

**THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS**  
**THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

Good morning Life Fellowship. My name is Dan and I am one of the teaching pastors here and I want to welcome you here on Mother's Day. I know we have a lot of moms that sometimes come out on this special day. Maybe you are a visitor from another church because you are in this area to go to someone's house for dinner, or you are planning to go out to dinner with some of your family; and if you are not a regular attendee of Life Fellowship we want you to know that you are most certainly welcome.

We thank God for the wonderful ladies and mothers that we have as part of Life Fellowship. My mom came to visit me a couple of weeks ago and I was going to ask her to stand so everyone could see her, but she doesn't care for public attention. My mom and I share something in that we both hit birthdays this year with zeros on the end. This was a big one for me and it will be a big one for her coming up. After the pandemic and not being able to see each other as much as we like to, now that we are both fully vaccinated we were able to get together and enjoy some sweet time. I have always said, and I have never been ashamed of it, that I am a mama's boy.

So if you are a mama's boy here today and you have your mom next to you this morning just really revel in that and appreciate it. If your mom doesn't live in the area, give her a call, and if she is in heaven then thank the Lord for her. And for all of you ladies we say thank you so much. Something that many people don't seem to notice is the ministry that Jesus had involved women with significance. It broke down barriers in a culture that was very masochistic and had issues with kind of a super patriarchal system. What Jesus did was spend time in their houses and He spoke up on their behalf. And it was women who were the first to come to His grave after His resurrection.

So I think it is important and incumbent upon us to understand and to recognize the value that God places in the unique role that women have in the church and in our families. So before we begin the service I would like to have a prayer of dedication to all of our ladies and the role that they have here. So would you please join me in prayer.

*Father, we thank you so much for your Word. We thank you for the example of Christ as it relates to His own mother when He looked at His beloved disciple and He asked him to take care of His mother as He was getting ready to go back to heaven. Father, we think about all of the examples we see of His love toward women who were abused, or women who were overlooked, or marginalized in some ways. So Father, we just thank you so much that you have set that example for us, and on this day when we culturally set aside a day to recognize our mothers, we thank you for the women in our lives, the aunts, the mothers, the grandmothers and the special adopted style of parenting that some have engaged in.*

*Father, thank you so much for all of them and for the wonderful relationship that we have that you valued and that you designed. Bless them Father, and help us to appreciate them for who they are and what they do in our lives, and for the value that you placed on them as well. Now as we open our Scriptures today and as we engage with the*

**THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS**  
**THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

*Word of God I pray that you would open our hearts as well here and wherever it is being opened all across this community in the good churches that love your Word and love you Father. I pray that every place around the world where your Word is open, that your Holy Spirit will have free access to our hearts and our wills that we might yield, submit and grow as disciples of you. For it is in Christ's name I pray. Amen.*

Well, this month we are talking about investing in growth and we have asked you to bring your Bibles with you, and I know many of you are doing that. Maybe you don't have a Bible that is a paper version, so we have Bibles for you. You can pick one up anytime as they are on a table right out front. Maybe you have plenty of Bibles of your own but you know someone who doesn't have one, so please pick one up and give it to them. Maybe you could put a little inscription in the front telling them that you wanted to share this with them. We want to see people use the Bible; engage with the Bible, and to share the Bible with others. Even though many of us use U-Verse and other forms of electronic Bibles today, and there is nothing wrong with that, for this month we have asked you to bring a Bible with you because it is just good to hear the rustling of pages as you look up Scripture.

