

Life in the Realm of Forgiveness

by Don Johnson

As Christians, we live in the realm of forgiveness, with constant cleansing and the ability to experience forgiveness when confessing sins, and our calling is to be like Christ, perfect and holy.

Duration: 1:04:02

Scripture: Proverbs 14:12, Matthew 6:14-15, John 3:19-21, 1 John 1:5, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon focuses on the theme of 'Life in the Realm of Forgiveness' based on passages from 1 John, Psalms, and Micah. It emphasizes the richness and depth of forgiveness, the need for confession, and the continuous cleansing available through Christ's sacrifice. The sermon highlights the believer's condition in the light, the struggle with sin, the advantage of living in forgiveness, and the importance of extending forgiveness to others.

Transcript

I'm glad to be in this great congregation. I want you to turn to the book of 1st John. Brother Kevin was getting awful close, but I determined even if he should preach it verbatim that I would tell it again.

I want to speak to you on the subject, Life in the Realm of Forgiveness. You might later on today look at a couple of other passages that support this. I'll not read these.

It's very familiar passages. The 32nd Psalm verses 1 through 5. What a great declaration of how blessed the man is that is forgiven. I mean this thing of forgiveness is so rich and so true and so deep that if you ever get it you've really got something.

Do you have it? There's another passage in Micah chapter 7 that declares who is a god like unto our God. Wonderful passage. Micah chapter 7 verse 18 and 19.

Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. He retaineth not his anger forever because he delights in mercy. He will turn again.

Listen to this. He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities.

That's his job not yours. He will do it. Now you do, as we will see, you do need to make confession and we'll make confession, but he will subdue our iniquities and thou will cast some of their sins, no all of their

sins, into the depths of the sea.

1st John chapter 1 beginning at 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. Impeccably pure, transcendently holy, infinitely perfect. There's no shadow of turning in him.

There's no variableness. God is ultra holy. He is the pure undiluted light.

He dwells in the light whom no man can approach to, who no man can see. So this is the God that we're dealing with, the God of light, the God in which there's no darkness. If we say that we have fellowship with him, you mean we can know this God? Yes.

If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. We have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

Isn't this interesting? Walking in the light, fellowship with God and being cleansed from all sin at the same time. Well, I don't need to be cleansed. If we say that 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 of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not.

And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation, the covering atonement, the full satisfaction, the thorough expiation. He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

These words in verse 7, we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin, cleanses us from all sin. And verse 9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. These words ought to be written in big gold letters and hanging on every wall of your house.

It is an amazing thing how such atrocious doctrines that are in the world that have all kinds of man-made schemes of how we can be forgiven. It is amazing that they could exist in light of these plain statements of how it is that God forgives sins. And yet we know the reason for this.

There are so many odd and evil teachings and so many man-made schemes of religion today because of the work of the devil. Because we know that if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine into them. God has to penetrate the darkness with his light.

I want to begin this message basically with this thought and I want to ask you children that are not Christians here, you have Christian parents but you're not a Christian, maybe even some of you older people. You do not belong to the Lord. You're not forgiven.

You're still in your sins. I want to ask you what are you going to do about your sins? It's a factor that you're going to have to deal with. You're going to have to do something about your sin problem.

What are you going to do? You know what sin is. It's wrongdoing. It's the transgression of God's law.

Lying is a sin. Cheating. Bad language.

Bad thoughts. Lustful thoughts. Evil deeds.

Fleshly deeds. Sin. Talking back to mom and dad.

Disobedience. Dishonoring your father and mother. What are you going to do about your sin problem? And I want you to know that only one of two things will be finally true of every one of us this morning.

You will either pay for all of your sins or you will pay for none of them. Why would you not want to be forgiven? When I talk about paying for sin, I am not talking about a light thing. For your eternity of suffering separated from God still will not be sufficient payment for your sins against the Holy God.

Hell is real and if you're not right with God, God is dangerous. Fear not him that is able to kill the body and after that there's no more than he can do. But fear him who after he has killed, God kills people and puts them in his trash can called hell to ever be separated from him.

So it's a consideration of the question and I'll ask it at the close. Consider this. What are you going to do about your sin problem? It will be true that you will either pay for them all in which you will never pay but you will suffer for all of them or you will pay for none.

