his Son, and fellowship with fellow believers.

John, you remember, was the one who leaned on Jesus' breast. It's John who uses this word. Oftentimes when we think of Christianity, some of us think of going to church.

Some of us think of reading of our Bibles and prayer. Some of us think of active Christian service. We have all kinds of concepts about Christianity, and so many of them are biblical and proper and right.

The one John uses in this epistle is fellowship, intimate fellowship. I've been hearing on the way down the car from Jacksonville this afternoon how wonderful fellowship you're having here. How the Lord is blessing in the park.

We thank the Lord. Now, John's fellowship is around a person. Verse one, that which was from the beginning.

He, of course, is speaking of our blessed Lord because only God is eternal. Only God is from the beginning. Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon in our hands of handles of the word of life.

In John's day, there were those who doubted that Jesus Christ, the eternal God, actually came into the flesh, came in flesh into the world. And so John says we've heard him. We were there by the sea when he called us to be fishers of men.

He says we've seen him with our eyes. We beheld him as he gave that great sermon on the mount and the horns of Hattin. We were there in that upper room as he spoke to us, the twelve, just before his crucifixion.

We've seen him ourselves. He says we've looked upon him. Actually, we've gazed upon him.

And I'm sure you and I would have gazed too had we seen him turn water into wine. Had we seen him heal a nobleman's son at a distance known of this wonderful miracle. Had we seen the blind come to see, and the lame walk, and the leper cleansed, and the dead raised to life.

You and I would have stood back and been amazed at this wonderful, wonderful Lord. John says our hands have handled him. Yes, he came in the flesh.

Yes, the Son of God came to this earth and died and rose again and ascended to heaven. Our hands handled him after the resurrection. On that resurrection day, he came to us, the ten, in that closed room, and he showed us his hands and his side.

We were so excited we went to Doubting Thomas, and we said, Thomas, we've seen the Lord. Thomas wasn't present on that occasion, and Thomas said, oh, except I see the print of the nail on my hand. Unless I put my hand in his side, I'll not believe.

You remember the omniscient Lord overheard that conversation, and eight days later, the Lord personally appeared to Thomas and said, Thomas, reach into thy finger and put it in the print of the nail. Reach into thy hand and put it in my rib and side, and be not faithless, but believing. You remember Thomas's immortal words, my Lord and my God.

Our hands have handled him. Our hands have handled him, the word of life. For the life was manifested, verse two, and we've seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us.

John says, it's just exciting to me to know the Lord Jesus Christ. It's exciting to me to know him personally, and we've just got to tell about him. We just must share him.

We can't keep him to ourselves. We've got to overflow with a wonderful blessing of this life that was manifested to us, the life of Christ. We mustn't leave, verse two, without recognizing the designation that John uses of the Lord Jesus.

He calls him eternal life. Did you notice that? The life was manifested, and we've seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life. Some people think of eternal life as our name being written down in glory.

They are written down in glory. Some people think of eternal life as the life of bliss beyond this life, and other people think it's being a member of the family of God, and all these concepts are true, biblical. John says eternal life is a person, a person, our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Flip over to chapter five with me a moment, will you? In verse 11 and verse 12, John says, this is the record that God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in the first church. Now, this life is where? In his son. So he that hath the son hath life.

He that hath not the son of God, what? Hath not life. It's that simple. Don't ever stumble over the simplicity of God's word.

Take this to the depths, but John couches it in such wonderful language. Oh, God's given to us eternal life. This life is where again? In his son.

He that hath the son life. Do you have him tonight? I trust everyone in this circle knows the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. I trust every one of us here has passed from death unto life.

Is it true that I go up and down these rows tonight and ask you to stand and say, give your testimony, and could you declare before this group of believers tonight? Yes, Jesus Christ is my Savior. Yes, I have received him. John 1 12, quote it with me.

But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. To as many as received him. You done this? You know it? You sure about it? Amen.

Wonderful to know the life was manifested. Now John continues in verse 3 of our first chapter. That which we've seen and heard, declare we unto you that ye also may have what? Fellowship with us.

Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. You who've walked with the Lord for some years know what John's talking about, don't you? Wholeness of joy.

I was talking with a man not long ago, and in the course of the conversation, we were talking about the things of the Lord, and I assured him of the joy and blessing of being a Christian. He said, what fun do you have in being a Christian? He just hadn't gotten his feet wet yet. John says, fullness of joy.

This is like going swimming. You can't tell how wonderful the water is until you're in. It's like being married.

You can't tell how wonderful marriage is with a wonderful Christian companion, with the blessing of God in your home, unless you've been married. John says, fullness of joy because of fellowship with the Lord God of heaven and earth, our heavenly Father. Fellowship with his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he says, with us, fellow believers, fellow believers. What a joy it is to share as Christians, isn't it? What a wonderful time we had in the car coming down this afternoon, talking about the things of God together, the blessing of the Lord together. What a wonderful time we had today at Southeastern Bible College, our day of prayer for this semester.

They gather at 8 o'clock in the morning, and I had to slip out of them at 11, but they're praying on until 12, and this afternoon again, to sit together and share together and pray together. What a blessed privilege it is. Fullness of joy.

Now, there's a debate in the Greek New Testament on which this is translated, whether that word, your, in verse 4 should be our. Some manuscripts have our. Our joy may be full.

John says, our hearts get thrilled when we see you in fellowship with the Lord, fellowship with the Father, fellowship with his Son, and fellowship one with another. And this is a pastor's heart, to see God's people walking in the truth, walking in the light. That is wonderful work.

We're taking inventory tonight. You know what this is? I didn't ask you if you did know what this was. I'm asking you tonight, do you know what this is? Is it your present experience tonight? Has this day been a day of fellowship with the Father, and fellowship with his Son, and fellowship with God's people? You have such a precious opportunity of fellowship in a place like this.

Sometimes there isn't fellowship. We know each other too well, you know. Are you in fellowship tonight with your neighbor? Fellowship tonight with the folks across the street? Fellowship tonight with the folks at the other end of the park? Fellowship tonight with God's people, because you're in fellowship with the Father and his Son.

Maybe your heart's heavy tonight, precious burden tonight. Need not be. The joy of your salvation can be yours when you're in fellowship with the Father and his Son and God's people.

Now, what hinders fellowship? John tells us in verse 5 and follows. The basis for this fellowship, verse 5, this then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Have you noticed that in this epistle of John, that John first talks about God as light before he talks about God as love? I was taught in Sunday school years ago, the verse 1 John 4.8 and 1 John 4.16, God is love, long before I learned God is light.

Actually, that was reversed. The right order is that I learned that God is light. Why? I don't appreciate his love until I appreciate his light.

What's John trying to say? What is he saying? He is saying that in order for us to fully appreciate this privilege of fellowship with the Father and his Son and in God's people, there is a basic, fundamental, common denominator that must be honored. That is that the God with whom we fellowship is light. In him is no darkness, no none at all, says John.

That means I can't be careless with sin and be in fellowship with the Father and his Son. That means I can't walk in the ways of the world and adopt the philosophy of this world and live for the material things of life. I can't adopt this kind of philosophy.

I can't live with unconfessed sin in my life and at the same time be in fellowship with the Father and his Son. When you argue with me about sin being sin, that it isn't so bad after all, and it's a different age and all the rest, you're saying I haven't had a fresh look at the holiness and righteousness of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That's what you say.

You start excusing sin. You start condoning sin. Everybody's doing it.

You're in trouble. Go back and look at your blessed law. God is, in him is no darkness, no sin, no not at all.

He's infinite holiness, infinite righteousness, infinite purity. If you're going to fellowship with him, you do it on his terms. Amen? At this point, John talks about hindrances to fellowship.

Verses six through ten, if we say that we have fellowship with him, this is a profession now, and walk in darkness, we what? We lie and do not the truth. We lie. John's writing to believers.

He's writing to God's children. He's writing to people of whom he can speak of fellowship with the Father and his Son and one another. John says there's some liars in the house.

Oh, that's strong language, isn't it? What's he mean? He's talking about people who say that they're in fellowship with God who is light and at the same time walk in darkness. John says you're a liar. You're a liar.

