

Truths We Confess

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn in them to 1 John as we continue to go verse by verse through this book.

1 John 1 verse 5 through chapter 2 verse 2 is our text this morning. If you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles in the pews that you may use.

And if you don't own a Bible, please take that Bible home as a gift from our church to you today in our hopes that you'll continue to be reading the Word of God. This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that 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. 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.

If we say 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.

[1 : 22] If we say we have not sin, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us. 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.

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated?

Well, this past week, many students and teachers went back to school, and that can be an exciting time and also a dreadful time for both students and for teachers.

Both of my sisters are public school teachers, and from time to time, when we get together, I'll hear stories that they share of some of the things that they have had to endure from difficult students and difficult parents.

One of my sisters told me a story about a mean email she received from a parent. And this parent's child had not done well on a test, but that is not what this parent was upset about.

[2 : 45] They took issue with my sister using a red pen to grade the test. They believed red check marks were a cruel and discouraging way to correct wrong answers.

This parent was also upset because at the bottom of the test, my sister wrote a note to the student asking, Did you study?

And the parent accused my sister of mocking and ridiculing their child's performance. My sister asked that question because she's a good teacher.

She was trying to discern how best to teach her student. If the student hadn't studied, then she would help them develop better habits to study.

And if the student had studied and still did poorly, then maybe they struggled with test anxiety or they just didn't grasp the lesson. But in the mind of this student and this parent, my sister was the one to blame.

[4 : 00] They had excuses and they took offense to her doing her job. We see this a lot in our society, don't we?

Refusal to accept blame and instead coming up with a list of reasons to excuse our behavior and place the fault on something or on someone else.

Why do people do that? The Bible has an answer. In the beginning, God created all things and he created all things good. And mankind was the pinnacle of that creation.

They were created in his image, enjoying a unique and special kind of relationship with God. Adam and Eve had perfect fellowship with God and all of creation, which they were tasked to manage and to rule over as husband and wife.

Genesis chapter 2 concludes saying in verse 24 and 25, God speaking here, Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

[5 : 14] And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. With no knowledge of evil, Adam and Eve had no shame.

They had nothing to hide. They had complete gratification in their union together. The joy that they had in being in a right relationship with God, their creator.

But the events of Genesis 3 undid that. Eve is tempted by Satan with secret knowledge, a lie that she exchanges for the truth.

She eats the fruit of the tree, which God had forbidden. And she hands it to Adam, her husband, who was supposed to be her protector, but doesn't protect her from Satan's assault on her, on truth, and God being the source and authority of it.

And he joins her in her disobedience. And then we read in Genesis chapter 3 verses 7 through 8. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked.

[6 : 19] And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden.

God calls out to Adam and Eve with a question. Where are you? God knows obviously where they were. The intent of the question was for them to explain why it was they were hiding from him.

To admit what they had done. And all God does here is ask questions. Where are you? Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?

Again, God knew what they had done. He's waiting for Adam to confess. But that is not what happens. Genesis chapter 3 verses 12 through 13.

The man said, the woman that you gave me, she gave me the fruit and I ate. The Lord said to the woman, what is this that you have done?

[7 : 29] And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. Eve blames Satan. Adam blames God.

This is what sin does. The Bible says that all of us are born with the nature to sin. A desire to sin. Like our first parents, we go to great lengths to hide our sin, to rationalize our sin, to blame someone else for our sin, or deny that sin even exists.

But John calls us all to understand here in this passage that to deny sin is to call God a liar and to call into question both God's word and his character.

To deny sin is to set yourself up as an authority over God. And that doesn't end well. Because ultimately, it's in the realization of our sin that we see our need for a Savior to save us from it.

[8 : 42] John has a totally different view of both sin's severity and a Savior's necessity. That's the point of his argument in these verses.

He's combating the false teachings that are taking place in his churches that are influencing the churches that he's writing to. He's warning them about the danger of denying sin and how such thinking leads people to deny Jesus Christ as their Savior.