It is a wonderful thing to be in Christ. The person who is in Christ, we're going to see the believer is absolutely forgiven, totally forgiven, and is being forgiven and can always, because he is in the realm of light, because he's in a sphere of forgiveness, he will always have ability to access as much forgiveness as he needs and will ever be forgiven. And let me say specifically when you were in Christ, your world changes.

You are not the same. In fact, you are not even living in the same world. You see, Christianity, being in Christ, is literally another realm.

It's another realm of life. It's another sphere of dimension. Actually, many times people accuse us Christians of not living in the real world.

Well, my friend, it is only those who've been awakened by God who know what the real world is all about. Because true reality is found in God and in Christ. Because it is a glorious thing to have God set his hands upon you and perform a miracle in your life where you are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

You will now change. You are in the realm of Christ and forgiveness. You live in the realm of forgiveness.

Now, if you're only still in your realm of the world, that is the natural realm, if all you know is the natural, the physical, the material, you're still in sin and you're unforgiven. Now, I hope that in the course of this, we will be encouraged to glory and to ingest in our soul just how marvelous, how wondrous, how broad, how deep the forgiveness of God is toward us who are in Christ. It's a sad thing that we are not always overwhelmed with a sense of our own forgiveness, especially when we struggle with a sense of our own weakness.

I've been, you know, I come to church occasionally and I hear, not just occasionally, almost every Sunday, the brethren tell me, said, preacher, I need a good sermon today. I've been struggling. Do you struggle? Why sure you do.

Struggling is a natural law. Keep on fighting! Struggle! We do struggle, but we often struggle with a sense of our weakness, and especially are we not overwhelmed with a sense of our forgiveness when we're under spiritual attack. Not all moments in our life are the same.

There are tranquil moments, there are moments of rest and peace, and then there are moments when we're under tremendous attack. There are times when our enemy comes to us and attacks us, and especially one of his favorite methods is parading a laundry list of our past sins before our memory. The devil is called the accuser of the brethren, and one thing he loves to do is charge you with the fact of your past sins.

Don't ever try to deny the fact of your bad and evil past. That's not the way for victory, to try to deny anything. In fact, be honest, because the devil obscures the truth that through Jesus Christ, and not because of the works of your righteousness, but because of his intense sufferings on your behalf, there has been issued from heaven a complete pardon for all your sins, saved, saved, saved by the blood of the crucified one.

Particularly troubling to Christians, and I may be speaking to some this morning, that you have experienced a tragic failure in your life, a post-conversion fall. Is it such a thing that Christians can really fall into a specific sin after you have even been converted and believed you've done something wrong, and you know you've fallen, you've been overtaken with a fall? You see, the devil really loves to rub this into your conscience. He really loves to come to you with the words, how could you be saved and do that? How in the world could you be a Christian and think that, or feel like that? And so, a post-conversion period where we have actually experienced a terrible fall is a leverage, in one sense, that the devil uses.

But we ought to bring this word up and rub it in the devil's face when we're bothered by a sense of our weakness and our shortcomings. Because it's vital to our mental and spiritual well-being to get a hold of this, of just how exhaustive, how unbelievable, how comprehensive the forgiveness of God is in our life, once we have entered into the realm of forgiveness. My friend, it is true.

This passage, beloved, is a true God-sent. It anticipates and expects the enemy's attempt to dishearten us and discourage us and to defeat us because of our various shortcomings and flip plots. As a believer, you see, learning to believe and live in the realm of a constant forgiveness.

Living, and this is the way it is if you're in the light, if you're in Christ, you live in the realm of constant forgiveness. And learning to live in constant forgiveness is just as essential as learning the initial gospel truth that we are justified through faith fully and not by the works of righteousness which we have done. So to learn to rest in the fact that Jesus did come to accomplish this mission, to save his people from their sins.

And we do need to be saved from our sins all the way through. We are wonderfully forgiven and yet we have a consistently weak and faulty life. Now I want to divide our thoughts in this message into four headings.

Number one, the Christian's condition, and we must understand this. When we talk about, and we will get to this thing of our falls or our failures, but we first of all must understand that our condition as a Christian and the standard that we have as Christians is this. We are in the light.

We're not in darkness anymore. That is our condition. And the standard that we have as being in the light is Christ and God.

We are pursuing God and God-likeness. Therefore our standard is perfection. Our standard is that we sin not.

The second thing we were going to look at is the Christian's performance. That is, our actual life is mixed. We do come short of perfection.

