

# CONFESSION OF SIN

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**1 JOHN 1:9 • TV-434B**

A television broadcast sermon delivered  
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by  
**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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## **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.*

Here is my text today, **First John Chapter 1 verse 9**. I've spoken several times from this Chapter of God's Word, but I am going to bring another message from it today. Here is the title of the message: "**CONFESSION OF SIN.**" What is it to confess our sin?

**First John 1:9** says this; "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" What a blessing that is when we truly, truly, confess our sins to God and are truly, completely and forever forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness.

I'm going to speak on that subject, but before I do; I must establish several things before I get to the heart of that text. We've got to clear up some things. We've got to admit some things.

Now, here is the first one. All people, men and women, boys and girls are sinners. I had a friend get angry with me while he was listening to this television program

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years ago, before God brought him to the knowledge of Christ. I pointed to the audience and I said; “You’re a sinner and I am a sinner.” He got angry. He said, “I am not a sinner and turned the television off.” I’m thankful that he got up and turned it back on and heard the rest of the message. My friend, this is true; you are a sinner! It doesn’t matter who you are because you are a sinner and I am a sinner.

The Bible says; “*There is no difference.*” It doesn’t matter if it is in the pulpit, the pew or in the world. All men and women are sinners. “*There is no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*” Is that not what the scripture says? “*There is none that doeth good and sinneth not.*”

In **Psalm 14**, it says, “*The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*”

We’re born with a principle of sin in us. We fell in Adam. “*By one man, sin entered into this world and death by sin, so death passed upon on all men for all have sinned in Adam.*” David said, in **Psalm 51**, when we are conceived in the womb of our mother, we are conceived in sin. We are developed in the womb in nine months and are born in sin. Look at **Psalm 51:5**: “*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”

When we come forth from the womb we come forth estranged from God, liars. That’s right, read **Psalm 58:3**, “*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*”

I didn’t invent that! That is what the scripture says. Most of you know it by experience. Look at **verse 8** in this same **Chapter of First John 1**. “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*” Don’t say that!

My friend turned the television off and said, “I’m no sinner.” He was deceived and the truth wasn’t in him. Thank God there is some truth in him now. He admits he’s a sinner.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us how to pray; “*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. If a man says that he has no sin, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him.*” Look at **verse 10**, following our text. “*If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His Word is not in us.*”

So, I am saying this to you; “We are sinners.” Let’s establish this fact first of all. It is by birth, by choice, by nature, by principle and by practice. We are sinners! “*All of sinned and come short of God’s glory. There is none that doeth good and sinneth not. Man at his best state is all together vanity.*” If you don’t admit this and own this, you are deceived. There are four things said about you: “*You are deceived*

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*and the truth is not in you. You make God Almighty a liar and His Word is not in you.”*

I'll go one step further. You hang on! Even our good works are filthy rags in God's sight. That is what the scripture says in **Isaiah 64:6**. *“Even our righteousnesses are filthy rags.”* In other words, even the good that we do has too much self in it. There are too many selfish motives in it. There is too much personal ego in it for one reason or another. We have tainted everything that we have touched. We have tainted everything that we deal with. We've made it unacceptable to God because we are in it.

I know that is difficult for most people to receive, but that is what God says. It is true. *“All are sinners.”* If we only knew how evil we are and how capable we are of the grossest sins, if it were not for God's restraining hand. The scripture says, *“The wrath of man will praise the Lord and the rest of the wrath He will restrain.”* That's right! You say; *“This world is gone to the dogs.”* If God didn't restrain sin and restrain us and restrain evil, you don't know what dogs are and what hell is. Our God restrains evil. God has restrained you and put hedges about you, walls about you and barriers about you and me to keep us from being what we could be.

We're not going to get anywhere with this confession of sin until we have something to confess. We have plenty to confess if only we realized it. Let's face it and read God's Word and admit the truth.

Secondly: I am glad that I have this to say. I have to lay this foundation. God is merciful. Thank God He is merciful! God will forgive sin. I spoke on this last week, do you remember; *“There is forgiveness with God? He's plenteous in mercy. He delights to show mercy.”* He's merciful. The scripture says, *“Be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful.”* God is merciful and God will forgive sinners.

His everlasting covenant is a covenant of grace. There are no works mixed in it. It is all of grace. *“Christ came into the world to save sinners.”* Before He was born the angel came to Joseph and said, *“Call His name Jesus, (Joshua) our Saviour. Call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”* That is why He is coming. The apostle Paul said, *“This is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”*

Why was He hanging on the cross? *“He was made sin for us. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. He bore our sins on His body on the tree.”* God is merciful and God will forgive sin. God will be gracious. That is why Christ died. *“He was wounded for our transgression; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid on Him.”* That is why He died.

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He lives! He lives and intercedes for sinners. Paul, in **Romans 8** said; “*Who can condemn us; it is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us.*”

The gospel is preached with the promise of forgiveness. That is what the gospel does, it promises forgiveness to all who believe. “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth on the Son of God shall never come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.*” In **Isaiah 1:18**, it says, “*God says come; let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they will be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*”

That is the gospel promise. In **Acts 13:38** the apostle said, “*Be it known unto you men and brethren that through this man, Jesus Christ, (who died on the cross), is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin.*” God will forgive sin. “*By Him, all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*” I’m talking about forgiveness.