And so John says, in effect, here, find out what a person believes about Jesus and what they think about sin, and that will tell you a lot.

It will tell you whether they have truly been born again. It will tell you whether or not they have been genuinely saved. And so John presents a series of tests in this letter for us to determine whether or not we are truly saved.

And in these verses, he makes it clear that someone who has genuinely been saved confesses their sin, acknowledging their need for a Savior.

[10 : 01] And so that's the main idea for this morning's sermon. Genuine believers confess their sin and acknowledge their need for a Savior.

Why is this important? Why is this important? Well, for believers, it's important because you must be guarding your heart and your mind from Satan's lies.

One of those lies leads into legalism. Forgetting that you are saved by grace. That you are saved by Christ through his atoning work on the cross to cleanse you of your sin.

And the danger is in thinking that, well, in order for God to love me, in order for God to save me or keep me saved, it's all about, or the Christian faith is all about, just keeping rules.

Why is this important? Also, for a believer, because of cheap grace. Preaching forgiveness without repentance. Preaching grace without a cross.

[11 : 16] And thinking or allowing others to think that they are saved merely by a profession of faith. Either through repeating something like a sinner's prayer, or signing a card, or walking down an aisle.

Yes, those who have been genuinely saved confess their sins. They profess Jesus as Lord. But the truth of that confession and that profession is revealed in the way that they live.

Continually confessing their sin. Repenting of their sin. Desiring sin to be put to death within them as they live in obedience to Christ.

And there's desire that others would know him and live in obedience to him too. Cheap grace seeks to hide the cost of what it means to follow Christ.

How will people know the truth about sin's severity and the necessity of a Savior if we are the ones who are hiding it from them? Why is this important to you if you're an unbeliever?

[12 : 26] Well, sin, your sin, has severe consequences. Romans 6.23 says the wages of sin is death.

Not just physical, but eternal death. Eternal separation from God in hell. But the good news is that Christ has come to save sinners.

In Christ, the Bible says we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

And so my hope today is that you will be the recipient of his grace today. That you will confess your sins and turn to Christ in acknowledging your need for a Savior.

Genuine believers confess their sin and acknowledge their need for a Savior. And in these verses, John presents us with three confessions that a genuine believer truly believes.

[13 : 38] Three confessions that a genuine believer truly believes. The first confession comes in verse 5. That God is sinless. God is sinless.

Look at verse 5 with me again. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

The message John speaks of here is the gospel. Christians have a gospel, a message of good news. This message concerns Jesus Christ, whom John has already identified as what was from the beginning and the word of life in verse 1.

He says in verse 2 that he is the eternal life. In verses 3 and 4, he says he is the Son of the Father, the source of our fellowship and the source of our joy.

This is the message John says that we have heard. And the perfect tense of the verb means that it continually rings in our ears this good news.

[14 : 42] And it's one that Christians continually proclaim. That God is light. And in him there is no darkness at all. But what does it mean that God is light?

Throughout the Bible, light and darkness are used to present the contrast between who God is and who we are without him. In the Bible, light is often used to represent truth.

And that truth is contained in his word. In Psalm 119, 105, we read, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

In Psalm 119, verse 30, we read, The unfolding of your words gives light. It imparts understanding to the simple. The Bible says that it's this light, this truth that gives life.

Psalm 27, 1, The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 36, 9, For with you is the fountain of life.

[15 : 54] In your light do we see light. God who is life and gives life, has come to us as the light of the world in his son Jesus Christ.

John 1, 4 says, In him Jesus was life, and the life was the light of men. John 1, 9, The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John 8, 12, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

In John 12, 46, he says, I came into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. So taking it all together, God is light means that he is the source of truth, and that his truth gives life.

That light and life was manifest in Jesus Christ, his son, who saves us by calling us out of darkness to walk in the light as children of light.

[17 : 09] This is the truth Christians confess. God is light. God is holy. He is other. He is perfectly pure.