The Christian life now, honestly, is one in which we deal with much failure. Can we do it? Can we deal with failure? We have to. We have to learn.

We have to learn the remedy of God is always the same. And thirdly, the Christian's advantage in his life, the fact that we now live in the realm of forgiveness, we have an advantage that we objectively all the time, conscious or unconscious, we are objectively being cleansed by the blood of Christ and Christ is answering for all of our sins for us on a daily basis. As being our great high priest and our constant mediator, the fact that we're after God and love God and want to please God, God is constantly cleansing you daily of all sin and all failure and all weakness.

But also, subjectively, we experience forgiveness when we particularly are conscious of a point of disobedience. Now what do we do then when we really are aware? Many of our sins we're not even aware of. Many of our faults and our shortcomings we're just completely oblivious to.

Well, look at the text. We can fellowship with God and we can have faults at the same time. What are we going to do? Well, when we have a known point of disobedience, there's a remedy.

What are we to do? Are we helpless? No. There's a remedy. Confess up.

And then fourthly, we're going to put this experience of our calling to be perfect but yet our performance is weak and short and the fact that we are constantly and subjectively forgiven as Christians, what lessons do we learn and glean? Now look at verse 6 and 7. Here's the believer's condition and it's good to ask yourself something and this is a good little test. Have you seen a noticeable difference in your opinion about sin? If God saves you, you will never have the same opinion about sin again. Look at it.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. So now the believer's condition is and position is this.

We live in the reality of the light and the life of God. Being a Christian means you are now living in the realm of light. God does not issue pardons without bringing you into His light.

He does not just go around handing out forgiveness of sin until He translates you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. The Christian's position is now I'm in the light. The light of God has come into me and the light of God shines upon my life and therefore we as Christians cannot live any longer in the sphere of darkness.

This is so, listen, if you say that you have fellowship with Him and walk and walk is a continual habit of life. If you walk in darkness you're a liar and do not the truth. This is so, you live in the realm of light and it's not a matter of trying to do so or hope so or maybe now and then God has come and done something to you.

He's worked a work in your soul. Isn't it amazing here? There's no particular detailed definition He's given us as to the exact meaning of life. It just says if we walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth but if we walk in the light, well why don't you explain that? It assumes that those who are in the light know and what it is and let me give you a little clue about understanding the Bible.

There has to be a spiritual connection in you before you can identify with what the scriptures are really saying. The scriptures are spiritually discerned and you have to have that experience of light in you to say yeah, this is what it is. Light.

God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. God hates sin. He can forgive it.

He crucified His Son for it but He hates it. He's light. In Him is no darkness.

Light in the scriptures is a common metaphor for His holiness, His goodness, righteousness, His perfection. What it means for this, if I'm a Christian now the light is up on me. The sun is up and shining upon my life now and I don't see anything like I used to see it.

If I'm in Christ old things have passed away and all things have become new. One of my favorite things when I'm at home is to get out early in the morning on my front porch swing and sit in the dark. I love to get out early in the morning just before bed and sit in the dark while things are totally dark and watch the breaking of the day.

The threes in the front yard you can't see because when it's real dark, just solid dark and the contour of the land but as the day begins to break and the full light begins to shine upon the natural world, the whole atmosphere, the whole business is illuminated. It's a wonderful experience just watching the day break and the light shine on things and that's exactly in a sense the way it is when you're born again. When you come to know God, when you have passed from death into life, you now have God in you.

You have God shining upon you. You have a consciousness that shines on all things. Everything now in your life is in the light.

For you're in the light. Everything is naked and open before God. All experience now is in the sight of God and in the light of truth.

Proverbs 14, the path of the justice of the shining light that shines more and more into the perfect day. When we talk about being in the light, we're talking about a God consciousness. We're talking about I am aware that there is a living God.

I'm aware that Christ is the Son of God. I'm aware that he has changed me on the inside. I'm aware that he has forgiven my sins.

Everything is new. Walking in the light is actually living in union and fellowship and harmony with the living God. And it's a walk.

It's a walk in light. Guess what? When now that you're a Christian, you can't get away with anything. And if you're a Christian, you don't want to get away with anything.

You're in the light. All things are now naked and open before the eyes of whom we have to do. So our condition is that we're in the light.

We're no longer in darkness. And our calling, what is it? Our calling is to be like Christ. Make no mistake about this.

