

1 John 1:5-2:2
Abide in the Light

I. Intro

When is the last time you confessed a sin to God?

Now... I'm willing to be wrong, but I would venture to say that for most of us, it's been a while.

Frankly, just the word confession makes us uncomfortable.

I mean let's be honest... none of us like admitting and telling that we are wrong.

When I was a teenager my mom caught me seeking out one night. My friend and I went to go TP another friend. Anyway, when I came home, all the lights were on in the house and I knew I was busted. So, I quickly concocted all kinds of things to tell me mom. And I did. I told her all these things:

Mom, we were just out on the deck, we just went for a walk up the street, one of my other friends was coming over, so we were just outside waiting for him!

Oh man... she just kept listening and I just kept digging a hole! Finally, I went into her room... and I said, ok, I confess... we went TPing. I'm sorry.

Now... I would like to say that I learned my lesson... but even now, at the age of 43... I still resist confessing. I mean I'll get in arguments with Dondra, and I can get so self-righteous. I will stand my ground, even if it is just totally obvious that I was wrong. I just do not like admitting that I am wrong.

How do you treat it when you sin?! Do you like confessing your sin and your brokenness?

Maybe it's because we have a messed-up view of our sin, of ourselves, and of God.

Today, I would like to try and redeem the word confession.

When you live in the mindset that you don't need to confess it doesn't just impact your friendships, your marriage, and your relationship with God... it leads you down a path of bitterness and languishing.

You know people like this. People who never apologize for anything.... People who always make you feel like you are awful.... In God's economy people who never confess have a character flaw.

Last week we talked about how God went to the greatest length to make himself known. And over these next three weeks we are going to look at three things that matter when it comes to knowing God. And the first thing John addresses is sin.

Today we will see that...

When I practice regular confession of sin, I will flourish.

So here is what we are going to do today...

Why should I practice confession?

What prevents me from confession?

Where do I get the power to confess?

Why should I practice it, what prevents me from it, where is the power for it?

II. Why do I need to confess?

I John 1:5

The short answer to, why do I need to confess, is God is light.

God is light means that he is holy, there is nothing dark in him, and he is always going to be around what is right and true. God is light is the picture of perfect purity.

There is nothing about God that is hiding in the shadows. He is not cutting corners. He's perfect.

Now, this can be complicated. Because when you think about it, we don't know anything that's perfect.

Can you name anything perfect in the world?

There is a reason that John uses the word Light here to describe God.

Remember, that John's point right now is that you can be in relationship with God. You can know Him intimately. And so when the light comes on in the morning after it's you've been in the dark, what happens. It reveals what's there.

So, why do we need to confess... **We need to confess to experience God.**

If we were to turn off the lights, you wouldn't be able to see anything. But when you turn the lights on, it reveals. And when you enter into the presence of God, who is perfect, who is light... he reveals what's there.

And John is saying... no matter who you are, the light is going to expose some things... some dark things.

And in order to walk in the light, we need to confess those things.

b. We need to confess to experience glory.

God has made each one of us a certain way. And sin has corrupted that glorious person He designed you to be.

The only way for God to reveal His work in us is if we confess, because it is in confession that we are cleansed.

Now, here's the problem when it comes to confession, the problem is how we understand sin. And John actually points out three beliefs that prevent us from confession. Let's look at them.

III. What prevents me from confession?

There are two ways that we live in that prevent us from confession... the Never Confessors and the Worm Confessors... That's process them both.

a. We become Never Confessors.

I John 1:6, 8, 10

John exposes three false views that we have when it comes to understanding our sin, that lead us to be 'never confessors'. And they really build off of each other. Let's read these verses.

Basically, he is suggesting that there is a tiered perspective that we can go through when it comes to our sin. And if we have any of these perspectives we will be never confessors. And in the kingdom of God there is not a place for never confessors.

Never confessors will start by hiding their sin (6), then they will justify their sin by comparing their sins to others (8) and that will lead to them starting to believe they don't sin (10)...

Let me go back to the beginning, this morning, when is the last time you confessed a sin to God?

If it's been a while, then you probably view your sin the wrong way. You are probably a never confessor.

It's hard sometimes to really press in and be exposed, but let God be the one exposing today... not shame and guilt. Let God reveal today your view of sin, because remember, He wants you to know Him, He wants you to flourish, but you can't walk with the light and be hiding your sin.

There is a story of a French Philosopher who lived a debauched life and said at the end of his life "I am not worried about God, he will forgive me, that is his job." Do you view God like that? Do you think God is just like, sin is sin... you do it... I got it... no worries? Friends, sin is destructive. And when you view sin and God this way, you will be a never confessors and you will languish in your spiritual life.

There is another way we live...

b. We become Worm confessors.

Worm confessors are the people who are always declaring how bad they are, how sinful they are, but it is driven by self-pity and self-abasement, not a real confession.

