

Faith Fights For Courageous Confession

A sermon in the series
What Faith Must Fight For

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Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

I 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.

One of the main reasons why skeptics and secularists want to remove all religions from the marketplace is because they believe it engenders guilt and they believe feelings of guilt produce negative consequences. Religion, they say, creates unrealistic expectation that sets people up for anxieties and complexes, the result of feeling guilty. In other words, religion establishes control over people by manipulating them with guilt.

One couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. The two parents knew that if there was any trouble in their small town, no doubt their two boys had something to do with it. They doubled Dennis the Menace. The parents were at their wits end at what to do with their sons' behavior. They heard there was a minister in town that had some success dealing with wayward children and so they agreed that they had nothing to lose. The pastor agreed to speak to the boys but he stipulated that he could only speak to one at a time and the 8 year old was chosen to go first. The day had come, he was to meet with the minister and into his office he was marched and sat down. And with somewhat of a sternness the pastor looked at the boy and said, "Where is God?" The boy said nothing. This time with a little sterner voice, the minister said, "Where is God?" Again, no response. This time even in louder tones and with his finger pointed in the boy's face, "Where is God?!" And with that the boy bolted, ran all the way back home, and shut himself in the closet and slammed the door. His brother followed him and said, "What happened?"

"We are in big trouble. God is missing and they think we did it."

That's what skeptics and secularists believe religion does—it makes people feel guilty and can

thereby manipulate and control them. They especially believe this is true of Christianity with all its talk about sin. Well, first of all I would like to say in rebuttal that most of the Christian talk in America today has nothing to do with sin. You're hard pressed to ever hear it mentioned. Secondly, sin is a big problem and "we are really in big trouble," to quote the 8 year old.

Therefore I want to recommend to the skeptic the Christian faith because only the Christian message of the Gospel can help people with the problem of guilt by removing the reason for the guilt—the sin problem.

You see the feeling of guilt is a phenomenon much larger than just being bothered by a troubled conscience. It becomes a way of life and it can overtake a man and eventually destroy him. What makes a man carry a dark secret and finally collapse under it and try to commit suicide? What does that to a man? Guilt will do it.

Last year the head of a huge collapsed brokerage firm, Russell Wasendorf, admitted to frauding his clients of almost \$100 million over a 20-year period by personally doctoring the bank statements. Knowing that he couldn't keep it a secret any longer and facing the humiliation that his guilt brought was too much for him. He tried to end his life but was discovered before he could do so. In his written statement, Mr. Wasendorf said he was the only person in the company that was aware of the fraud. He had carefully concealed it all of those years. The scheme began out of financial desperation. He wrote these words,

"I had no access to additional capital 20 years ago and I was forced into difficult decision, should I go out of business or cheat? I guess my ego was too big to admit failure so I cheated."

And the guilt got to him. That's what bothered this executive that he would even try to take his own life. It wasn't the sin he had done that bothered him, it was the shame, the reproach and the guilt that lived with him. If you were to ask an individual *what is guilt?* Most would say guilt is the feeling you have when you do something wrong. But that is not what guilt is. That's the feeling guilt produces, but it's not guilt.

If you were to put your hand on a hot stove you're going to experience pain, but the pain is not the burn. The burn causes the pain. The feeling of guilt is not guilt but the result of it. What's really sad is that most people don't really care about the sin, they just want to get rid of the feelings of guilt resulting from the sin. Only Christ though, only Christ, can remove both the guilt and the sin that produces the guilty feeling.

Christianity offers the removal of the cause of guilt thereby removing the emotions associated with the guilt. How so? Because God literally renders you not guilty. In other words, if you were here last week you would have heard that God makes a legal decision to pronounce you not guilty. How can He do that? Because He sent His son to take your sin, my sin, and He was punished on our behalf in our place so that the guilt is not ours. It was transferred to Him. It's no longer mine because as far as God is concerned I'm not guilty. That's the blessed doctrine of

justification. That's what your faith must fight for to believe.

But for reasons that are contradictory to the Gospel, many Christians are riddled with guilt and don't know what to do about it. There are Christians who show the evidences and fruit of being a Christian but they carry guilt all the time and can't get out from under it. They don't know how to fight the guilt with faith. When they confess their sin to God they don't really feel forgiven and therefore they don't believe they are. They weep before God, they confess, they ask God to forgive them, but with all of their pleading they still live with this gnawing sense that something is not right between them and God. The guilt remains.