You can say you're in fellowship. You can put on a spiritual front that you're in fellowship. You can try to leave the impression with your neighbors and friends and loved ones you're in fellowship, but if you're walking in darkness, John says you're a downright bold-faced liar.

Oh, that's strong. I found in my 38 years of being a Christian that it's easy to put on a front, spiritually. I found it much easier to talk about prayer than to pray.

I found it much easier to preach on soul winning than to lead people to Christ. I found it much easier to talk about having your quiet time, your daily devotional life, than it is to have it, to do it consistently, daily. I found it much easier to tell other people how to raise their kids than to raise my own.

A lot easier. It's a lot easier to profess a high level of spiritual life, a high level of fellowship with God and His Son and with one another, and at the same time walk in darkness. John says when we do, we're liars.

We're deceiving others. That's what liars are. I had this brought home to me with great force some years ago in a Midwestern city.

We were there for a week of meetings and a lady asked if she could see me in the hotel where I was staying. I met her in the lobby and we sat and shared together. She said, do you see this pearl around my neck? And I said, yes.

And she said, I've never prized anything more in all my life. She said, you don't know me, but she said, if you talk to people in our church, they would tell you I'm one of the most spiritual women in the church. They would tell you that I'm an able Bible teacher, that I'm a leader among the women in our fellowship.

But she said, I have to say to you today that I'm a married woman with a family and this pearl around my neck is from a married man, not my husband, in the church, an elder in the church. She said, I can't live with myself. Amen.

I said, do you want to get squared away with the Lord? She said, yes, I do. She said, give me the pearl. She did that.

Actions speak louder than words, my father told me when I was just a boy. The truth, isn't it? So we talked some more, talked about the price of walking in darkness, the disciplinary hand of God if we go on and live a lie, which is exactly what she was doing. She finally came to the conclusion she must walk with God.

She mustn't betray her husband and her five children. She must not ruin her testimony and her local ascendance. So she said, I'll return it.

I suggested she have no more contact with the gentleman and that she mail it. But she said, no, I'd rather hand it to him, say a word to him. I said, all right, but make it definite and make it final.

I sat on the platform that night in the church. She'd come early and sat near the front. She looked back and saw him back there.

He was ushering. I saw her get up, walk back to him, put a package in his hand, say a word and come back. The victory had been won.

But she'd been living a lie. I don't know your hearts. Nobody's told me any stories.

All I know is I was led to talk on this text tonight. Anybody living a lie here at Park of the Bronx? Anybody professing what you really aren't down deep inside? Anybody here professing to be a Christian that's really not a Christian? You say you are. You give testimony to that that you know down deep in your heart.

You've never been born again through faith in Christ. If this is so, oh, tonight confess your spiritual hypocrisy and call upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save you. If you're a Christian, what's the cure? John tells us in verse 7, but if we what? Walk in the light.

Isn't it simple? The cure for walking in darkness is walking in the light. There it is. And there's no other cure.

You'll read from Genesis to Revelation. You won't find another one. This is one of the most helpful texts in all the Bible to me.

I hope God will give it to you fresh tonight. But the cure for walking in darkness is simply walking in the light. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we what? Have fellowship one with another.

Context, the Father, his Son, and fellow believers, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin if we walk in the light. That means taking this life of mine, this heart of mine, these desires of mine, the thoughts and intents of the heart, to use Hebrews 4.12, it means to open my life, to expose it to light. The light is his word.

Beloved, this weekend, by the grace of God, I challenge you to open your heart, your mind, your will, your emotions, all you are and have, open it simply to the light of God's word. Just open it to the light of his word. Lord, by your grace, I want to walk in the light.

You sent that fellow Gannett here for some reason. Lord, speak to me this weekend, and I open my heart to the word. Whatsoever he saith unto me, what? Do it.

That's it. That's walking in the light. Lord, here's my heart.

Here's my heart. You show me the darkness, and when you do, by your grace, I'll confess it and forsake it. Lord, I purpose by your grace to walk in the light.