As John says, In him is no darkness at all. And now that might be bad grammar, but it's excellent theology.

God has no dark side. This is a non-negotiable tenet of the Christian faith. Romans 3, 23 through 24 said, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

The critical link of fellowship between creatures of darkness and a creator who exists in absolute light is the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Without him, we remain in a state of darkness, an alienation from the light and the life of God.

[18 : 21] God is sinless. That is a truth that those who have genuinely been saved confess. And the second confession is this. People are sinful.

God is sinless. People are sinful. Verses 6 through 10. The false teachers that had infiltrated the churches that John was writing to claimed to be sinless.

So why is that a big deal? Because sin is a big deal to God, our sinless creator.

Well, what is sin? Sin is a word God uses to describe an action that misses the mark. His mark.

God is holy. He is perfect. And sin is anything that deviates from his expressed will and desire.

[19 : 28] In a real sense, the essence of sin is our attempting to take God's place. It's our wanting to be in charge.

Wanting to make the rules and wanting to call the shots. Wanting to provide our own definition of what is right and what is wrong.

What is sin and what isn't. But John isn't interested in human opinions about sin. He knows the truth.

And he uses three rhetorical, if we say, statements to help us see sin for what it is. And to see it the way that God sees it.

So in verse 6, he says, if we, and this we includes anyone, anywhere, at any time, who takes this position, even John himself.

[20 : 30] If we say we have fellowship with him, meaning we claim to know him savingly, while we walk in darkness, living a life that contradicts that claim that we know God, John says, we lie and do not practice the truth.

This describes a person who says, I know God, but whose practice and behavior contradicts that statement.

They don't practice what they preach. You know, Jesus' sharpest rebukes weren't directed towards thieving tax collectors, adulterous women, or people who his society labeled as sinners.

Those people knew they were sinners. But at least they didn't try to hide it. Jesus ate with them.

Jesus fellowshiped with them. Not because he condoned their sin, but because they had an awareness of their sin. And it was in that awareness of their sin that they were drawn to Jesus.

[21 : 55] Seeing in him someone who could do something about their sin. And Jesus was ready to help. His sharpest rebukes were for the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, the lawyers, the teachers of Israel.

Those who claimed to know God better than anyone else. But Jesus repeatedly called them out for their self-righteous ways.

And one place he did that was Matthew 21, verses 28 through 31. What do you think? Jesus asks.

A man had two sons and he went to the first and said, Son, go and work in the vineyard today.

And he answered, I will not. But afterward, he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, I will go, sir, but did not go.

Which of the two did the will of his father? And they, that's the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, the lawyers, they answered the first.

[23 : 08] And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom before you.

Wow. You can follow the rules without following Christ and still be in darkness.

Conversely, you can make a profession of faith, but if your life doesn't demonstrate a changed attitude towards sin, that profession means nothing.

And you are still living in darkness. In Matthew 7, 15 through 20, Jesus said, Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?

So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

[24 : 21] A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Thus, you will recognize them by their fruit. Similarly, in Matthew 3, verses 7 through 10, John the Baptist issued the same warning to those who professed to know God, but whose lives told another story.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father. For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children of Abraham.

Even now, the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

[25 : 39] Bearing fruit in keeping with repentance. What does repentance mean? Well, it's turning away from sin and turning in faith to God.

They are like opposite sides of the same coin. Both are linked in salvation. You know that God is sinless. You understand that you are a sinner, and you recognize your need for that to be made right, and you understand that only Christ can make that right.

And he, and only he, can supply you with what you need. And so, in verse 7, John says, 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.

A sinner can be sure that they are saved because they have a desire to walk in the light. they desire to confess their sins, not hide them, not excuse them, not ignore them.

They've lived in the darkness, and they don't want to go back there. They grieve their sins in repentance, but they know and they trust that while those sins have distanced them from Christ for a time, they have not separated them from Christ.