What I would like to do this morning, with God's help, is to address that and show you how to fight for a courageous confession and how to deal with the sense of guilt that remains even after you have confessed your sins to God. I think the best way to begin is by looking at guilt and examining it.

I. THE ANATOMY OF GUILT

We're going to do a little biology, spiritually speaking, this morning. Only spiritual though, so no smell of formaldehyde here.

A. Guilt is a Legal Term.

Guilt is being responsible for the act of the crime. It's the state of being a transgressor, the opposite of the state of innocence. To be guilty it is to be in a state of non-innocence because you have committed a crime, a violation of some law. It has nothing to do with the feelings or emotions of guilt. Again, we have already distinguished that guilt is a state of being where you are responsible for having violated a law, whether it be man's or God's law. You are in a state of guilt regardless if you feel it because you broke the law.

B. Guilt Affects the Conscience.

When a person sins, the conscience produces an emotion of imbalance. That's when the guilty begins to sing its sad song, when it begins to flash, "WARNING", and you feel something is not right. The conscience is part of our person that God has made and given to us to help us make moral judgments about our own actions. God has given you a conscience so you can be helped to make right decisions. Listen carefully, this is a very important point, your conscience is not the voice of God. He uses it, but it's not His voice. That will become very important at the end of this message. So let me ask you to write that down in your brain and hold it for a moment and we will pick it back up. Your conscience is not the voice of God. God uses it, but it's not His voice. The conscience is a faculty of human judgment that sense right or wrong according to your understanding.

There are three possible reactions to guilt:

I. No effect

No remorse, no anxiety, no feelings of guilt. No effect whatsoever. Adolf Eichmann, the bureaucratic mastermind of the holocaust was responsible for millions of Jews being incarcerated at Hitler's concentration camps. When he was on trial for his life in 1961, his only regret or remorse was that he failed to exterminate all the European Jews. He said, "There was more we could have done." His only disappointment was that he didn't get them all. He showed no remorse for what he had done. The Bible calls that a seared or defiled conscience where the conscience no longer works properly. You can sin and not feel any sense of guilt or remorse.

"speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Timothy 4:2)

"To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled." (Titus 1:15)

In 1984 a jet crashed in Spain. The black box cockpit recorders revealed that several minutes before impact it made its computerized synthesized voice, "Pull up! Pull up!" The pilot thought it was a malfunction so he reached for the switch and said, "Shut up!" and turned it off. A few minutes later they plowed into the side of a mountain and all were killed.

That's what happens when you turn off your conscience to its warnings. It just doesn't work anymore. That's a seared or defiled conscience. It doesn't mean your conscience doesn't work altogether. I'm sure Adolf Eichmann had several things he thought unconscionable, things he couldn't do without his conscience bothering them, but perhaps it could get to the point where nothing they do bothers them at all.

2. Warns of the wrong, testifies to the right, and convicts of sin.

The Bible calls this a good or a pure conscience. It's when it's warning you of wrong, testifying to what is right and then when you do not heed its suggestion, it convicts of sin.

"I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day," 2 Timothy 1:3

"Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably." (Hebrews 13:18)

Baseball legend Gil Hodges tells this story. Once he was managing the Washington Senators, now they're called the Washington Nationals, and he discovered that four of his players had snuck out past curfew. So the next day at the players meeting he said this, "I know four of you slipped out during the night and I don't want to embarrass any of you so I've placed a cigar box on my desk. You know the penalty for breaking curfew, \$100, so by 3 o'clock this afternoon I expect you to put your fine in my box. We'll be done with it and nobody will say anything." At the end of the day Gil Hodges found \$700 in his box, which means seven men rather than four had violated the

curfew and the other men's conscience were working quite well also. That's what happens, the conscience does that, it says you are guilty and that your state of being is guilty.

3. Convicts of sin when no sin has occurred or will not accept forgiveness.

One of the ways a conscience can respond to guilt is that it will convict of sin when no sin has been committed or it will not receive the forgiveness granted. Guilt can plague a conscience that is "hypersensitive", meaning it's overactive. Some of us have an overactive conscience. The Bible calls it a weak conscience.

