

North Summit Church
Devoted: Confession
July 13, 2025

1 John 1:8-10

8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Hebrews 12:1-2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Introduction:

- **I have a confession to make this morning** - and it seems fitting given our topic.
- My garage is consistently in disarray.
 - It's not that I intend for it to be a disaster zone, but it seems to be a constant battle:
 - I start a project, I pull out tools, materials get scattered, and then life calls.
 - Instead of taking the fifteen minutes to put everything back where it belongs, I tell myself, "I'll deal with it later."
- Project after project, this pattern repeats. Before long, I can't find the tools I need when I need them. Simple tasks become frustrating searches through the chaos.
- What should be a functional space becomes a source of stress rather than productivity.
- This morning, we're talking about something infinitely more important than garage organization - **the gift of confession.**
- Just as neglecting physical spaces leads to accumulating clutter, neglecting the spiritual discipline of confession leads to what we might call "spiritual clutter" -

unresolved guilt, hidden shame, and broken fellowship that accumulates in our hearts and relationships.

- But here's the truth: God hasn't left us to wade through this spiritual mess alone. Confession isn't a burden He's imposed upon us - it's a gracious gift He's given us for growth in Christ-likeness and genuine fellowship with Him and one another.
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The Problem - Spiritual Clutter Accumulates

- **Let's begin with the reality we all face.**
 - The writer of Hebrews gives us this image:

Hebrews 12:1-2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

- **Notice that phrase - "sin which clings so closely."**
- The Greek word here suggests something that easily entangles, like loose clothing that snags and slows a runner.
 - This isn't talking about dramatic moral failures; it's describing the daily accumulation of "small" sins that gradually weigh us down.
- **This is the nature of spiritual accumulation.**
 - David understood this progression perfectly.
 - **In Psalm 19, he prays:**

Psalm 19:12-13

"Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression"

David identifies three stages in sin's progression:

- **Hidden faults** - private thoughts and attitudes, sins of the heart that no one else sees - sometimes they are even hidden from you, they are blind spots.
 - **Presumptuous sins** - behaviors that spill over into our relationships, witnessed by family and friends but never addressed - we typically make excuses for these.
 - **Great transgression** - public scandal that devastates testimony and relationships
- This isn't speculation; it's the consistent pattern of how spiritual neglect works.
 - What starts as a "minor" unconfessed attitude of pride becomes a pattern of dismissing others' opinions, which eventually erupts into public arrogance that destroys relationships and witness.

Here's what makes spiritual clutter so dangerous - we adapt to it.

John warns us about this very tendency:

1 John 1:8

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"

The word "deceive" here doesn't mean we're lying to others; it means we're lying to ourselves. We become accustomed to our spiritual disarray. We rationalize. We minimize. We develop elaborate explanations for why our spiritual life looks nothing like what Scripture describes.

- Just as I can walk through my cluttered garage and think, "It's not that bad," we can walk through cluttered spiritual lives thinking we're "doing fine" because no major scandals have erupted.
- **But Scripture asks the challenging question:**

Psalms 130:3

"If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?"

- The answer is obvious - none of us. The person who thinks they have no need for regular confession hasn't looked honestly in the mirror of God's Word.
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The Solution - Honest Confession

- This brings us to God's gracious solution. John gives us this promise:

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

- **But what does it mean to truly "confess"?**
- This isn't just a religious exercise or spiritual maintenance routine - it's an act of honesty and humility.
- The Greek word translated "confess" is *homologeō* - a compound word meaning "to speak the same thing." It's the idea of agreement, of saying the same thing about our sin that God says about it.

This means:

- If God calls it pride, we don't call it "healthy self-confidence"
- If God calls it gossip, we don't call it "sharing prayer requests"
- If God calls it bitter anger, we don't call it "righteous indignation"
- If God calls it greed, we don't call it "being responsible with money"
- **True confession requires what we might call "theological honesty"** - using God's vocabulary for our spiritual condition rather than our own euphemisms and rationalizations.

Proverbs gives us the blueprint for the process of honest confession:

Proverbs 28:13

"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy"

- **Notice the two-fold action: confessing AND forsaking.**
- True confession isn't just naming our sin; it's turning from it. It's both acknowledgment and repentance.
- But here's where the gospel becomes magnificent - we're not cleaning ourselves up through confession.
 - **We're asking Another to clean us up.**

- The verse says God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- We do the confessing; God does the cleansing.

Why can we have such confidence in confession?

