



“Sin, Confession, and Cleansing” (1 John 1:1-2:2)

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Intro: This little epistle was written around A.D. 100 by the apostle John. Having been exiled to Patmos where he received the tremendous vision now penned as the book of Revelation, John later gained his freedom and moved to the city of Ephesus. Jerusalem had been basically ransacked by Titus and the Roman army, and John supposedly spent the rest of his life in Ephesus. He most likely wrote this little letter from the city of Ephesus.

John was an older man at this time, and several times in the letter he refers to his readers as “dear children.”

False teachings had infiltrated the churches, and we find John giving firm absolutes in his letters to counter many of these false teachings. Two Greek words for “know” appear thirty-six times in this little epistle.

vv.1-4 Our fellowship with one another is based solely on our fellowship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Some of us would not be together for any other reason!

Our joy is dependent upon our fellowship with God and with one another as believers in Jesus Christ.

v.5 See John 1:4-5

James 1: 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God reveals shadows, but there are no shadows in Him. God being light suggests His perfection, holiness, majesty, glory...

v.6 Walking in the darkness simply means I am hiding something. We'll come back to that.

v.7 See Romans 13:12-14; If I walk in the light, it means first and foremost that I have allowed myself to be exposed by God's light, that I have realized my sinful condition – my “nakedness” before the light of God's holiness. It means I am not trying to hide anything from God. I am honest before God. But it also means I am not trying to hide anything before others. My walking in the light means that I have fellowship with others who are walking in the light, and we have

nothing to hide (from God or from one another). As a result, the blood of Jesus “purifies us from all sin.” And one of the tremendous results is abundant and complete joy!

v.8 The most difficult person for the truth to reach is the person who does not see their sin. See John 8:31-34; 9:41; Parable of Pharisee and tax collector (Luke 18:9-14); Rom.10:1-4.

See Isaiah 6: 5-7.

Rom.3:23 For all have sinned...v.10 there is none righteous...

v.9 This is one of the great challenges of the Christian life, not allowing sin to remain hidden. And the Bible instructs me to confess not only to the Lord, but also to fellow Christians (James 5:16).

The privilege of confession is because God wants to forgive us of our sin and purify us from all unrighteousness (darkness).

v.10 This seems to be referring to someone who has sinned, needs to confess the sin, but instead chooses to keep it hidden.

Proverbs 28:13 Whoever conceals his sin does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

2:1a The Word of God is a vital component in the life of a Christian to help us to not sin.

Psalms 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

In the temptation in the wilderness Jesus responded to the devil with “It is written...”

2:1b-2 Anyone in the world can have their sins forgiven, because Jesus’ death on the cross is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. So for the Calvinists in the crowd, the atonement is not limited. And anyone who has had their sins forgiven can continue to walk in the light by not keeping sin that needs to be confessed hidden. If we will confess it, Jesus is ready to speak to the Father on our behalf, and our fellowship can be restored, with God and with other believers.

Unfortunately the record in Scripture is filled with people who chose to hide their sin rather than come clean before God and others.

The Bible begins with a story of an attempted cover up (see Gen.3:6-13).

Then there is the story of a man named Achan (Joshua 6:18; 7:11-12a, 14-22ff).

The servant of one of the greatest OT prophets sinned and attempted to cover it up (see II Kings 5:20-27).

Israel’s most beloved king, and someone God himself described as “a man after my own heart,” sinned greatly and went to great lengths to try and cover it up (see 2 Samuel 11).

One of the twelve apostles was I think one of the best men ever in keeping his sin hidden (Judas). None of the other eleven had the slightest clue to Judas being a thief. Story of CC Merritt Island, the elder/treasurer who for over twenty years had been stealing from the offerings; Les Watkins.

A couple in the early church at Jerusalem conspired together in an attempt to hide their sin (see Acts 5:1-11).

Why is it we have so many examples in the Bible of people who attempted to cover their sin up rather than confess it? One is that we have a natural love for darkness instead of light. Our flesh enjoys sin (Heb.11:25). A second is that it is uncomfortable to be exposed, and we have a natural inclination to not want to be exposed (John 3:19-20). And then there is the fear of condemnation if the sin becomes known. That's why I need to be reminded of verses like John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

The woman at the well; the sinful woman who interrupted the dinner party; the woman caught in adultery; Zacchaeus; Matthew the tax collector;

I want us to pause for a moment and think about why God encourages us to not keep sin hidden. Sin does nothing good for us, do you understand that?

- It is deceitful
 - Hebrews 3:13...encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that no one may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
- It produces death, not life
 - James 1:15...sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.
 - Rom.6:23
 - Psalm 51:1-3, 10-13; 32:1-5

Let's be reminded of some things before we leave here today:

1. Nobody can hide anything from God
 - Hebrews 4: 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
2. All sin will ultimately be exposed and dealt with by God
 - Num.32:23b ...you may be sure that your sin will find you out.
3. God wants to forgive us, cleanse us
 - Hebrews 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.