In I Corinthians 8:7, Paul is dealing with a schism in the church. The spiritually mature know they can eat meat offered to idols, it doesn't bother their conscience because they realize an idol is nothing, just a piece of stone or wood or metal, it's not really God. So when they're shopping for meat at the local meat market in downtown Corinth if the meat had been offered to an idol in one of the temples they could buy it and eat it with no problem. They were mature in their faith. But then there were other Christians in the church and their consciences were "weak". They would say, "No, no, no, we can't do that because this is associated with idolatry and we don't want to be associated with that," and so their conscience would not allow them to eat that meat. And if they were provoked in doing it against their conscience, Paul said it would be sin to that person because to know to do right—even if it's against your own conscience and even though that conscience might be wrong—to you it is sin. So Paul says to the Corinthians,

"However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled." (1 Corinthians 8:7)

A weak conscience is a person's conscience that is hypersensitive. It's working overtime. It's like a revved up engine that will not idle. From this false guilt is produced. That is, they feel guilty even when they haven't done anything wrong.

II. FALSE GUILT

False guilt lingers when you haven't done anything wrong or a conscience that will not let you be forgiven when you have. The conscience riddled with false guilt manifests itself in a continual feeling that there is something wrong with the person. Let me ask you a question; are you one of those people who always feel something is wrong about you? You feel as if there is always this cloud over you and that you're never quite right. You get close, but you just don't get it. There is some stain. You're a clean freak, spiritually speaking. You've got your rag in one hand and you've got your bottle of spiritual Lysol in the other and you're always looking on the inside for that spot you know is there, you just haven't found it yet. It's not that you're really guilty you just feel like it. That's the problem of this hypersensitive, overdeveloped, conscience.

I'm not a psychologist and this is not a psychological profile of some of you. That would be almost

impossible. You're beyond human help and I have to deliver you over to the Lord Jesus Christ who can help us all. The truth is we're all beyond human help, aren't we? There are several reasons for this overdeveloped conscience.

A. False Guilt's Root is in Pride.

This sense of always feeling like something is not right about me is rooted deeply in pride. It's a pride problem. You wouldn't think it would be. You would think a proud person is someone who is sinning and always boasting in themselves, but pride manifests itself in so many ways and that's why it's so deceptive. It can look like a pauper and in this case it does. It is always craving the approval of others and therefore looking to others like a beggar, wanting peoples' acceptance. We all want people's acceptance, don't misunderstand me, but for some people that's the big thing. That's what fuels them all the time. They're not happy with themselves, therefore the only way they can quiet this conscience is to get other people to affirm them and tell them how wonderful they are. *Maybe then, those people think, I can diminish this sense of guilt that I carry with me.*

They are always looking for people to please and rules to be kept. They like rules they don't like liberty. They don't like this "however the Spirit leads you", they like to be told specifics. I used to be so amazed that when I would teach on spiritual liberty and how to be led by the Spirit, invariably someone raises their hand and says, "Well, pastor, what about it this situation?" and they lay out the details because they wanted me to give them law. They want rules. Why? Because that conscience, that hypersensitive conscience is saying, "I can't operate by the Spirit, I've got to have rules. Because if I have rules then I can know if I measure up and if I measure up then I'm proving to myself that I'm not so bad after all." This is a huge motivation for those who live under false guilt. The conscience is rooted in pride.

B. False Guilt Demands Performance.

It never ceases to demand it. The guilt-ridden conscience cries constantly, "That's not enough, but at least you're trying, so keep trying." Therefore false guilt never allows for rest. It's a hard taskmaster. In fact, you can't rest. You even feel guilty about taking time off. I labored with this when I first came here. Everybody thought I was just super-spiritual and a workaholic, no; I was working under the motivation of false guilt. I couldn't sit down and take one day off. Many of you think, as you look at my line of work, that it's not really work at all, I understand that and at times it feels that way to me, I so enjoy it. But everyday, seven days a week for several years I worked without taking days off because my false guilt would not let me do so. The moment I sat down and do nothing that conscience is going off, "You lazy bum! Don't you know sloth is a great sin?" It demands performance all the time.

C. False Guilt Is Introspective.

It's always looking within, self-examination. The hypersensitive conscience produces this constant desire and need to self-inspect. I've said a lot of negative things about you folks, whoever you

are—and you know who you are, don't you?—let me say something good about you. You constantly want to be a blessing to others and to God. Therefore you're constantly evaluating and doubting your performance. You don't want to ever let anybody down. It crushes you to know that you've let somebody down or when you think you've let them down, although you probably haven't.