We also have a Bible reading program we would like to share with you. You can pick up one of those cards at the table as well, as we are reading through parts of the Bible together as a church this month. Now if you have your Bibles please open with me to Luke Chapter 24 and we are going to be reading there as we are getting close to concluding the series on the Apostles Creed. In fact this is my last time to address any portion of it as we are getting ready to wind that down. Pastor Ben will tell you next week what we will be doing over the summer. So the Apostles Creed is where we have been as part of our philosophy of ancient future. In a contemporary world it is important that we still emphasize the fundamental standards and truths and orthodox doctrine of the Word of God. And through the Apostles Creed we have a venue, we have a strategic plan that is not Scripture itself, or the equivalent of Scripture, but it is a guide, it is a roadmap to some of the important doctrines of historic Christian faith that at times get overshadowed by our contemporary culture. And they need to be brushed off and reviewed and renewed in our hearts.

Now again to all the moms and guests who are here we welcome you. And I know many times there is kind of this idea that on certain holidays we should preach to certain topics. Christmas is advent, Easter is resurrection, and Mother and Father's days have specific significance. By the way if we were doing that then Pentecost Sunday is coming up and then we have a whole bunch of liturgical dates as well. And if we observed all of those before long it would become impossible to be able to preach strategically, either with a theme or a passage of Scripture expositionally.

So while we acknowledge and appreciate our moms, this isn't going to be a typical mother's day sermon, except for the fact that we are going to be talking about sin. And I have to tell you that my first introduction to sin, right and wrong, punishment and

# THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

## THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8

### Dan Burrell

---

justice, and all kinds of attached topics came from my mom. And I think that is probably true of most of us. It was my mother who first applied the board of education to my seat of knowledge. (*Laughter.*) It was my mom who taught me the difference between right and wrong and who would school me. She was the one who made sure I had values that were consistent with her values as she learned them from the Word of God, and she would impart them to me. So in that sense it is a good thing to have the topic of sin with moms today.

We are going to be looking at Luke Chapter 24 and I want us to read verses 44 through 49. But before we do that, I want us to say the Apostles Creed together. We have been doing that each week and it kind of helps us to memorize it. So will you read it along with me, and then I will read Luke Chapter 24. So here we go together:

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to hell, the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

So as we are almost to the end of this series on the Apostles Creed we are talking about the forgiveness of sins today. Now look if you would with me in Luke Chapter 24 and I will begin reading in verse 44. ***“Then He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”***

Now two weeks ago when I was teaching I reminded you of this that we have three sections to the Apostles Creed. The first one is: ‘*I believe in God the Father.*’ The second one was: ‘*I believe in God the Son,*’ and then there are some sub-points under that. And then the third one is: ‘*I believe in the Holy Spirit,*’ and then there are some points under that. Including under those sub-points is ‘*the forgiveness of sins.*’ Now you may wonder why the forgiveness of sins is underneath this section that opens up with a belief in the Holy Spirit. And it is because it is very, very important for us to note that the repentance of sin, that the identification of sin and how we deal with sin, is a spiritual act.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

While we commit sins physically, there is a spiritual implication. It is our sin that spiritually separates us from a holy God. It is our sin that had to be supernaturally paid for so that we might be reconciled with God. There is a forgiveness element that is beyond the physical that involves the spiritual area of our lives that we need to see and that needs to be a part of our dealing with sin.

As Pastor Jason mentioned before as we were worshipping with music this morning, this concept is a controversial concept when you consider the whole of world religions. Now our tendency is because we are Americans, we are Westerners and we grew up in a Christian culture, that we kind of view the rest of the world through our lens. So when we talk about Jesus, when we talk about the cross, when we talk about the Bible, when we talk about sin and forgiveness and justice, we do so from a Christian perspective. We do this because it is almost a default setting and even for people who don't have a personal relationship with Christ there is a default setting culturally that says we value things like goodness and righteousness. We value things like forgiveness and justice. We value things that have their roots in the Judeo-Christian ethic of the Torah, the New Testament, and the Old Testament.