God did not just save you to keep you out of hell. That would have been a noble thing in itself, but he saved you to transform you into the image of his Son and make you absolutely perfect. Jesus wasn't kidding when he said, be you therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.

You know what your calling is? Perfection. Perfection. And it's a delightful prospect.

Our desire is to be perfect. If you could be perfect now, I'd never sin again. Would you be so? Is that desire beating your breasts? I want to be like my Lord.

I don't want to ever do wrong. I don't want to ever sin a sin. I don't ever want to think of evil thought.

I don't want to have any more corruption in my being. What a prospect. And the general tenor, walking in the light, is the direction of our life.

We as Christians now live a life of faith, a life of obedience. Our calling is perfection. But if you're still in darkness and if you're lost, you have no fellowship with God and no inner desire to please him.

You cannot say in your heart, I delight in the law of God in the inner man. You can't say that if you're a non-Christian. You're in darkness.

You don't desire to please the Lord. In fact, practicing chronic habitual sinning is your plans. You know what you plan on doing? You plan on doing as much as you can get by with.

If you're without God and without Christ, you have a heart and a hunger after sin. It's your nature. You drink iniquity in like water.

And furthermore, being in darkness means that you are dishonest even about your own sins. You try to cover up your sins. You try to keep them hidden.

You try to paint them in a different light than they really are. You try to excuse them. You try to say, well they're not as bad as that.

They're no different than other people are doing. Dishonest. Darkness.

You don't have any concern for the truth. You're not interested in the truth. When you get with God and follow him, truth becomes essential to you.

You've got to have the Word. You've got to receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save your souls. You love the truth.

Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. But if you're in darkness, you hold to error and lies. Un-Christian views of sin.

Un-Christian views of salvation. You have belief in your own ability to do good work. So these two realms of life and death, light and darkness, are opposite.

And beloved, you don't have one leg in one of the dimensions and another leg in the other. You're either in the light or you're in darkness. You're either in Christ or you are in sin.

And if you're in Christ, you live in the realm of forgiveness. Now what about the Christians' performance? Now, here we are. Look, in verse 7, the last part, the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanses us from all sin.

And if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves that the truth is not in us. We confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his Word is not in us. Now that God has come and forgiven us of our sins, our desire and our direction and our drive is holiness. We're focused on God and living right.

We're definitely doing better in our behavior, amen? But here's a one of those odd paradoxes. We live and walk in the realm of light. We by no means can walk in darkness.

We no longer can pursue wholehearted, aggressive, willful sin. We can't do it. We walk in the light, live in the realm of light.

But we also come short of living up. And you know it's true. You know you come short of living up to perfection.

See, there's something that God does to you when he pardons your sin. He raises the learning curve on sin. He makes you aware that there are things that are sinful now that you never even thought about before you were a child of God.

You used to think that sins were only confined to the area of blatant, immoral behavior. Even at that, you may have had an excuse for it. But now you realize that whosoever looketh on a woman doeth not lust after her.

You realize that sin is not just behavior itself, but sin can be in the thought. You realize that your perception of sin has been heightened. And that being the case, we struggle with frequent failure.

How can both things be true? Look at verse 6. We say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness. We lie and do not the truth. And then verse 8, if we say that we have no sin and we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, can both things be true? Absolutely.

Why should it be for the believer that attainment of perfection, which we all desire, to please the Lord and obey the Lord? Why should it be that the attainment of perfection is such a struggle? Did you know that when God saved you, he could have implanted and imposed perfection to the degree into your being from the very beginning, from the very start, from the very get-go, God could have made it where you never, ever thought a sinful thought, never did a wrong deed, never said an angry word, never felt an unforgiving spirit. He could have perfected you. In fact, he could have killed you and took you to heaven right there.

Why is it that attainment of perfection is in the plan? Why is it such a struggle? Did you know it's God's plan that you struggle and strive to enter in and deny yourself? What's the cross for? You see, the Lord wants the contact, the dependence, the constant coming to him in time of need in your life. Thank the Lord. We ain't gone.

We hurried this morning boldly to the throne of grace. We have identified the factor we feel and know to be true of us. It's the light.

The fact that we're now passed out of darkness into the light makes us even more sensitive to our sins and our shortcomings. For the light exposes not only actions that are wrong, but imaginations, motives, intents of the heart. Therefore, you cannot cover, ignore, or hide any sin when you're in the light.