I'll never forget one person telling me that they almost left this church because they were tired of teaching a Sunday School class but didn't want to have to tell me they wanted out of the class. It would be easier to go to a different church. False guilt. You don't want to be a disappointment to you. I want to be a blessing, I want to be an asset to you and so there's always this introspection going on. Analyzing, are you a liability to the church, are you a liability to any person, to your spouse, your children, your parents. You're always questioning why you do what you do and your motives, that's how this false guilt works.

I'm praying that God would set some people free here today because there is an answer, a remedy, and it is faith. We are to fight the fight of faith against false guilt, in fact, against all guilt even deserved guilt. Even when I have sinned, the fight of faith must come fully armored to the defense and fight the good fight of faith.

III. THE ANSWER TO ALL GUILT IS A COURAGEOUS CONFESSION

What is courageous confession? **A confession of sin that boldly believes God's promise in Christ to forgive sin.** You fight to believe that is true. Let's see this from our two texts.

A. Courageous Confession is Bold.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace..." (Hebrews 4:16)

You don't go to God timidly. You can come to God boldly because you're coming to a throne of grace not judgment. If God's throne for me, His child, was judgment I would come timid. I wouldn't even want to come. I'd avoid it at all costs. But I am not coming to a throne of judgment. My sins have been already judged and sentenced, and the sentence has been carried out on the cross. It's why we sang about the blood with such fervor and enthusiasm; the blood has paid for my sins. My sin is not held against me. I'm not guilty today.

As I said last week, if I walked down from this pulpit and I slapped Jason to kingdom come, wherever that is, I'm not guilty in the sight of God. Why? Because that sin has already been placed on Jesus Christ. Some of you are already starting to become theologians and you're theologically calculating, *That cannot be. That's too easy. God can't be that way and be just.* Oh, but He is just and that's why Jesus suffered for that sin. I'm not held responsible.

Now friends, there are a lot of ramifications to me slapping Jason. A lot of bad consequences for

me, not to mention the pain he would feel. We're not advocating that everyone slap Jason today, but we are advocating that there is not a throne of judgment awaiting the true believer in Jesus Christ because it's a throne of grace. It's a throne of a loving Father who acknowledges my sin. It's not like He's pretending I haven't sinned. He knows I've sinned, He's just placed the guilt on Christ and paid for the sin in Christ, but He knows we have committed this and like a loving Father He does not reject His child but pays attention to His child in a very loving way, we call it discipline. Now some of you don't think of discipline being very loving because maybe your daddy didn't do it the way he should have. But my heavenly Daddy does. I've never felt so loved but when I have sinned.

It's not only a throne of grace but also a throne of privilege. It's a privilege to be able to come to God for mercy. This is not drudgery. False guilt will make it feel like drudgery, like you're wearing God out. Please, get the shield of faith out, let's do some fighting and once and for all slay that dragon of doubt. You never, ever wear your Father out. This is a throne of privilege. He welcomes you; He wants you to come, especially when you have sinned because He has a solution. To not come boldly is a negative reflection on the atonement of Christ. It is in essence saying there is something wrong with my Lord's death, it's not sufficient to cover this sin that I now feel the guilt of. It's not able to wash me and make me white as snow.

My friend, that's a lie. Come let us reason, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as wool. God has made a promise, a guarantee—the satisfaction of the death of Christ is sufficient and it took care of the penalty. Now you can come and have your conscience cleansed. That's the problem when we sin, the conscience is stained and violated and the only thing that can calm that conscience is faith in Christ's atonement. So come boldly. I wish time would permit, I would spend another hour on just that point and unpack it further. It's a travesty and almost blasphemous to come any way other than boldly when you have sinned. I am not saying come arrogantly or haphazardly; I am not saying you not come with grief. The fact is that the closer you get to God the more you find out how wicked you really are, and the more you recognize how wicked you are the more you will mourn for sin. You will mourn for it more than the day you were converted, but it's a joyful mourning. It's a grief filled with rejoicing that there is an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

B. Courageous Confession Admits Guilt.

“If we confess our sins . . .” (1 John 1:9)

We've covered this before as we went through the First Epistle of John. John is not saying that all you have to do is say you're sorry and that takes care of the sin. The word *confession* doesn't have any idea of the words *I'm sorry* about it. It literally means *to agree* or *to say the same thing*. *Amen*, for example, is a confession. It means *I agree* or *so be it*. So when you say *amen* to me, you are confessing or agreeing with what I'm saying. If we confess our sins, if we agree with God that what we did was sin and we own our sin, we say, *Yes, I am the one, like David of old, against Thee and Thee only have I sinned*, John says He is faithful and just in cleansing immediately. It doesn't even have to

be coupled with prayer. It's just the heart that says *that's sin and I hate it so*. God says forgiveness is immediate. How do I know that's so? Because of what John said in verse seven,

“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 1:7)

Cleanses = present tense, continually, ongoing, from sin.