Because of what John tells us earlier:

1 John 1:7

"But 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"

- The blood of Jesus - His perfect sacrifice - is the foundation of our forgiveness.
- We're not hoping God will be merciful; we're resting in the accomplished work of Christ.
- When we confess, we're not trying to earn forgiveness; we're receiving what Christ has already purchased.
- Even more remarkably, John reminds us:

1 John 2:1

"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"

- Christ Himself is our advocate, presenting His perfect righteousness on our behalf. Even our imperfect repentance is covered by His perfect obedience.
- So keep short accounts. With yourself and others.

The Result - Fellowship and Joy

- This brings us to the outcome of regular, honest confession - **restored fellowship and genuine joy.**

1. Fellowship with God

- John opens his letter with this incredible statement:

1 John 1:1, 3

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life... we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ"

The goal of the gospel isn't just forgiveness - it's fellowship.

- Intimate, personal relationship with the triune God. But notice how John immediately connects this to dealing with sin:

1 John 1:5-6

"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"

- Unconfessed sin doesn't just make us guilty; it breaks fellowship. It creates distance in our relationship with God. Regular confession isn't just about avoiding punishment; it's about maintaining intimacy with our heavenly Father.

2. Fellowship with Others

- But the blessing extends beyond our vertical relationship.
- John says our fellowship is "with the Father and with his Son" but also "with one another" (1 John 1:3, 7).
 - Confession is fundamentally communal.
- When we harbor unconfessed sin, it doesn't just affect our relationship with God - it poisons our relationships with others.
 - Bitterness makes us critical.
 - Pride makes us judgmental.
 - Greed makes us selfish.
 - Hidden guilt makes us defensive and hypocritical.

Jesus taught us about this connection:

Matthew 5:23-24

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift"

- True worship requires honest relationships.
- Paul echoes this in his instructions about the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11 - unresolved conflict and unconfessed sin actually make our communion a mockery rather than a blessing.

3. The Joy of Clean Fellowship

- And what's the result of this honest fellowship? John tells us plainly:

1 John 1:4

"And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete"

- Complete joy! Not happiness dependent on circumstances, but deep, abiding joy rooted in clean conscience and restored relationships.
- **David experienced this joy after his confession of adultery and murder:**

Psalm 32:1, 3, 5

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered... When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long... I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin".

- The contrast is stark - groaning under the weight of unconfessed sin versus the blessedness of forgiveness.
- Later in the psalm, David breaks into praise:

Psalm 32:11 - "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"

- This is the fruit of regular confession - not just relief from guilt, but positive joy in relationship with God and others.

Conclusion:

- Let me take you back to my garage. When I finally tackle the clutter and restore order, something remarkable happens. Not only can I find what I need when I need it, but the space becomes useful for its intended purpose. Instead of being a source of frustration, it becomes a place of productivity and service.
- The same tools that were once buried under chaos become available for projects that bless my family and neighbors. The workbench that was once unusable becomes a place where broken things get repaired and new things get created. Order doesn't just eliminate the negative; it enables the positive.
- **This is the gift of confession in the Christian life.** When we regularly deal with the spiritual clutter through honest confession, our lives become what God intended them to be - not just free from the burden of guilt, but actively useful for His kingdom purposes.
- **God has given us confession not as a burden but as a gift - a way to maintain the fellowship for which we were created.** Just as my garage functions best with regular attention, our spiritual lives flourish with regular confession.
- **This isn't about perfection; it's about honesty.** It's not about never sinning; it's about quickly dealing with sin when we do. It's the gracious rhythm of acknowledgment, forgiveness, and restoration that keeps our relationship with God and others fresh and genuine.
- **And remember - just as an organized garage serves the whole household, lives marked by regular confession serve the whole body of Christ.** When we're honest about our struggles, others feel permission to be honest about theirs. When we demonstrate the joy of forgiveness, we point others to the grace available in Christ.
 - When we walk in the light through regular confession, we don't just experience fellowship with God - we become people with whom others can have genuine fellowship.

So here's my challenge as we close:

- What spiritual clutter has accumulated in your life?

- What weights and easily entangling sins need to be confessed and forsaken?
- What broken relationships need the healing that comes through honest acknowledgment and biblical forgiveness?
- Don't wait until the mess becomes overwhelming. Don't adapt to spiritual disarray as normal. Take advantage of the gracious gift God has given us in confession.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

- He's faithful. He's just. He's ready to forgive and cleanse.
- All that remains is our honest confession - speaking the same thing about our sin that He speaks, trusting in the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **The result?** Fellowship with the Father and the Son. Fellowship with one another. And joy - complete joy - in the grace of God.

Benediction

Gracious Father, as we go from this place, may You who are faithful and just to forgive our sins go with us. Give us courage to walk in Your light, to confess quickly, and to forgive freely. May the blood of Jesus be our confidence and His advocacy our assurance.

Transform our lives into workshops of grace where broken things get repaired and beautiful things get created - all for Your glory and the building up of Your body..

Amen.