So while we consider these things, we need to understand that much of civilization, much of history, much of the world did not, or do not, view things like sin or the forgiveness of sin in the same way at a default level. And that is true of the concept of forgiveness. The Scriptures that we have in the New Testament, the setting for that was during the age of the Romans. And the Romans were exceptionally brutal. They were not nice at all. They would have considered the idea of forgiving your enemies to be a sign of pathetic weakness. And to ask for forgiveness was a sign of pathetic weakness. There was a certain defiance that was ingrained into their culture that said, *'I have no repentance in the face of my personal agenda or my personal will. I alone, or my cause alone, is sufficient for that confidence. Therefore do what you will, strike me down, crucify me, or behead me.'*

Also the other side of this is wondering what kind of person begs for forgiveness. What kind of person admits their frailties? What kind of person admits that they are wrong? Again, in our culture we see that as a virtue. We see that as something positive, that if someone is humble enough to admit that we fall short of a standard, and we try to rectify that through repentance and the receipt of forgiveness, we see that as virtue. But for many generations in the past, and even for some in the present, that isn't a good deal, that isn't a virtue to which they should aspire.

So this is radical theology, and it is why it was included in the Apostles Creed. But we cannot detach it from it because it is also an internal spiritual position that we have to respect, that it is God that convinces us, that it is God that convicts us, that it is God that challenges us. And He does that through His Holy Spirit.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

Go back and look at Luke Chapter 24 and we will see some of the things that were going on. Look again in verse 45 where it says: “***Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.***” Who is it that gives us understanding of the Scriptures? Well, we know that it is the Holy Spirit who is our teacher. We have looked at that in the past, and we know that it is the Holy Spirit that literally opens our minds so that we look at the Scripture and we say, ‘*Why yes, I affirm that. That is obviously true.*’

Who is it that brings us to that, who draws us to truth, who convicts us of sin, and asks of us a response? It is the Holy Spirit. That is why this book is supernatural and that is why God in His supernatural way is working in us. In a culture that exalts violence, in a culture that exalts independence, in a culture that lifts up pride, in a culture that says we should not admit we are wrong, the supernatural work of God in our lives says this: ‘*I am accountable. I must give answer. There is one higher than I. His Words are significant and important. And I must yield to truth.*’

And so we are going against the grain, we are going against the typical; we are going in some ways against history, or in some ways even against the masses and the majority. Why? It is because God is completing His work in us through His Word and through His Holy Spirit. So when we declare ‘*I believe in the Holy Spirit and I believe in the forgiveness of sins,*’ we are saying, ‘*I believe that there is a God that matters. I believe that there is a truth that originates with Him. I believe that I as a fallen and broken and marred creation of my God have a responsibility to listen to truth, and to respond to His urging from the Holy Spirit, that the Scripture might be lived out in my life as I repent and as I emulate the God of the universe.*’

This is our call. This is the Christian distinctive. This is ancient truth that is relevant today. Now I know today we have tried to redefine sin. We have tried to make sin something that is changeable, moldable, and applicable in various ways and various situations. It is called ‘moral relativity’ at some level. It is this idea that situations change ethics, and it is called ‘situational ethics.’ So in other words what may not be right here is right over there. What may have been wrong in the past may not be wrong today. And yet we believe as devoted followers of Jesus Christ, who trust the Word of God, that truth is eternal and it is not transient in the sense that it evolves, that it changes, or that it adapts. But rather truth always has been truth; truth is truth for all people at all places at all times. Truth doesn’t morph. Truth is not dynamic, but rather truth is always truth even if not one single person knew it, acknowledged it, or obeyed it; it is still stands on its own.

So that is the difference in worldview. And the worldview says, ‘*There is truth and it matters and it doesn’t change.*’ The anti-biblical or the anti-Christian world view would say, ‘*Truth is transient, because what is true for you may not be true for me.*’ And by the way, in that absence of an absolute – what do you get? You get chaos, because everyone does what they think is right, and here is what the Scripture said: “***that which is right in their own eyes.***” And when you have a culture that is built on doing that which

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

is right in their own eyes, you have a culture that is absolutely heading toward chaos and confusion.

So out of that what will happen is a need for order. And as the need for order emerges, they will adopt a new standard for truth, their standard. So the question is not whether or not we are going to live by truth, but whether or not we are going to live by THE truth. There is always a necessity of truth. The truth is that if you drive any way you want to on a highway you are going to end up with chaos and confusion. If we took away all the speed limits, if we erased all the lines on the highway, if we eliminated the signs that say 'One Way Only' or whatever, can you imagine what I-77 would look like? And as bad as it is on most days, it would be even worse if that happened. People would be going back and forth, speeding, and cutting in and out of traffic. It would be absolute chaos.

So what have they done? They have given us some truths by which we are to drive. Now those are arbitrary, those are set and sometimes they are even changed. Sometimes the speed limit may go down, sometimes it may go up, and there are different reasons why it changes. But in God's economy, in God's design, He has said, '*I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the light. In other words, truth begins with me.*' And with that you and I have a responsibility to uncover that truth so that we might live by it, because in the living of truth there is protection. In the living of truth, there is order. In the living of truth, there is a journey toward godliness, and that is supernatural, that is spiritual, and that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

As we look at this we realize that the ministry of Jesus was really, really radical because in Jesus we are hearing things like, '***Love your enemies. Turn the other cheek. Return good for evil. Walk a second mile. Give them your cloak. Love those that hate you. Speak kindness to those who speak evil of you. Forgive one another.***' Very radical, very unusual, and yet these phrases were probably familiar to most of us because these are central truths connected to our faith and trust in Christ and our belief that the Bible is the Word of God.

And then that next step is if God was willing and took proactive action to reconcile us with Him, He was willing to forgive us of our sins and our trespasses, how can we refuse to do the same to others? In other words what Christ did for us we have an obligation to do for others and that is to forgive. And again, many in the day when Scripture was originally written considered this to be incredibly backwards.

So to fully appreciate the power of the declaration that we said together this morning, '*we believe in the forgiveness of sins,*' we need to look at two key words; the word 'forgiveness' and the word 'sin.' And if sin is really no big deal then forgiveness is no big deal. But make no mistake, the way God has designed it both forgiveness and sin are big deals to Him. There is no way to unpack all of this in fifteen minutes. It is just not going to happen. However, I hope to introduce to you enough of these thoughts

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

and enough of these Scriptures that you will go on and pursue it, study it, consider it, and think about it some more. So let's look at why the forgiveness of sins is important. Why was this included in the Apostles Creed? Why is it considered to be a significant ancient doctrine? Well, let me give you four points.

Number one – humans consistently work to minimize their sin. It is just what we do. We consistently work to minimize our sin. You have heard me say this before, and I will say it again, I live it all the time. And it is that this – your sin drives me nuts, absolutely makes me a crazy man. It frustrates me and it offends me. When you commit a sin, particularly if it is a sin against me, you are likely to hear from me if you are in my presence. However, there is a good reason when I sin. I am an excuse making machine for my own sins. And that comes down to a fundamental truth about all human beings. And that is this – fundamentally, we as humans are experts at suppressing the truth and deceiving ourselves. Fundamentally, we have got this one down. We want to suppress the truth and we enjoy deceiving ourselves.

And yes, your pastor can stand at the front of the line on his skills for doing that. Because it is part of our broken nature, it is a part of our failure as being created in the image of God, that we tend not to want to admit the fact that we are frail, that we make mistakes, that we are narcissists, and that we are rebellious and angry. So in the process of it we separate ourselves from God. The bottom line is that we will not seek forgiveness if we refuse to acknowledge sin and therefore it is important that we learn to acknowledge our sin.