Set your heart to me. Set your heart to me. All right, here's one hindrance to sin, and that's the deception of others.

There's a second hindrance to sin in verse 8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive whom? Ourselves. Now, the deception is a self-deception. Oh, to see ourselves as others see us, but far better, oh, to see ourselves as God sees us.

How is this possible? Through the word, through the word, through the word. John says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in it. You mean it's possible for a Christian to be deceived? Oh, indeed.

As a pastor, I never forget certain occasions when I was especially burdened in the ministry of the word through a certain book of the Bible or a certain series of doctrines, and I knew so well that certain people in the church needed this in a special way. I had learned the hard way not to get up a special sermon just for special people. I tried that one time back in college, and the very man I was after didn't even show up that Sunday morning, so the Lord rebuked me for that stunt.

But I, of course, would know my people, and here were certain people with certain problems and certain needs. And on several occasions, some of the Lord's people would come out on Sunday morning and greet at my hand and say, Pastor, oh, isn't it too bad so-and-so wasn't here today? That was precisely what he needed. And I knew all the time as his pastor there was nobody in the church who needed it more than he did.

See? Self-deception. Ever been there? Uh-huh. I have.

Everything's fine. How are you, brother? Oh, things are growing great. Of course, I haven't met the Lord lately in the Word, but things are fine.

I've had a wonderful season of prayer for I don't know how long and praying for the world that needs Christ, but just oh, things are wonderful. I haven't been faithful in my giving to see that the gospel is speed at the ends of the earth, but everything's fine. I haven't gotten to prayer meeting lately, but I'm sure everything's just fine, you know.

I haven't talked to anybody about Christ in, I don't know how long, but things are wonderful, I tell you. Self-deception. Just too tired at night, you know, to get out and serve the Lord.

Too busy during the day to do it. Weekends of charge, you know. Ever been there? This is for younger folks, you know.

This is part of that. This is for younger folks. Have you turned all this over to the other folks? Take my children and let them be consecrated.

Lord, we're too old. We're retired. Retired from serving the Lord, yes or no? No.

Listen, if that were true, you'd be taking them home. Self-deception. How about it tonight? With you? With me? Are things vital? Am I walking with God? Do I have a daily quiet time? Do we have our family worship? Do we gather together and pray together as husband and wife, as children in our home? Is the Lord a vital reality? Is our Christianity dynamic? Am I burning for a world that needs Christ? Am I doing something about it in praying for them, in giving of my substance, in looking for God to give me opportunities to bear witness to the grace of God? How is it that some of us deceive tonight? We just come to sit.

I told you before, St. Vance Havner would add, sits open tower. Self-deception. What's the trouble? The truth is not in us.

What's the cure for this? Verse 9. If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from what? All unrighteousness. I have to get right down to business and frankly and honestly and forthrightly confess. Not cover over.

Not run. Not hide. Not put on a false front.

Get down to business and faith of my life and the light of the word of God and where I see self-deception, confess my sin. There's a third hindrance to fellowship. That's verse 10.

The deceiving of others, the deceiving of ourselves. Now look at verse 10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar.

We're saying God is deceiving us. You know how it's said these days. Ah, this is a new day.

Things are different from when I was a youngster. Indeed they are. But the standards are different.

This is 1967. This is a new era. This is a scientific age.

We have new light. We have new understanding. We have a new set of value judgments.

Indeed we do. In my office just yesterday afternoon in Birmingham, Alabama, a young man said I've been to a psychiatrist for some time and he said the psychiatrist told me that pre-marital relations or adultery is perfectly all right in our day as long as the two parties agree. Not a problem in the world.

Our own University of Alabama over there has followed suit along with another number of other universities in America to allow the girls visit the boys dormitory and the boys visit the girls dormitory, you know, and just leave a little crack. Huh? All this kind of nonsense. It's a new day.

Nothing wrong with it. Biologically sound. Everything fine.

God you're outmoded and outdated. You've deceived us. You've been telling us it's adultery.

You've been telling us it's fornication. You've been telling us it's wrong. You've been causing us to sense awful grief of conviction of this kind of thing when it's been perfectly all right all the way along.

