

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## FORGIVENESS ON THE GO

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26 APRIL 2021

"Out of intense complexities, intense simplicities emerge" – One liner's tell us what we need to know without the faff. Here's one from the Bible: "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). This single line prompts action, praises God and prescribes our forgiveness so let's explore it together.

Simplification works against us when we need to deeply consider an issue, however, when we need a quick solution it serves us well. Imagine you are tired, worn down and feeling guilt about a sin you committed. What do you do? The chances are you don't reach for John Owen's 'On The Mortification of Sin' or wait around until you have the opportunity to read the Bible. Most likely you dip into your mind to find encouragement that is already stored there.

This verse from 1 John has upheld me on countless occasions, to the extent that I've even memorised it, and that's why I share it with you today. If you forget everything else in this Beacon, remember this: "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). I hope it will get through a long Monday, or help you recover from one at 6pm.

Let's look at three components of this verse to understand how it helps us and why it's so good:

The first component is:

1. Confession – This verse describes the situation when we confess our sins to God and what happens as a result. This is the primary action we are called to as fallible human beings who constantly sin against God.

Is there any good reason we should confess? Yes. Earlier, chapter 1:8 says we "deceive ourselves" if we claim we don't have sin in us and in 1:10 we make God

out to be a "liar". Simply put, all human beings sin and all of us need our relationship with God restored through his forgiveness.

Why would we say that we have no sin? Perhaps because we only see the big sins like murder and adultery as sin, but not things like anger and lust which lie underneath the big outward actions. Perhaps we only compare ourselves to human beings around us rather than God. Perhaps we are too afraid to admit it or think about it.

It's easy to see why all of us react in those ways to God sometimes. In 1 John 1 :5 we are confronted with God's perfection: there is 'no darkness' in him at all. How are we to live up to that and what hope is there for us? I will answer this as we go along.

2. God's character – if we are worried about God's perfection and our shortcomings, the second part of the verse gives us hope because it shows a vital part of God's character: "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins..."

God, in his perfection, doesn't want to burn us to a crisp or kick us away, he wants us to come to him, redirect our lives and be saved. Confession is encouraged based upon his character because he is faithful and just to forgive us.

What makes him just to forgive us our sin? Don't we deserve to be punished when we do something wrong, especially against someone so great? How can it be 'just' to let something like that go? Jesus willingly chose to receive the penalty we deserved for our sin and died on a cross for it, even though he lived a perfect life. God brought him back to life because of his perfection, and now, everyone who trusts in Jesus' can be forgiven because the penalty for sin has been paid. When I say 'trust in Jesus', I am particularly thinking of trusting in his 'perfectly lived life to save us' rather than worrying about our own qualifications and good deeds.

If we trust in God, it is 'just' for God to forgive us because Jesus has already paid the price for our sins. He's already done the time we deserved so we are also assured of forgiveness when we confess.

The extent of forgiveness – "...faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Not some unrighteousness, not lots of unrighteousness, but all unrighteousness. Not some types of sin, not many types of sin, but our sin, whatever it is. I love this aspect of the verse because in a couple

of words it confirms the magnitude of God's forgiveness, with zero qualification or hesitation.

There is no sin that God cannot forgive if we confess it to him. All sin can be forgiven, in all its many forms. What's the catch?

If any, the catch is that we need to come to him and confess it. This doesn't mean confessing each and every sin that we've ever committed, but it does mean, as a whole, confessing that we are sinners who have sinned against him. The opposite is a person who believes that they don't need God's forgiveness and therefore don't confess their sin to him.

I love this verse because as soon as you hear it there is something to do with it. It cuts through the crap of 'woe is me I can't be forgiven' or 'I don't need forgiveness'. We can confess anything, be forgiven for everything and see the goodness of God who enables us to do this.

The exploration of this verse is a summary, and I encourage you to read the full chapter to get a fuller picture. The beauty of this short verse is that we can easily apply it, quickly memorise it and use it constantly in our lives to fend off Satan's accusations and our own pride and moping around.

I hope it encourages you today to explore the riches of God hinted in this short one liner.



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