[27 : 06] And it's that truth that creates within them a desire to walk in the light, putting sin to death in themselves, knowing that Christ is better.

Whereas confession involves admitting that what we did was wrong, repentance involves a desire to change course. We not only acknowledge our sin, but take steps to overcome it and to forsake it and to kill it.

Confession without repentance is only words. Most people will confess to a sin when they're caught red-handed. Their show of remorse is due to the consequences of their actions, not the sin of the action.

a person who truly knows Jesus Christ is not comfortable with sin's presence in their life.

And they go to him daily, regularly, seeking and receiving his forgiveness when they confess their sins.

[28 : 27] More on that in a moment, but let's move to verse 8. John says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. The false teachers that were in the churches that John was writing to were denying the existence of a sin nature in their lives.

And that is a lie that contradicts everything we read in the Bible about God and ourselves. For example, the Bible says in Romans 5, 12, that we are all born sinful.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, that man is Adam, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all have sinned.

The sin nature was passed down to all of us from Adam and Eve. we are all born with a nature that desires to rebel against God and finds enjoyment in it.

And if you don't believe that, then volunteer in our nursery next Sunday. Those kids are precious. God loves those children.

[29 : 47] children. But anyone who has been around a child or who has raised a child, they know you don't have to teach a child how to be bad, do you?

And when you tell them, when you tell them that something is bad or when you tell them not to do something, not only do they do it, but they do it with a smile on their face, don't they?

humanity is sinful, not just in theory or in practice, but by nature.

Wherever people are, there is trouble. In Psalm 51, 5, David confesses, behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Later, he adds in Psalm 58, 3, the wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray from birth, speaking lies. Isaiah says, all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own

way.

[31 : 01] Wise King Solomon said, surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. The apostle Paul acknowledged of himself, for we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh.

sold under sin. And those verses are just a few of many that talk about the sin nature that we are all born with.

But notice that these men who knew God, who were saved by God, who were inspired by God to write his word, were most keenly aware of their own sin.

More aware of their own sin than the sins of anyone else. Because the truth was in them. Proof of the sin nature abounds, both internally within each and every one of us and externally in all that we see.

To deny it or to say that you haven't sinned is the height of self-deception. Charles Spurgeon said, the idea of having no sin is a delusion.

[32 : 20] You are altogether deceived if you say so. The truth is not in you and you have not seen things in the true light. You must have shut your eyes to the high requirements of the law.

You must be a stranger to your own heart. You must be blind to your own conduct every day and you must have forgotten to search your thoughts and weigh your motives or you would have detected the presence of sin.

He who cannot find water in the seas is not more foolish than the man who cannot perceive sin in his members. As the salt flavors every drop of the Atlantic, so does sin affect every atom of our nature.

You may think, you may want to think, that you have no sin, but God says that you do. you may think you have no need for a savior, but God says otherwise.

And praise God that he says otherwise. Because look at verse 9 again. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[33 : 34] verse 9 is one of the most beloved and memorized verses in the Bible. God may not always forgive the earthly consequences of a sin, but he's faithful and he's just to forgive us the eternal consequences for them all.

All of them. that is who God is. He desires to forgive us. When my children disobey Danny and I, there's consequences for that.

But you know, the consequences are lessened when they acknowledge what they did to us first. And when we can tell and see in them a sense of sorrow, feeling sorry for what they've done.

As their father in that moment, you know what I want to do for them? I want to forgive them. I don't want them to carry around that guilt anymore.

[34 : 57] I don't want them to feel or be tempted to think that we don't love them because we've punished them for their sin, for their disobedience. I don't want them to sit and time out forever.

I don't get enjoyment out of disciplining my children. And I'm a sinful man. How much greater is that desire in our sinless creator to forgive us, to show us mercy?

Proverbs 28, 13 says, whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes, you see it? Confession and repentance, forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Not might obtain mercy, not probably will obtain mercy, but will obtain mercy. Before John moves on into chapter two to explain how God has proven faithful and just to cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness, he reiterates all that he said about those who refuse to confess their sinfulness with the last if we say statement.