For the light makes manifest your most secret deeds. But beloved, walking in the light does not mean walking in sinless perfection. I was in a meeting a few years ago in Poplar Brook, Missouri and I met this guy.

We were doing some outside of work, inviting people to church and trying to witness to him. And I met this guy. He told me, he said, he never sinned anymore.

He said, I'm perfect. I don't sin anymore. I said, you don't mean that.

He said, no, I don't sin. I said, you're lying. And I quoted him this verse.

He said, Peter, I told you, I don't ever sin. I said, the scripture says, there's not a just man on the earth that does good and sin if not. Well, he got mad and threw me out.

Do we have failures? Walking in the light, if you would understand this, you live now in the realm of forgiveness. And you're going to need it. And you have access to it.

Walking in the light is not living in sinless perfection. Though your goal and desire is striving after perfection, your actual track record is short. And beloved, it's deceitful to deny it.

It is healthy and helpful to admit it. The Christian generally does what is right and good, but at times you can make a mess, do the wrong thing, either in word. I had some words with my sister a couple weeks ago.

I disagree with her doctrinally and I lost my cool and temper with her in trying to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. And though my doctrines were right, I was in a hot temper about it. And I realized I was reprovved when I went to the Word of God.

It says, the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men. Be meek and lowly, hoping, pre-adventure, speaking the truth in love. God will perhaps grant them repentance to them.

We've got to drive it down people's throat. And that's part of it's due to my nature. But I realized I'd failed.

I had sinned. And I had to get before God and confess up and write my sister an apology and say, listen, the content of what I said was right, but the package in which I delivered it was wrong. Do we need to be honest with our sins? Yes, we are forgiven, but we need frequent cleansing.

Jesus who taught us to pray in Matthew 6:11 for our daily bread also taught us to say, and forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us. We are in honest fellowship with God, and yet we sin. We're righteous.

We have a new nature. We love it, but we're also weak in our flesh and we have... I'm speaking for myself. I have a sinful propensity yet within my flesh that I find Galatians 5 puts its spotlight on pretty clearly, that the flesh sets its desires against the spirit.

And the spirit sets its desire against the flesh. These are contrary to each other. We love Christ, but we do not live perfect lives.

We do not attain... Paul said himself in Philippians 3, 10, 12, that he did not yet attain unto perfection, but was still striving. Hardly ever do we live up or think up or act to our own expectations. And beloved, listen in verse 10.

It's honesty toward your sins and weaknesses and shortcomings that's just as much a mark of a state of grace in your souls as your faith in the blood of Christ. Verse 10 says if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. So there's a perfect balance here in our attitude toward life.

And as far as encouragement, on one hand we love Christ, we love God, we love holiness, and we want to be totally obedient. We don't want to sin at all. We don't think lightly even of the least sin.

And yet our present experience in this body is that we come short. We fail. Our fellowship is often disturbed.

The spirit can be grieved. Our conscience can be bothered. And our failure is many times an occasion for more attack from the enemy.

But beloved, we must not give up. We must not fall in despair or succumb to defeat even if we have sinned. And even if you've been overtaken in a pretty serious sin, you must not give up.

You must not despair because it is not the end or the destruction of your Christian life. There is a potent answer and solution to all your shortcomings, all of your sins, all of your failures. For why? We have light and life and we dwell in this marvelous sphere of forgiveness.

You see this is the Christian's advantage over sinners that are outside of Christ. I ask the question, what are you going to do about your sins? For the Christian, our answer is, Christ has done something about my sins. That's always our answer.

Christ, that's our hope. This is our advantage. It's all because of Christ.

The believing Christian has an advantage over a sinning unbeliever in that he has entered into the fantastic realm of forgiveness made possible by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to notice quickly the two dimensions of active forgiveness that works on behalf of the Christian. Did you notice that? In verse 7, we walk in the light as he is in the light.

We have fellowship, one with another. His fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. The saint has an ongoing continual cleansing taking place in his life every day even without asking.

This is an amazing thing and it's due simply for being in fellowship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Did you know one of the family perks of being a Christian is this continual mediation that the Lord Jesus is carrying on in heaven on behalf of the weaknesses and shortcomings of his dear people? He answers for them all. You know, the thing about it is, you don't even know all of it.