A while ago I talked about sin and I took us down, but not as far down as we are. I tried to describe what we are by birth, and by nature. I may have offended some people, (who knows), but they need to be offended. Sin ought to offend us. Now, I’m talking about the mercy of God. We’re just as evil as God is Holy. We’re unthankful just as much as God is merciful. We are just as far down in the depths of our depravity as God is High up in His mercy and His grace. God will forgive sin. “*God delights to show mercy.*” That is God’s glory.

All right, here is the third thing that I must establish: First, we are sinners, secondly; God is merciful and He will forgive. Thirdly, the Bible is full of promises of mercy and forgiveness to those who confess their sin and come to Christ and believe on Christ.

In **Isaiah 45:22** it says; “*Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else.*” Look and find mercy!

In **Isaiah 55** it says; “*Let the wicked forsake his way and let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will find mercy. Let him return to our God and He will abundantly pardon forever.*”

In **Matthew 11:28**, our Lord said; “*Come to Me and I will give you rest. All ye that labor and are heavy laden, you come and I will give your rest.*”

I tell you, God talks about casting our sins into the depths of the sea. He talks about blotting them out. He talks about casting them behind His back. He talks about remembering them no more.

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Here in my text; listen to it again; *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sin, we make God a liar and His Word is not in us. But, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”* You have to confess them, not deny them. Don’t hide them. Don’t justify them. Don’t excuse them. Don’t use it as an alibi. Come clean and confess our sins. Don’t confess somebody else’s, not the world’s sin, our sins.

It says, *“He’s faithful.”* Who is faithful? God is. God is faithful to His nature. *“God is love and He delights to show mercy.”* That is God’s nature. His nature is holiness and love.

That is what Christ did when He came. God’s truth and mercy met together in Christ. God’s righteousness and peace kissed each other at Calvary. He is faithful. He is faithful to His nature; He’s faithful to His covenant. His covenant is the covenant of grace (it is a testament). He’s faithful to His Son. He promised His Son a people. He’s faithful to His Word. He says, *“I will be merciful; I will be gracious; I will be merciful to whom I will but I will be merciful.”* I’ll be gracious. He is faithful if we confess our sins and He is just. In other words, God has purposed a way and in Christ has given us a way that He can be Holy and yet forgive us. He can be righteous and yet show mercy to us.

He can punish our sins and yet forgive our sins. How can He do that? Christ took our place. The Son of God, (the second person of the divine Godhead) came into this world in human flesh and walked this earth as a man. *“He was tempted, tried and tested in all points as we are without sin.”* God looked on Him and considered us. God looked on His obedience and reckoned it to us and imputed it to us. He gave it to us and then God sent His Son to the cross and there He punished Him for all the sins of all believers of all generations and all ages. He paid the debt in full. God forgave us. The law was honored and justice was satisfied.

The debt was paid and we owe nothing. That’s right! The debt was paid legally, before the law and before justice and we are not guilty. We have no sin. I’m not guilty because my sin has been paid for. I’m not guilty in Christ; I fulfilled the law in Christ, *“He’s faithful and He is just to forgive us our sins,”* all of them, not some of them, but rather all our sins.

When Christ died for my sins; He didn’t die for the sins that I committed, up to the point that I made a profession of faith. People say, “Well, when I believed on Christ; He paid for my sins, up to that point.” My friends, when Christ died on the cross all my sins were future. He paid for them; I didn’t pay for them. Faith didn’t pay for them; the profession of faith didn’t pay for them; Christ did. He didn’t pay for some of them; *“The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin,”* (A-L-L).

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Now, in Eastern Kentucky that means the “whole kit and caboodle,” all of it! What does it mean in West Virginia and Ohio? It means the same thing, all of our sins. *“The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin. He’s faithful and just to forgive all sin.”* That is not some of them; it is all of them.

I will tell you this, if you read **Romans Chapter 3**, you will find that when Christ died, He not only paid for the sins of His people in the future, He paid for the sins of His people in the past. When He died on the cross, He paid the sin debt for Abraham, Moses, David and Isaiah and their sin debt was cancelled. *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”*

God waited until Christ died and their sin debts were cancelled and paid. When He died, all of them who will believe, their sin debts were paid. Now He presents believers before His throne, *“holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.”*

Do you know something? If we confess our sins, (right then), God Almighty forgives all your sins, past, present and future. We have to come before God genuinely owning our sin. We have to admit our sin and not deny or justify or excuse them before God. We have to approach Him admitting and confessing our sin and believing on Christ and looking to Him alone for salvation, mercy and grace.

We have to trust in Him, rest in Him, receive Him, submit to Him, and look to Him alone. You are in Christ accepted in the Beloved. You are justified, you are sanctified, you’re redeemed and you are God’s child. You don’t have one sin and you never will have a sin. That’s exactly right! You never will have a sin because they are all paid for.