When I was in High School I played goalie for the soccer team... and as you know... well my skills weren't that amazing. So... every time I performed poorly I would yell to the whole field... 'Sorry Guys!' I'd made a bad kick, 'Sorry Guys!', I'd let in a goal, 'Sorry Guys!'. It was this, I'm worthless, I'm awful, so I'll confess to everyone!

Some of us in this room are worm confessors. We sin, we stumble, we struggle, and we say to the triune God, 'Sorry Guys', but it is not a confession of transparency, it is a confession of convenience. Do you confess your sin like that to God? Just whenever you sin it's a light hearted 'sorry guys' with no contrition or weight.

What keeps you from confession?

We are either **Never Confessors or Worm Confessors.**

We either think... sin isn't that big of a deal, God's fine – that's his job... or I know I sin and I don't know what to do, I feel like God is just continually frustrated and disappointed in me...

The purpose of today's sermon is to invite you to a third way. To invite you to the belief that **When I practice regular confession of sin, I will flourish.**

That there is a healthy way to live in the light and be aware and transparent of my sin, which I confess to God. This might be a little too much information, but I like to confess my sin to God in the shower. There is a visual piece for me there. That God cleanses me of unrighteousness. Sometimes I'll just think through the day before and offer prayers of confession to God.

But the reality is, it's a struggle. It's a struggle to practice it regularly.

So where is the power to have a life of confession like that.

Well John uses some legal language here that if we can really begin to grasp... will be the beginning of us experiencing a walk with God that is joyous and flourishing!

III. Where do I get the power to confess?

I John 2:1-2

Chapter two verse one says, Jesus is our advocate, one who speaks on our defense. An advocate is someone who has a relationship with you so that whatever they achieve you achieve and whatever they lose you lose. He is our legal representative, our defense attorney. The lawyer stands in the client's place, he is your representative. Now, I need to help us see this in the right way, so let me illustrate this.

I remember when I got my first speeding ticket. I was driving down Ladue Road and it just got a little away from me. It was brutal, all my friends were in the car.

Anyway, I had to go to court and my dad came with me. He actually knew the guy who was the judge.

So, we are standing up there and the guy says to my dad, you here to represent him. Yep... Is he going to be able to slow down... Yep my dad says. Alright, let's just do driving school and we'll get it off his record.

Thanks, we both said...

Now my dad was a good advocate, but I still had to pay a price. Jesus is a more complete advocate. Look at the verse what does it say, Jesus the righteous.

Yes, he is our lawyer, and what does every lawyer have... a case. He stands before God and he has a case. And his case is verse 2...he is our propitiation. Big word, but a critical word. It means **satisfaction or appeasement made on behalf of the guilty for pardon.** So basically, Propitiation is the appeasement of the wrath of God against sinners by the death of Jesus.

Jesus Christ's death drives God to accept us and love us, and for God to be known, which was his plan all along. So, God sees sin as a tremendous issue, but He doesn't just look at you with frustration and disappointment!

Jesus says, "Yes, Brian sinned again, but I died that death for him and I was able to do that because I lived the life that he was supposed to live. I am his advocate and when you look at him you have to see me. I demand justice!"

Now, do any of you feel like you should demand the justice of God when it comes to your sin?

Look at verse 9, what does it say?! Let's read it together!

What is God, he is just!! He has to forgive! You can now stand before God and know Him!!

Jesus declares “Your law demands death for the sin that has been committed. That death has already happened, the punishment has been taken. It would be unjust for you to demand two payments for these sins. Therefore, it would be unjust for you not to forgive”.

I know you want to break free from your sin. We just don’t know how to break free from it, we don’t know how to change. Deep down we think, how can I go to Jesus with this sin? I’ve already gone before. Will he forgive me again? We hear that voice... ‘You call yourself a Christian? How dare you go to the father! What if everyone knew what you had done?’ Some of you are crushed by it.

My friends, can I share you the great news, that God is light and holy and that means he has to be just! And He can be because everything has been paid! Don’t listen to that voice anymore! Jesus is your advocate!

The God of the universe provided you a way to not be crushed by your sin. When you confess your sin to God He is not going to crush you, He is going to release you! And that is when you will start to flourish! Because.... **When I practice regular confession of sin, I will flourish.**

IV. Conclusion

Today we are going to conclude just a little differently. I’m going to invite you to be vulnerable with God and let yourself experience the power of forgiveness. In just a moment I’m going to ask you to go before God and have a moment of confession. To be transparent with Him. And after you do, I want to invite you to take communion, to remember the cross, to taste what your advocate has accomplished for you. And when you head to the tables this morning someone is going to be there as you take the cracker and dip it in the juice and they are going to declare this truth over you... ‘Because of the work of Christ, you are forgiven’. I want to invite you to receive that truth. And then we are going to worship.

This is the way God is inviting you to today. Confession, Forgiveness, Worship... Can we join in that together today? Let’s pray...