

1 John 1:1–10

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—

² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

⁵ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that 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 that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

“Confession and Relationship with God”

1 John 1:5-10

INTRO:

We will be observing the Lord’s Supper. In Paul’s instructions for taking the elements, he wrote that we had to take them worthily. We must do a self-examination to deal with our hearts. He included an incredible promise in **verses 31-32**. *“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”* If we want to take advantage of this promise, we must understand how we *“judge ourselves.”* This is where today’s text fits.

1 John 1 is about fellowship with the living God. How do we sinful people have fellowship with God? Our fellowship with God is built upon Our Lord’s Incarnation (**verses 1-4**), God’s Self-revelation (**v. 5-7**), and Our Confession (**v. 8-10**). We will only look at the last two points of this chapter.

I. God’s Self-revelation (5-7)

II. Our Confession (v. 8-10)

I. God Self-revelation (5-7)

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:4-7)

A. Our fellowship with the living God required the incarnation of the Son. He had to come in the likeness of sinful flesh. This was so our thrice holy God could condemn our sin in His flesh. Our Lord’s death on the cross is the ultimate basis of our fellowship with God. The second foundation is our God’s self-revelation.

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”

1. What does this mean? It is true light reveals things. Light also penetrates the darkness.

2. The ultimate idea about light and darkness in **John** is righteousness and sin. Two verses we have looked at several times demonstrate the point. **John 3:19-20**

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”

B. This truth leads to two points, First,

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

If we want to have fellowship with the living God, we cannot live our lives in the darkness of sin.

C. That’s the bad news. The second point is the very best news.

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

1. If we walk in His righteousness, we will share together with the living God and He with us.

2. Since we are sinners and we will never be entirely sinless this side of heaven, how can we walk in the light? We cannot walk in the light by faithfully following some “dos and don’ts” list. Our own righteousness will never make us able to have fellowship with God.

D. “And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

This is continuously going on as we walk with God. How does this happen? This is where the third foundation fits.

II. Our Confession (v. 8-10)

“If we say that 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 our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” 1 John 1:8-10

A. The Apostle John liked to emphasize the positive by giving the negative. So, to make us recognize how this works, he included a truth sandwich. First let's deal with the negative statements which underline the positive reality. These are **verses 8 and 10**.

1. ***“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (Verse 8)*** The first problem which will keep us from having fellowship with the living God is our claiming to have no sin. One sure mark of our conversion is a sensitivity to sin. If we claim we have no sin, we have never received Christ as our Savior.

2. The other side of the truth sandwich is **verse 10**.

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”
This makes it a little stronger. Not only do we have no sin, we claim we have never sinned. If you believe this, you make God a liar.

B. Now the spiritual meat of the sandwich. (v. 9)

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1. We begin by confessing our sin. What does it mean to confess our sins and what does the Lord promise? The word translated confess means to say the same thing God says about our sin. This is sin. We aren't giving an excuse. Rather, we admit we are guilty of sinning against our eternal God who has never done anything bad to us. We see this in David's Psalm of confession, **Psalm 51:3-5**.

“For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.”

2. What should happen when we confess our sins? God should judge us. Instead of judging us, our Lord does something entirely different. Listen to what John wrote.

“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

God is faithful to what the Lord Jesus did on the cross, and He is absolutely righteous in forgiving our sin and in cleansing us. When we confess, God forgives and cleanses. This is how we sinful people can walk in the light with Him.

C. To help us understand how tremendous this forgiveness and cleansing is, I want to focus on some of the words in these verses.

1. First look at the extent of the forgiveness. The word *“all”* appears twice in these verses. Notice first in **verse 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

He repeated this *“all”* statement in **verse 9**.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

He forgives all our sins and cleanses us from all our wickedness and guilt.

2. The two words for sin are also helpful. In **1 John 1:7** John wrote about the reality which happens unceasingly. If we are walking in the light, our Lord Jesus is continuously cleansing us from all our sin. This word is the general word for sin. He forgives our failures to obey God and love Him as we should. Judicially, He forgave our sin once and for all when He saved us. Practically, He forgives our sin when we confess it to Him.

3. In **1 John 1:9** John uses two words for sin.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The word translated sins is the usual word for sin. He forgives our sins, but he also cleanses all our unrighteousness. This could be translated *“our wickedness.”* He is likely saying the same thing again in slightly different terms. However, he may be emphasizing how completely the Lord forgives us. He did not forgive only part of our sin and wash away only some of our wickedness. He forgives and cleanses all of it.

Hebrews 8:12 *“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

Hymn #185 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross