

If we confess our sins

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Without the assurance of this verse, it would be practically impossible to go on in the Christian life. As we grow in grace, we have a deepening awareness of our utter sinfulness. We must have some provision for instant cleansing for sins, otherwise we are doomed to perpetual guilt and defeat.

John tells us that, for believers, provision is made through confession. The unbeliever receives judicial forgiveness from the penalty of sins through faith in the Lord Jesus. The believer receives parental forgiveness from the defilement of sins through confession.

Sin breaks fellowship in the life of the child of God, and that fellowship remains broken till the sin is confessed and forsaken. When we confess, God is faithful to His Word; He has promised to forgive. He is just in forgiving because the work of Christ at the Cross has provided a righteous basis on which He may do so.

What this verse means, then, is that when we confess our sins, we can know that the record is clear, that we have been completely cleansed, that the happy family spirit has been restored. As soon as we are conscious of sin in our lives, we can go into the presence of God, call that sin by its name, repudiate it, and know with certainty that it has been put away.

But how do we know for certain? Do we feel forgiven? It is not at all a question of feelings. We know that we have been forgiven because God says so in His Word. Feelings are undependable at best. God's Word is sure.

But suppose someone says, “I know that God has forgiven me but I can't forgive myself”? This might sound very pious but actually it is dishonoring to God. If God has forgiven me, then He wants m

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