He says, if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and the word is not in us. If we don't confess our sin, if we act like it's nothing, we add to our sin by calling God a liar and the truth of God is not in us because in such a state of denial, we will reject our need for a Savior.

[36 : 48] But those who have been genuinely saved, not only do they confess that God is sinless and that people themselves included are sinful, thirdly, they confess that Jesus died to save sinners.

Jesus died to save sinners. John begins in verse 1 and calling these believers my little children. This is a term of endearment. John genuinely loves these people and cares for these people. And he continues in verse 1 of chapter 2 saying, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. Now, John has already made it clear that in this life we cannot be completely sinless, but he does believe and the Bible says that as we walk with Christ and follow him we can sin less.

By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit working in conjunction with God's word, we can move closer to hitting the mark. I think I was in fifth grade, we had a science fair and every student was supposed to come up with a project and my project loving baseball trying to incorporate baseball into school was a test in accuracy, a test in throwing accuracy, seeing how accurate I could be from various distances from the target that I was aiming at.

[38 : 26] And do you want to know what my great, amazing scientific discovery was in this project? The closer you are to the target, the more accurate you are.

Amazing stuff. How close are you? Brother, how close are you, sister, today to the target? And maybe that's God's message for you through his word is that you're far off. You're missing the mark too much. You need to move closer to me and maybe that's you today.

But whether you are a believer who has strayed or an unbeliever walking in darkness, there's good news. So we continue in verse one.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. The word advocate means helper, one who comes alongside of another in a time of need.

[39 : 41] There is only one person in all of human history who did not sin, who does not have a sin nature, and that person is Jesus Christ.

His virgin birth allowed him to enter our sin-cursed world while bypassing the curse of sin passed down from Adam to us. But this sinless one, he doesn't snub his nose at us and look down on us. He helps us. He helps us. How does he help us? We continue in verse two. He is the propitiation for our sins.

Propitiation is an important word. It carries the idea of satisfaction. Jesus Christ, by his sinless life, was able to atone, to satisfy, to appease God the Father's holiness, and turn away his righteous wrath from sinners like you and me.

The wrath that should have been poured out on us was poured out on Jesus at the cross. Jesus Christ satisfied God's wrath willingly, purposefully, and completely.

[41 : 07] It's why he came. He satisfied God's wrath against sin and provides those who put their faith in him with victory over their sin nature.

First Peter 2 24 says, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

So understand this, Jesus is more powerful to save than Adam was to ruin. In his resurrection, Jesus offers life to everyone who is enslaved to sin.

in salvation, he causes us to be born again, giving us a new life with a new command. Romans 6 11, so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

These truths that we confess are truths that are meant to be shared, as John concludes in verse 2. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the world.

[42 : 25] The pardon of sin is offered to you. Do you know that God is sinless? Do you know that you are sinful?

Do you see your need for Jesus to save you? Augustine said, he who denies the existence of God has some reason for wishing that God did not exist.

If that's you today, if you're denying the existence of God, why is it you know in your heart of hearts what that is, and ultimately it's sin.

sin? So what do you do? What should we all do when we sin? Simply, turn to Christ for forgiveness. That's the main application. Turn to Christ for forgiveness. forgiveness. And you know what will happen when you turn to Christ for forgiveness?

[43 : 35] You'll realize that he's been facing you all that time. In Matthew 11, 28 through 30, Jesus says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The guilt you have, the shame you have, the brokenness that you have, that make you feel heavy laden.

Jesus says, come to me and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and I love what follows.

for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

It's an amazing thing that we who have sinned against God would receive such a great mercy through Jesus Christ his son.