God you're wrong. You've been lying to us. That's not like 1967.

That's the trouble. His word is not in us. That's the trouble.

Go back to verse 6. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and notice. Do not the truth. Verse 8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Verse 10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. Oh see this tonight beloved, that in each of these three occasions of deception regarding sin, it is a careless relationship to the written word of God.

That's where the problem arises. This is why we preachers emphasize your time in the word. That's why you have at the park Bible conferences, Bible teaching, Bible exposition.

That's why we have colleges like ours emphasizing Bible exposition. It's only as we're rightly related to the word of God do we enter into the blessing God has for us. In this context, fellowship with the father and his son and one another.

Stick to the book. Stick to the book. Stick to the book is where it is.

Now finally, how is this fellowship maintained? From God's point of view, we see it in verses 1 and 2 of the next chapter. My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, talking to Christians, we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ, the righteous.

And he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. From God's point of view, this fellowship is maintained by the advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man in the glory. Tonight seated at the father's right hand.

John says his name is Jesus Christ, the righteous one. Not the good one though he is, not the merciful one though he is, not the gracious one though he is, not the loving one though he is, but in this context of unconfessed sin, in this context of walking in the light, he calls him Jesus Christ, the righteous one. So, he deals with us as believers in relation to our sins as believers on the basis of righteousness.

Don't just have the idea that he just pats his arm ahead and says, now son you just do better next time and everything will be fine. Not in your life. Jesus Christ, the righteous.

He says if any man sins, we have an advocate. I was seated across from Dr. Culbertson, president of Moody Bible Institute at a conference some time ago and he said, oh did you notice in the text, it doesn't say we ask for an advocate. We plead for an advocate.

We beg for an advocate. Oh no, we have one. Isn't that precious? We have one already there.

Jesus Christ, the righteous. What's an advocate? The Greek here says, one called alongside to help. That's precisely what we need when we've sinned as believers.

And the one called alongside to help is our blessed Lord who loved us and who died for us and having loved us all, loved his own, he loves us unto the end. That one who ever lives to make intercession for us, this one is our advocate there at the right hand of the Father. And John says, verse 2, he is the propitiation.

Get the pronunciation. Some people have a hard time with that word. It's murdered sometimes.

It's propitiation. He's the propitiation for our sins. What's that big word mean? You're right in your margins.

Put it there. It means satisfaction. Satisfaction.

He is the satisfaction for our sin. He's talking about justice. He's talking about righteousness.

He's talking about God's government here with an erring son. He says, the Lord Jesus Christ, the man in the glory, the God man in the glory, seated at the Father's right hand, our lawyer, our advocate, our pleader, this one is the satisfaction for our sin. I don't know where you stand on this subject, and I'm not here to start a controversy tonight, but this word is very, very precious to me because it says to us Christians, Jesus Christ is the satisfaction for our sins.

Not for ours only, but the whole world. This means then that I cannot go to hell as a Christian because justice was already satisfied at Calvary for our sins as believers. Some people have the idea that Christ died for all my sins up to the point of salvation.

From there on in, I'm on my own. Oh, thank God, no. This text says He satisfied God the Father for our sins.

Who are they are? Believers in this context. Not for us only, but for the whole world. Beloved, when Jesus Christ got on the cross, He died not only for my past sins, but my present ones, and anything I commit in the future.

He died for all the sins I've confessed, and He died for all the sins I haven't confessed. He died for all the sins of the unbeliever, whether they've accepted Christ or whether they haven't. He died for them all.

You got a chapter and verse for that? Right here, friend. None clear in all your Bibles in this. He is the satisfaction for our sins, and not for ours only, but also the whole world.

It means this, beloved, that when Christ died on the cross, God the Father looked down from heaven and saw His Son there in your stead and in mine. He saw Him giving up His life through the shedding of His blood on the cross, and the Father said, I'm satisfied with the death of my Son as a full and complete and final payment for all the sins of all mankind. Isn't that universalism? Oh, no, because the Bible puts conditions.

To Him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. So, Christ died for our sins as Christians. That means a Christian doesn't go to hell when he sins.