You think you can confess your sins. How would you like the Savior on any one day to confess your sins to you? You see, if he wasn't active taking care of all of our sins all the time, we would be gone. We would be ruined.

But he stands good. The blood pleads. It's by being in fellowship with God.

We know that he stands good for all of our sins. The cruel death and the blood of the Lord Jesus has paid for them all. A perfect propitiation has been made.

God has laid on Christ all of your misery, all of your wretchedness, lock, stock, and barrel. He's laid it all upon Jesus. And Jesus stands good for you even in those areas.

You've had a pretty good day. You've talked with God. You've read the Bible.

You've tried to witness. You've done a lot. You don't know all that you've come short of the miraculous, infinite perfections of God.

But Jesus stands good. Why? II Corinthians 5:21, For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. So therefore, we have an objective cleansing from our sin going on.

Every believer enjoys this precious application of Christ's mediation and forgiveness for all of our failures. You don't even pray like you ought to pray. You know not how to pray as you ought.

Jesus must purify your own praying and forgive you of your sins and your prayers. We're faulty. We're selfish.

We think of ourselves too much. We focus entirely on too much of us. You remember David when Nathan came in and rebuked him for his terrible sins? Before David ever confessed the sins, before God, before he ever wrote the 51st Psalm, Nathan after the close of telling him that you've sinned, thou art the man, Nathan told him, the Lord hath put away thy sin.

Isn't that amazing? Why is this? You see, your forgiveness has to be based on some other factor other than your repentance. It's not your repentance that saves you. It's suffering.

It's not your faith that saves you. It's the cross, and it's what radiates from the arms of the Lord Jesus that saves us and makes us good before God. So in the atonement, we have an answer for all of our sins, an objective cleansing even before we do them.

We have a wealth, a reserve, a remedy, an answer for every sin that we will ever commit as Christians because of being in the light, in the realm of forgiveness. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. Beloved, we can experience.

Secondly, did you notice this? There's the objective cleansing going on in verse 7, but we can also experience the subjective cleansing in our conscience when we are aware of a failure, a sin, and we do it by following this timeless, simple formula. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. You see, when your heart is troubled over any particular sin, when your conscience is burdened down, there must be a current response toward Jesus in your life.

You've got to come to Him. He wants you to! Come! Come in confession. Come in repentance.

You should not allow any failure, any guilt to linger long in your soul before you come. Be honest! You've got to be. You see, there's light on this thing now.

You're not going to get away with it, beloved, if you belong to Christ. Seek forgiveness. Cast yourself down before the Lord.

Believe in His grace and trust Him in time of need. Now what kind of sins are we talking about here, Brother Don? What kind of sins can He forgive in a believer's life? What kind of sins can a believer commit? I don't know. I think a believer can just about fall into anything short of willful apostasy, but he can't stay there! He must repent, and he can be forgiven.

I've known good Christians who've done some pretty horrid things after they believe. Can the Lord forgive? Are you laboring this morning because even after your conversion, even after you've turned to the Lord, you've suffered some kind of a grievous fall, and you're so defeated over the thing, you're so run down, you're so laden with condemnation and guilt, you don't think you can ever get out of that pit? Well listen, my friend, the joy and the beauty of being a Christian is that you can be thoroughly forgiven today! Even after you've messed up, it can be cleansed, washed clear from your conscience. But you must come to Christ in honest confession.

Listen, listen carefully. If we confess, go back to the point of disobedience. You know when it was? Bring it before the Lord and make full and honest confession in repentance.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. You need add nothing to the work of Christ. You don't have to make excuses or explain anything.

It's just Christ's business to forgive. Look to Jesus and go and sin no more like that again. Now let me bring this to a close by emphasizing a few lessons on the effect of this marvelous, infinite, incomprehensible sphere of forgiveness that we live in.

We should remember some things. Here's a lesson, practical lessons. Number one, you need to remember preeminently it's the enemy.

It's your adversary that wants you to crash and burn when you mess up. The devil's not near as much interested in your sin as what you do after you have sinned. Our Lord Jesus Christ is for us.

Aren't you glad? You see, when he saved me, yes, he saved me to make his child, but marvelous thing, he saved me to make me his friend. And I always think of this, if I had a friend whom I had a real need and that the resources were in that friend to meet that need, do you think that friend would turn me down? Not at all. What a friend we have in Jesus.