There is a little word, here in my text that I want to look at (it carries so much). The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son cleanseth us from what? *“Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

There’s a little word here in my text and I want you to take a look at it. It is a two-letter word and it carries so much weight and is of great importance. The word is “if.” The scripture says; *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

I will tell you this; no man ever truly comes to God in sincerity seeking mercy, but he that finds it. That’s right! Here is the problem. You can’t find someone who is

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sincere. You can't find someone who is genuine and truly repentant in heart and truly confesses his sin. Job said this; (Job 33:27-28), "*He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.*"

Can you do that? Can you do it sincerely, honestly and genuinely before God? It is true; I have sinned. It is true, no doubt about it! It is easy to say, "I have sinned." Do you mean it?

If you go through the Bible, there were some who didn't mean it and some who did. Let me give you some who didn't. Pharaoh didn't mean it. In Exodus 9:27 and 28, Pharaoh said to Moses; "*I have sinned; take your people and get out of here.*" Did he mean it? No, it wasn't long, until he was after them.

Balaam said it. He was the covetous preacher. He was supposed to have been a preacher, a prophet. He got in cahoots with some fellows with some money. They were promoters. He couldn't resist and was so covetous and greedy. Finally God spoke to him through the ass. Do you remember the talking ass? God talked to Balaam and he said, "O I have sinned." He didn't mean it. It wasn't long until he was just as covetous as ever. We've seen a lot of that in the 1990's, haven't we?

King Saul said, "I have sinned." He said to David when he was chasing him and trying to kill him, he said, "David, son, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I tried to kill you; I have sinned." He wasn't sincere because he tried it again. He kept on trying until God killed him.

Do you remember Achan; He stole the wedge of gold in **Joshua 7**? Finally, Joshua caught him. God punished Israel for what this man did. He coveted that wedge of gold. He stole it and he hid it in his tent. He wouldn't admit it and finally Joshua found him by process of elimination. He said, "Son, you stole this gold." Finally, old Achan said, "I have sinned." He didn't say it until he was exposed and he had to. He didn't mean it.

There was Judas who betrayed our Lord. He sold him for 30 pieces of silver. Do you know that he said, "I have sinned." That is right! He said it out of remorse, despair and depression; he finally came back to the priest from whom he had taken the 30 pieces of silver and cast them on the floor. He said, "I have sinned." Did he mean it? Well, he knew it but he went out and hanged himself.

I want you to look at a man in the Bible who said, "I have sinned," and he meant it. He was genuine; he was sincere and I want you to see the welcome that he got. He said, "I have sinned." He was a genuine sinner, a prodigal, guilty sinner. He wasted his father's substance, was alienated from his father, but he said, "I have sinned."

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This is a picture of true confession. I want you to watch this; “I have sinned.” You should be familiar with the story of the Prodigal Son and how he had spent all and wasted his father’s substance on riotous living. He was now, feeding the hogs in the hog pen and you are familiar with his confession of sin. But, have you ever really looked at it? Listen to it! It says, first of all, in **Luke 15:17**, “*And he came to himself.*” He realized what he was, he realized where he was, and he realized why he was there. Have you ever come to that place? He was a poor rebel; that is what he was. He was in the hog-pen. That is where he was and he was there because of his own evil nature and heart. Can you face that?

What are you? You are a sinner and a rebel. Where are you? You are away from God. You are alienated from God in darkness and sin and you are going to hell. Why are you there? The reason is that it is “my fault.” It is not my momma’s fault, daddy’s fault, countries fault or my environment’s fault; it is my fault. I am what I am by choice and so are you.

Then, what did he do? He came to himself. He realized what he was, where he was and why he was there. Secondly, he considered His Father’s house. Not his Father’s law. It was His Father’s goodness.

Listen to what it says; “*O, how many hired servants in my Father’s house have bread to spare and I am perishing with hunger?*” (He is not talking about sons; he is talking about servants).

I tell you, My Father is God. Your Father is God. That’s right, if you are one of His own, one of His believers. “*The goodness of God is what leads a man to repentance.*” It’s not the whip of the law. I tell all these preachers that hell-fire and brimstone is not going to bring people to repentance, it didn’t bring the Prodigal Son to himself or to repentance. If he had thought about a whip, he wouldn’t have gone home. If he had thought about hell-fire, he wouldn’t have gone home. If he had thought that His father was a terrible tyrant who wouldn’t forgive, he wouldn’t go home. He said, “In My Father’s house, even the servants are taken care of.” I’m going to rise and go to My Father and I’m going to say, “Father, I have sinned.”

He humbled himself and said, “*I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*”

I’m not looking for merit. I’m not looking for praise. I’m not looking for position. I’m not looking for reward. I’ve got no excuses. I do not deserve anything, just make me a slave, because your slaves fair better than the devil’s sons. “*I have sinned and I’m not worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.*”



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Do you know what kind of welcome he got? The father saw him come and ran, embraced him and kissed him. He said, “*Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet and a robe on His back.*” My son was lost and now he is home. What did he do? He came to himself. He humbled himself. He saw the goodness of His Father and came home and confessed his sins and found mercy.

*“If we confess our sin, He’s faithful and just to forgive us.”*