Amen. That means that the man in the glory has satisfied God for my sins. I had the privilege of having Lewis Barry Chaffer as one of my teachers.

I'll never forget his teaching this very text of Scripture over and over and over again in class. He took every occasion he could get to teach it to us and remind us of it. That's why he became so precious to us, I'm sure.

He spoke of Satan as going about seeking whom he may devour, and the accuser of the brethren spoke of Satan being up there in the glory and saying, Father, look at that fellow Chaffer down there. There he is, the president of the theological seminary. There he is, a professor in the classroom training young men for the gospel ministry.

And look what he's done. The devil says, Father, cast him off. Cast him out.

He's utterly unworthy to be your child. He's utterly disgrace to you. In that moment, he's Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ steps up and says, Father, I died for that sin. I paid for it in full. That's what he's saying.

This is no license to sin, brother. This is no careless attitude towards sin. This is faith in the word of God and the integrity of God.

For when Jesus Christ died, he died for my sins as a Christian, as well. Now, it's my part. Back in verse 9 of chapter 1. If we confess our sins.

That's my part. What's confess mean? Say the same thing. It's what God says about my sins.

What does God say about it? It's wrong. It's wicked. It's flawless.

I've missed the mark. I agree with God. That's confession.

I stop excusing it. I stop justifying it. I stop ignoring it.

I face it. I confess it. And by God's grace, we'll shake it.

I remind you in the Old Testament that after they offered a sin offering, they turned right around and offered a burnt offering. The sin offering for the sin, the burnt offering, the offering of complete dedication to God. So that once the sin offering was offered, the offerer turned right around and said, Lord, here's my life anew.

It's all good. My part is confession. My part is confession.

Is this needed tonight in your life? In mine. When do I confess? The moment I've sinned. The moment I've sinned.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was seen walking across the road, across the street back there in the horse and buggy days of London. Stopped right in the middle of the road, bowed his head. The moment he walked across the road, somebody who knew him well enough said, Dr. Spurgeon, may I ask why in the world you stopped in the middle of that road and bowed your head? He said, a cloud came over my soul and I couldn't wait till I got across the road to get it lifted.

Short accounts. Short accounts. Oh, I'll take him at his word tonight.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to what? Forgive us and to what? Cleanse us from what? All unrighteous. You believe that? You believe that? Never forget the time when I didn't believe it. I'd committed some sin before God, which I was ashamed.

And I remember coming to the Lord and bowing before him in my own living room when I was a youngster. I said, oh God, forgive me. Oh God, I'm ashamed.

Oh God, I've done it wrong and I've done it. I ask you to forgive me and no peace, no rest. I went back again the second time and said, Lord, I've done this thing and it's wrong and I'm ashamed of it and I claim your forgiveness.

And I got up and went off and still no rest. I came back the third time I remember so vividly and said, Lord, I'm honest, I'm sincere. I want you to know I mean it, but I'm ashamed for what I've done and I confess it.

I'm sorry. And by your grace, I forsake it. I went away again still without rest and I found no rest until I did one thing.

I took God at his word that when he says if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive. Kind of like John 3.16. It doesn't bring assurance until you believe it. And the Lord forgave me the first time I confessed, the very first time.

But I didn't believe it. I didn't take him at his word. I didn't realize he'd cleansed me from all of my iniquities.

Maybe there's somebody here tonight with that problem. I encourage you as we close to take him at his word, to believe him. And let's face this weekend with clean hands and pure hearts, with those open and ready and eager to walk in the light of God's glory.

As God shows it to us. May we pray together. Our blessed Father, we are thankful for the word of God.

We are thankful for the light revealed therein. God does know our hearts far better than we know ourselves tonight. We ask that the Spirit of God shall bring to light any areas of darkness and then give us the grace to confess them and by thy grace forsake them.

Lord, let us face this weekend of fellowship of Bible study around the person of Christ with open hearts to thy word, with purpose to walk in his light. May the word cleanse us tonight. May it sanctify us tonight.

May it conform us the more to our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in his wonderful name. Amen.

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