All our sins and griefs to bear. It's the enemy that wants you to crash and burn, not the Lord Jesus. He wants you to come to the throne of grace and receive true mercy.

He's suffered sufficiently. He is full of sympathy. He has inexhaustible resources, his propitiation, nothing can be added to it.

He need not suffer again. It's all covering. The second practical lesson is that when we do sin and we have sinned and we've confessed, turn your attention off of your failure.

Don't think about them anymore. When you turn to Christ and his promise, don't vex yourself with condemnation that you cannot bear. For you see, if you pass out of the realm of darkness into life, there is

never any real condemnation for those who are truly honest.

And you cannot be a real Christian and not be heartbroken over your sin. You're sorry for them. You will not bear condemnation.

If you've come clean and confessed and repented, forget it. Don't worry about it anymore. I don't care what human beings assessments are.

You're not going to answer to human beings. You answer to Christ. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.

There may be self-righteous people that in their egotistical pride lift up their noses and look down upon you and your failures as if they were permanent and unpardonable fixtures that utterly ruined you. I know that there are people that don't easily forget your sins or your failures, but they're wrong in doing so. Listen, look what God has said.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and then thirdly, if you can be forgiven and cleansed so frequently, what about others? You know what? We need to learn from our own weakness and shortcomings. We need to learn to be generous and tolerant and merciful toward the shortcomings of others. You know what? If you start looking at any believer very closely, you know what you're going to have? You're going to finally, if people's faults and shortcomings begin to bother you, you're going to pretty soon have a circle drawn around your life and say, I can't fellowship with anybody because I'm the only one that's right.

You need to learn to be merciful, tolerant. Jesus said this, blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Let us learn to be patient, to be merciful.

Since we are so loved, let us reproduce this love. If we can build up such frequent sins and shortcomings, why can't we be more forgiving of the faults and the failures of others? Jesus, remember, attached it as an appendix to this, and forgive us of our sins. He put a little extra in there that said, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

You better learn how to translate this great forgiveness, which you constantly receive from the Lord into your dealings with other people. Learn to be forgiving. It's one of the greatest attributes, being merciful, generous, kind-hearted, tender-hearted, forgiving.

Pass it on. Let it out to others. God's so good to you, be good to others.

Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Freely you have received, freely give. Beloved, forgiveness and mercy, when you receive it and you know it.

Let me tell you, it doesn't give you, well, now I want to go out and do that again. You see, your experience, if you've sinned or failed and been forgiven and restored by God, you know what? It motivates you to do better, to walk a little humbler, to love a little deeper, to pursue a little more aggressively. We grow, we should grow a little wiser.

I said at the beginning, I asked you the question, and it's the most relevant and most personal and epic question any of you ever face. Of all the other issues in life you think you've got business matters in, there's nothing that matters more to you than this. What are you going to do about your sin problem? One

of two things will be true of all of you when your life is said and done.

You will either be paying for all of them or for none. Why in the world, why in the world would you not want to be forgiven? Young man, why would you not want to be forgiven? Young lady, do you want to carry your sins to the grave with you? There's a remedy this morning. He's willing to forgive, but you've got to do business with him.

You must surrender to him. You see, Jesus has a little formula like this. He will give you your forgiveness that you so desperately need, only under one condition, that you give him your life to rule and control from that point on.

It's a good trade. Surrender. Give up.

Give yourself to the Lord. You'll ruin your life if you keep control of it, for he that finds his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life for my sake, the same shall find it. May we pray.

Precious Lord, we thank you for loving us and sacrificing yourself on the cross for our sins. We thank you for your heart of love and that you came into this world to save sinners. Thank you for saving us.

Thank you for cleansing us so frequently, so wondrously, day after day. Thank you for washing away our sins time and time again. Thank you for the life that you've given us, the joy, the peace, the forgiveness.

Lord, may we walk in a manner that's pleasing to you. Please, dear Lord, receive sinful men today. We know that you will.

Draw them to yourself. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

This is the condemnation that light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. He that doeth evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds be exposed, but he that does truth comes to the light that his deeds might be manifested that they are wrought in God. Isn't this something to know that you're sinful and to not want those deeds to be exposed, but to find out when you come to the light, the place where they're shown to be the most evil, that in that realm, as soon as you get there, all those things are cleansed and washed away in the realm of the light.

What a glorious thing.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/07vE2DV60xo.mp4>

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