We will minimize forgiveness unless we see sin as offensive. And until we are willing to admit the depravity of our own very nature within us, we will see no need in having a Savior. We will see no need for it. And that is one of the dangerous things that is going on in our culture today in the philosophy that basically preaches – *'You are okay, and I am okay. Don't focus on the sin. Don't focus on the negative. Focus on the positive.'* And when we become the center, rather than God being the standard, we are in dangerous territory. You see when we become the center of right and wrong, rather than letting God be the standard for right and wrong, we are walking in foggy. We are walking in confusion, and we are walking in danger as well. And that is why God gave us the Bible to provide clarity, to give us what C. S. Lewis called it – the straight stick to place against our crooked stick so that we could know where we are messing up and where we are falling short. It is called 'the straight stick theory,' and the straight stick is the Word of God. So it is important and too often we refuse to recognize the offense to the holiness of God.

Understand this – sin was the germ of our condemnation. Maybe you are wondering what does that mean. The fact is this, until we deal with the issue of sin in our lives we stand condemned because God, as a holy and righteous God, does not tolerate sin. Now the fact that God does not tolerate sin does not mean that He does not acknowledge that there is sin. In fact what it did was the presence of sin put into place on

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

His part a plan so that we could get forgiveness of sin. And that forgiveness of sin then removes the condemnation. But because you and I sin that germ infects us with condemnation.

Now I don't know about you guys, but I have always tended to be a germ freak even before there was a pandemic. I have often thought if I were ever a business man I would at every one of my businesses the restroom doors would be automatic. Can I get an amen on that? (*Amen.*) I'm serious. I am sorry but I just freak out in most public restrooms. I am sixty years old and I can still flush a urinal with my foot every time. I may look like a Kung Fu fighter but I can get the job down without touching it with my hands. Now that was probably much more information than you really needed on Sunday morning, right? (*Laughter.*)

Some of you have mental pictures of me right now in your mind that you are never going to get rid of. But then, this is the one that always gets me - it is when they have the faucets you turn on to wash your hands and then what are you going to do? And then there is the coup de grace which is there are no paper towels to use to turn off the faucets, or to dry your hands on, but instead there is this hot air dryer. So you have to use your clean hands to turn off the faucets. And particularly if you have been in some truck stop restrooms you know the dilemma that can create. And finally you walk over to the door and there is this door handle that you are supposed to grab and turn in order to get out. No! So I will pull my shirttail out and wrap it around the door handle, or I will try using my foot again, or as a last resort I will just wait patiently till someone else opens the door. I have done it all. I am not touching that handle I guarantee you. I have a phobia about germs.

Now what if we had a similar phobia about sin? What if we really took that seriously? And here is the thing. If I get a few germs on me chances are it is not going to be that big of a deal. I grew up on a farm and I am very familiar with germs around a barn so I don't know why I freak out in restrooms. But here is what we do - it is okay to be phobic about germs and not even give a thought about sin. We just beep bop through life infecting ourselves and infecting others, being casual, letting Satan cough in our faces, and just dealing with it. Why do we do that? It is because we want to minimize our sin.

But when we understand the tragic consequences of the germ infection that sin gives us, we realize we need to do something about it. We have to repent, we have to forgive, we have to reconcile. There are proactive steps that we need to take because of sin. So we minimize forgiveness unless we see sin as offensive. And until we are willing to admit our own depravity we will see no need in having a Savior. That is why I think so many people are constantly trying to avoid acknowledgement of sin in their lives because they don't want to be held accountable. We may be disturbed by someone else's sins but not our own.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

There are ways in which we minimize sins. Let me just run through a quick list of ways in which we do that. We compare ourselves with others such as: *'Well I am certainly no Hitler.'* Congratulations for picking a real obvious one. When we compare ourselves with someone else, or someone particularly egregious, rather than comparing ourselves with God we are comparing in the wrong direction. But when we compare ourselves with God we all fall short, we all have room for growth, and we all are confronted with the need for repentance.