[44 : 57] To know him in salvation. To know the hope that comes through Jesus alone. To have that heavy load of sin, and the guilt, and the shame, and the anger, and the brokenness, and the hurtfulness, be taken off of you by him.

as he comes alongside of you, and he helps you all the days of your life. And when you sin, and when you stumble as a believer, he's there to lift you up, to clean you up, and to continue that walk with you all the rest of the days of your life.

life. And you know, Christians, we need to be more like Jesus. Especially when it comes to each other's sins.

How often people have been hurt in the church because they've been made to feel that in order to belong, you have to act like you're perfect and have no sin. What a lie. What a lie. We've all sinned. We've all fallen short. In Christ, we continue to try to follow him. And hopefully we should be, as we're growing in sanctification, sinning less, but we still sin. We need Jesus all the time.

[46 : 21] We need reminders of the gospel every day. And we need to remind each other of it. This isn't in my sermon, but let me just ask you, and I think this will help us to gauge where our church is at in doing this.

Do you feel comfortable? Would you feel comfortable confessing your sins, to the person sitting next to you in the pew this morning? Do you feel that they really love you and care for you?

That they will be like Christ to you? There's a problem if that's not the case. This is not a place for us to pretend like our lives are perfect and we have no problems.

us. We all need Jesus. We need him all the time. And thank God he's given us his church to serve in, to be fed, to be nourished, and to grow, to be more like Jesus, and hopefully to be a light to a world that is walking in darkness.

four application questions for you to look at later today or later this week. How does the image of light help you understand who God is?

[47 : 44] How does the image of light help you understand who God is? Think of all the things that light does for us. And what is God communicating about light that we need to understand about him?

Question number two. Why is it important to get your idea of sin from what God says rather than from culture? Why is that important? Question three.

Read Romans 1, 18-32. What are the consequences for a culture that denies and normalizes sin? And I'll tell you, we're living in it right now.

And then finally, what does John say about Jesus that gives sinners reason to hope? And man, there is reason to hope. So the invitation for you again this morning is to turn to Jesus.

Maybe, brother or sister, you realize that you've been in sin. And God through his word today is calling to you and saying, all right, it's time to cut that stuff out.

[48 : 49] Come to me. You're far away from the mark. Draw near to me. And if that's the case, don't leave this room without going to the Lord in prayer and confession and repentance.

And if you're an unbeliever here this morning, understand this. That salvation isn't about you cleaning yourself up, getting your act straight, doing a bunch of good deeds so that you feel like you can then go to God.

No, it's just you going to him right now. The thief on the cross who is being crucified next to Jesus turned to him and said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And Jesus said to him, what? Today you will be with me in paradise. There it is. He never attended a church service. He never went to Sunday school. He wasn't even baptized. He turned to Jesus and saw his need and Jesus forgave him and received him.

And he's ready to do that for you today. If you feel comfortable coming up during our invitation, great. If not, I'll be up here and I would love to talk to you and to hear and to answer questions that you might have.

[50 : 04] Will you bow your heads with me and let's pray. Lord, what a wonderful truth it is to know that there is salvation in Jesus Christ. What a wonderful truth it is to know that, Lord, when we sin, we have an advocate who comes alongside of us, who helps us in our time of need, who does not rub our face and our sin, but who restores us, who cleanses us, who washes us white as snow.

God, we know we are living in a time when many who claim to know you, churches who claim to preach your gospel, they're not doing it. They're following culture, they're following the world, they're not calling sin, sin, and they're making salvation seem like it's something cheap that doesn't require

confession or repentance of sin.

God, we pray for them. We pray that you, Lord, would reveal the truth to them in the error of their ways that they would change. And God, we pray for those who know it, who see it, who you have opened the eyes to see these things, that we would proclaim it.

But like you, Lord, we would do so in a way that is gentle and humble, not to win an argument, but hopefully to win people to you, to be used of you to do that.

And so, Lord, we pray for your help. And God, if there's anyone here this morning who does not know you, Lord, I pray that you would call out to them, that they would turn to you in repentance, and that they'd be saved.

[51 : 45] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.