This is a confession fueled by repentance. No one ever agrees with God about their sin until they are repentant. What does that mean? It means, not only do they know what they've done is wrong, they hate it. They grieve over it and they turn away from it. How many times does a Christian repent, once when he gets saved? No, his whole life is a life of repentance. Why? Because I'm constantly seeing my sins and needing to turn from them and acknowledge what they are with grief. But boldly doing so, with courage, not with timidity or weakness. This idea that all I have to do is say “I'm sorry” is not biblical. Courageous confession is a confession, an agreement, an owning of the sin from a spirit that's turning from the sin.

C. Courageous Confession Accepts Forgiveness.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Sir, what are you doing feeling guilty about that sin? The only reason you have not received what God has said He would be faithful to give is because you're not accepting it. It's the only reason. If you are a child of God and walk around feeling guilty or like something is wrong with you, then you have in essence said, *Oh God, I want to trust you but I don't know if I can. Especially when it comes to my conscience being cleared.* Courageous confession is courageous to accept the forgiveness.

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

That's what you always get when coming to God through courageous confession because faith will fight to believe what God has promised and it receives it.

But pastor, here's my problem, you say. I understand that with my mind, theologically, I get that and know that's true but I still feel the guilt and I feel the guilt because I have this inner compulsion to do something about it. The reason you do, please listen, is because you don't in the end really trust the Lord. That's why you have to fight the fight of faith. Courageous confession is rooted in faith. False guilt is rooted in pride, courageous confession is rooted in faith.

D. Courageous Confession is Rooted in Faith.

Faith in God is the opposite of pride because pride has faith only in self. So biblical faith is the

opposite of pride. The only way to combat your self-confidence, which says you can somehow sit in the penalty box long enough until God is appeased, is to trust God's Word and His character. False guilt says perfection is salvation. I've got to get to this standard right and when I achieve that and do it well then I know I'm all right with God. We play mind games because we wouldn't dare use the word perfect, but that's what we're really meaning. We believe perfection is salvation and with anything short of that we start suggesting to ourselves that we may not even be saved. That's false guilt. But courageous confession says Christ is perfection and His atonement is salvation.

Salvation is in Christ alone. Being here today won't save any of us. Me preaching will not save me.

**My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name.**

I come to God today in the name of Christ. I don't even pronounce my own name; I claim His name as my own because He is my safety. He's my refuge, He's my place of hiding, He's my shelter, He's my all in all. But false guilt says no, no, no, I am guilty so I must repay. I did it and I've got to pay. I did the crime, so I've got to do the time. That's the mentality of false guilt. But courageous confession says I'm guilty, yes, but I don't have to repay because I don't have what it takes to repay. But God has given me an advocate who has already paid it all. I don't have to pay because it's already paid.

False guilt doubts the character of God. Courageous confession doubts self and trusts God's integrity. Why does false guilt doubt God? Partly because they themselves do not easily forgive. A person operating by the hypersensitive conscience and false guilt doesn't find forgiving others easy. They hold grudges usually. Although they may act like everything is fine, most of them are great actors, but down deep they still remember and still hold it against you because they tend to take things very personal because it's all about them anyway. Remember? False guilt is rooted in pride. They find it hard to forgive and clear the slate of people who offend them. They take things very personal and will take things as an offense because that's how they operate with themselves. They find sin in themselves when the average person wouldn't. But courageous confession doubts self completely and trusts in the integrity of God and when God says I'm clean, I've repented, I've confessed, I'm clean, then I am clean.

In conclusion, I no longer listen to my conscience, because my conscience is a weak one, usually. I can't trust my conscience but I can trust the voice of God. If there are not known violations of God's commands. Even if I may not have performed to the best but I still fulfilled the command and if the Spirit is not convicting me then I should not feel guilty at all. Period. That's the way I try to live for two reasons.