Sometimes we rationalize why it was necessary which is just excuse making. I call that the *'Yeah but'* syndrome. *'Yeah that was wrong, but.....'* *'Yeah I shouldn't have done that, but.....'* *'Yeah I shouldn't have said that, but.....'* So we get into the *'Yeah but'* syndrome where we rationalize why it was okay for us to sin when if someone else had done the exact same thing to us it would have been a problem.

Another way we minimize sin is to deny that it is sin at all. And today we are really getting good at that, because we are redefining what sin is. Sin today is okay if it is between consenting adults, or as long as no one gets hurt, or as long as in the end something good is accomplished. Then it is okay, right? So we deny that it is a sin at all which removes from us any effort toward accountability.

Sometimes we minimize sin or we rank it. Therefore we have our little list of sins. And by the way I don't believe in an egalitarian system of sins, that all sins are equal. Let me explain this a little bit before you jump to a conclusion and start sending me emails. All sins are not equal in terms of consequence. They are not all equal in terms of consequence. It is an obvious answer that if I kick a hole in the wall that may be a sin because I am acting out of anger, but if I kick a puppy you are going to be more upset, correct? And if I kick a small child, you are really going to be upset. Now please don't go out and kick anything, but I am trying to demonstrate to you that there are degrees of consequences for sin. But make no mistake in terms of condemnation it only takes one to fall short of the standard of perfection that has been given to us by a holy and righteous God.

Now don't despair because God has paid the penalty for us. He has offered us a plan for forgiveness and reconciliation. We don't have to despair, but we are going to need to acknowledge that we need it. And that is when we minimize sin, when we say sin isn't a big deal, we cut ourselves apart from the redemption plan that God has put in place for us. A person who will not admit that they are a sinner will not have a need for a Savior. That is why we teach right and wrong. That is why the Ten Commandments are significant. That is why we have a Bible. And you and I must come to the reality that we are sinners, we mess up, and we are not godly. Our very nature calls us away from that which God created us to be. And until we can get to that point and say, *'I am broken, I am unable to save myself, I am undone and I need a Savior,'* it is at that moment the Holy Spirit calls us to repentance and promises us forgiveness in return.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

That is the joy of the gospel and that is the fundamental tenet of the Christian faith. Another thing we do to minimize our sin is we attempt to hide it, to cover it up. We see this over and over in Scripture. We either deny it or we hide it. We dig a hole in our tent and bury it. Remember when the children of Israel experienced the consequences of one man doing that. Sometimes we blame others. We justify it because they provoked us, or they cheated us.

My mother used to say to me, *'It is never right to do wrong to do right. Never let another person's actions determine your reactions.'* She had a whole list of epigrams that she would feed to me to remind me that I am not responsible for what other people may do or say, even when it is against me, but I am responsible for how I respond. Thank God for godly mothers who set a good standard for us from our earliest days of childhood. So we blame others, or we fail to even consider it sin at all.

Listen while I read Romans Chapter 7 and verses 12 and 13 to you. It is speaking of the Law and why the Law is important. It says: ***'So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did that which is good, then bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, that through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.'*** One version of the Bible calls it ***"exceedingly sinful."*** The reality is this, that sin needs to be viewed by us as exceedingly sinful, as harmful and destructive.

Number two – the Bible requires us to be honest about sin. To deny we need forgiveness is to deny that we sin, and to deny that we sin puts us at direct confrontation and contradiction to God. There are several verses about this in Romans. And then we will turn real quickly to I John Chapter 1. Romans Chapter 3 and verse 10 says: ***"There is none righteous, no not one."*** Romans Chapter 3 and verse 23 says: ***"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."*** Romans Chapter 6 and verse 23 says: ***"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** So over and over and over again Paul said to the Romans, who were the pagans, who were the ones who were angry, violent and vicious, that they had to admit that they had a problem. They had to admit that they sinned.

And until we do that the first step is not in place in order to find reconciliation with God. I John Chapter 1 and verses 5 through 10 are such key verses. We hit them lightly last year when we were studying I John last year, and I really wish I had the time to really bear down on them right now. Listen to what it says: ***"This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."*** That is the standard - He is light with no darkness. And then three times you are going to hear the words *'If we say.'* He is posing a series of hypotheticals to us.

**THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS**  
**THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

He says: ***“If we say we have fellowship with Him yet we 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 His son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But 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 we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His Word is not in us.”***

Now in these five verses you see three times the ‘if’ is asked, and in those first two it shows the solution, and in the third there is no solution. So I want you to look at them real carefully. In verse 6 the issue is ***“If we say we have fellowship with Him yet we walk in darkness,”*** what are you? You are a liar. That is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is when we lie to ourselves. *‘Look you know I am right with God even though I may be walking in sin.’* It is when we claim to be okay but we are lying to ourselves. *‘I think God is okay with my sin. I think He understands me. God created me this way.’* And so we go through all this litany of things and we are hypocritical in that we lie to others and to ourselves about who we are. We justify it and we rationalize it. And we need to really watch out for this kind of behavior.

When we live one way in public and another way in private - are you listening, Christians? When we live one way in public and another way in private this is hypocrisy. We say, *‘I am walking in the light,’* but we really aren’t. We don’t repent of our sins, we don’t acknowledge sin in our lives and the Bible says we are hypocrites. Look again in verse 8 where it says: ***“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.”*** This is the dangerous thing about tolerating sin because we start believing the lies we live. We get away with it and think we are okay, and we then begin doing it intentionally, and that is called duplicity. We are not only lying to others but we are lying to ourselves and think, *‘Hey, I’m good.’* And this is where we end up in a tragic set of circumstances.

And by the way, professors of Christ are not immune from this behavior. In fact we may even be more vulnerable to it because we fight the fight, we struggle against it and we feel the tension. And if you don’t believe that then just Google Josh Duggar. He is in the headlines right now. You and I can be raised in the Word of God, we can go to church, we can know the right things, we can be people with a good public reputation, but in the end we can be corrupt, we can be corroded, we can be living in sin and not even be aware of it because after a while we have become so good at fooling everyone else that we think we are okay. And that is duplicity because we lie to ourselves.

And in verse 10 we find the third thing. ***“If we say we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His Word is not in us.”*** There gets to be a point of arrogance where we think that what we are doing is okay with God. *‘What I am doing is okay because I am special. What I am doing is okay because no one has ever caught me, no one is being hurt, no one knows. Therefore it is okay.’* And when we do that we make

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

God a liar, and folks, that is apostasy. That is apostasy. And you notice there is no escape from apostasy because apostasy leads to damnation, because we fundamentally reject God's authority in our lives. We refuse to repent and in fact we have God endorsing our sinfulness.

I am fearful for pastors I see today that are throwing the Word of God out for wokeness and political correctness and popularity so that they can keep positions and diminish criticism; but in doing so they diminish, they ignore, or they even imply an endorsement from a holy and righteous God on conduct and behavior that is wicked. And whether you are a pastor or a pew sitter, whether you are well known or anonymous, whether you have a seminary degree or are illiterate we will all stand before a holy and righteous God and give account for what we do with truth.

The next thing is forgiveness was the purpose for the death of Christ. It was so that you and I could have forgiveness that Christ died. Matthew Chapter 1 and verses 20 and 21 says this speaking of Joseph: ***“But after he had pondered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to embrace Mary as your wife, for the one conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save the people from their sins.”***

I Peter Chapter 2 and verse 24 says: ***“He Himself bore our sins and in His body on the tree, so that He might die to sin and live to righteousness.”*** And there is a quote from Isaiah that says: ***“By His stripes you are healed,”*** and that refers to Jesus. By the way, I see people do this all the time saying they are claiming that verse for their physical healing. That has nothing to do with physical healing. It has everything to do with our spiritual healing. We are dead men walking apart from Christ, and ***“By His stripes,”*** by His death, by His shed blood that we sang about this morning, we are healed spiritually and given new life.