I don't trust my voice of conscience. When I read, "Avoid the very appearance of evil" I will see evil where there is no evil. Just confessing to you. I have a good conscience. Too good. I can't sin and go until tonight when I pray before bed to confess it. I just can't go that long. I just can't deal with it.

I'll never forget I was so very exhausted coming back from one of the trips to Romania. I had taken a couple preachers and one of my dearest friends was with me, Mike Morrow and he and I had been having a constant debate over Hebrews 6 and the correct interpretation. I had been trying to get him to see that he was wrong and I was right. We had a very grueling schedule. That night before we were making our drive back to Bucharest I had only slept a couple of hours trying to get everything done that needed to be done, not packing but just trying to get all the loose ends tied up in Romania and counseling with young preachers. I was exhausted. Mike and I were in the backseat being driven to Bucharest to catch the flight the next day and here he goes on Hebrews 6. I'm not mentally alert, I'm tired, and he just keeps digging and digging and at one point I blew it. I told the driver, "Sir, be prepared. I'm getting ready to tell you to stop and I'm going to throw this fat little preacher out of this van." And I meant it. You've got to know my brother, he's more like my wife, very easy going, laid back in many ways, and he didn't think anything about it, he kind of laughed at me. But immediately my conscience began to trouble me. I'm sitting in the backseat looking out the window making sure nobody is looking at me because tears are coming down my face. I'm feeling so convicted, so wrong.

The person who has a hypersensitive conscience right now is saying, "So, that's the way it's supposed to work, right?" You don't see a problem with it.

Yes, our conscience is supposed to tell us when we've done wrong, but listen to me, there is a greater authority than even your conscience, if you're a Christian. If you're not a Christian your conscience is the only hope you have. You better not sear it because you don't have any voice of reason beyond that. But for the child of God you've got a higher Voice, a greater Voice of reasoning and that is God Himself, His Spirit living within you. Yes, I should feel guilty and I should feel it quickly, but my problem is that to this day if we ever bring it up, do you know what I say? "Brother, I am so sorry." To this day. I will want to apologize again. There is where the conscience is overacting.

So I say to us, if you've not violated the Word of God or if the Spirit of God is not dealing with you about a sin, believe God that He has forgiven you. Listen, the Spirit of God shouldn't have to deal with me if I know I have sinned. But there are some things in our heart, attitudes that we aren't even aware of that the Spirit of God will bring those to the surface, then I'll deal with my sin. Otherwise I am walking in the truth with the courageous faith that believes God and His Word. Period. That's how I live. Some of you will say *that's too liberal for me. That sounds like a license to sin.* Well let me end with that and deal with that because you're right, it needs to be dealt with.

We're not saying that we take our sins lightly. How can I do so when Jesus died for them? Take sin lightly? Are you crazy?! No, we're not saying that at all! I'm just taking His atonement as seriously as I do my sin. Try it. It's wonderful. We're not talking about just professing to be a Christian and anytime you do wrong and finally somebody discovers it then you say, *Well you're right, I did, I'm sorry.* Then you go to God and say, *Lord, please forgive me.* Or you just pray when you sin, *Okay, God please forgive me. I thank You that I John 1:9 says that now I'm forgiven.* You feel no remorse,

you feel no grief, brother, beware. I don't believe you're a Christian if that's what happens when you have sinned.

Listen to me, if a man is arrested for mayhem, malicious crimes against society, lets say he has murdered and raped and finally they apprehend him and the judge says, "I'm just curious, what if you were to pardon you today, what would you do?" The man looks at him with no emotion and with a stone cold face says, "I tell you what I'd do, I'd rape, I'd murder, if I could I'd slit your throat right now." Do you think that man deserves to be forgiven and pardoned? There's not a judge in this country who would pardon such a man.

Why do we think God will forgive a man or a woman who has no repentance in his heart, no sense of sorrow for what he's done, has no inclination to turn from his sin but will run to sin again, knowing that God will forgive him if he simply says he's sorry? No sir. That's not what I'm talking about. That's not biblical and that's not courageous confession, it is deception from a proud heart. But God has paid the price for us. Because one may abuse the Gospel of Christ doesn't mean that I can't take it wholeheartedly and accept it as it really is. I am forgiven when I agree with God and repent and turn from my sin. Then it is done and I don't need to think about it again. It is the fight of faith to believe that. May God help us all to fight. Amen.