The last thing is this – forgiveness gives us a positive future. You are not saved from hell alone; you are saved for a positive future. There is so much more. Few things are more final than a funeral and few things are more hopeful than a birth. Thus when we receive forgiveness of sin, we need to remember that the old man dies, and he is gone for good; it is final. But the new man is born again and that gives us the hope of reconciliation with God. Life everlasting, which is what Ben will talk about next week.

So here is my question – have you received the forgiveness of sin? Is sin serious to you? Does sin matter? Do you consider it, let alone confess it? My challenge to all of us is that before the sun goes down today, even on Mother's day, that we would take a walk, have a seat, open a Bible, or take a moment and just say, *‘God, show me in my heart, in my life where I have allowed sin to take root, where I have rationalized it, where I have justified it, where I have embraced it.’* And then receive the forgiveness of sin. It is not just identify it; but it is to repent and receive forgiveness. That is God's gift to us.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8 Dan Burrell

---

The Scripture says: “*There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*” He opens His arms and He says: ‘*Come on. Come on. I will forgive you.*’ Prodigal son: ‘*Come home.*’ Woman at the well: ‘*Welcome.*’ Woman taken in adultery: ‘*Here I am.*’ Dirty tax collector: ‘*Come on down.*’ Dan Burrell: ‘*I have a room for you.*’ He is offering to all of us the forgiveness of sin, but it begins when we admit and we deal with it.

Our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed. As we continue this study we realize it is a heavy topic. It is absolutely a heavy topic, but it is an important topic. So my hope and prayer for you is that you will do battle with the germs of sin, that you will experience the freedom of forgiveness, that you will have a funeral for the old man, and a celebration for the new beginning that comes when you accept Christ as Savior.

This morning if you do not know Christ as your Savior, maybe you are thinking, ‘*You know I really want forgiveness of sins. I want this.*’ If that is you let me urge you to do this - right after the service is over, just slip out of the room and go to the right in the lobby where there is a room that says ‘Prayer Room.’ And there will be someone standing there, maybe one of our pastors or elders or someone on our prayer team and they would love to answer your questions and show you from the Bible what it means to get forgiveness of sins.

It is not about becoming a member of our church, you don’t have to join a denomination, you don’t have to write a check, you don’t have to sign a card; this is spiritual and it is just about you and God. And we will journey with you in this, we will answer your questions, but it is only something that you can do. No one can do it for you. Would you do that this morning? Several weeks ago we had someone who had been visiting our church for weeks just walk out of here that morning and say: ‘*I am ready now. The Lord has shown me the way and I want to become part of God’s family.*’ Maybe it is your turn next. Would you do that?

Or you may say, ‘*Dan, I know I am a Christian, but I have been tolerating sin in my life. I have been living flippantly. I have forgotten the offense that sin is to God. I have forgotten the fact that my sin nailed Jesus to the cross, and my sin is what required Him to have to die. And today even as a believer, even though I know Christ, I want to do battle with the sin that I have allowed to infect me to be the weeds in the garden of my life, to diminish my testimony, to choke out my Christian testimony and today I am going to do battle with sin.*’

I don’t know what it is that God has called you to do. That is the cool thing about the Holy Spirit; He is bringing something to your mind, to your attention that I have no way of knowing what it is. And He wants you to do business with Him. So as we sing this final song, as we get ready to go home and enjoy time with mom, before you do that, please do time with God, will you? Let’s stand as we pray.

**THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS**  
**THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 8**  
**Dan Burrell**

---

*Father, thank you for your Word. Father, help us to be serious about the topic of sin. Thank you for loving us enough to take upon yourself our sin penalty so that we can be free. Thank you, Father, for the forgiveness of sin. For it is in Christ's name I pray. Amen.*

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*