

1 John 1

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 October 2012

Preacher: Brian Maiden

- [0 : 00] The Word of God reads like this, That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life.
- The life appeared. We have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.
- We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.
- We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you. God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.
- If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.
- [1 : 24] And the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.
- If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.
- But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.
- He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.
- [2 : 32] Amen. Now, it's nice to be here. I think I've said that already, but it is, honestly, it is nice to be here. And it'll be nice to be here next week and the week after as well.
- I've been given a subject this morning. I think I can pick my own subjects next week and the week after, and I'm picking my own subjects. I'm doing a series on Philippians starting this evening, the three Sundays.
- But this morning, I've been asked to speak on a particular subject. And what I've been asked to speak on is how God deals with sin. How God deals with sin.
- That's a very, very appropriate subject. I'm very happy to deal with this subject, because in many ways, actually, in fact, it definitely is probably the most important subject you'll ever hear about.
- And it's particularly appropriate because there might be folk here this morning who aren't Christians yet. And it's particularly appropriate also because we're going to gather around the Lord's table, which is where we remind ourselves how God deals with sin, how God has dealt with our sins.
- [3 : 41] So how God deals with sin. I'd like to start by asking the question, what is sin? Because we mustn't assume that people understand what we mean when we talk about sin.

In the passage from 1 John that was read earlier, from verse 5 onwards, or verse 7 onwards, sorry, verse, yeah, verse 7 onwards, down to about chapter 2, verse 2, in almost every verse, John mentions sin, or sins.

Almost every verse, every verse, in fact, from about verse 7 down to chapter 2, verse 2. Every verse, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin.

What does he mean? What do we mean when we talk about sin? Well, fortunately, John actually tells us what he means by sin later on in the letter.

Chapter 3, verse 4, everyone who sins breaks the law. In fact, sin is lawlessness. So sin, says John, is breaking God's law.

[4 : 57] Now, God is a lawgiver. He gave his law in detail to the Jewish people. And at the heart of that law that he gave to the Jewish people are the Ten Commandments.

But Paul, in his letter to the Romans, says that every human being is aware in our hearts of the basic requirements of God's law.

He spelled it out in detail to the Jewish people, but in the hearts of every human being there is a conscience. And our conscience accuses us sometimes.

You shouldn't have done that. Sometimes it excuses us. That was alright. Don't worry about that. That was good. There's something inside us called a conscience. And the conscience is something that reminds us about God's law.

Whether we like it or not, we've all got this conscience. So in our hearts we know the basic requirements of God's law. And sometimes we all know that we've done things that we shouldn't have done or said things that we shouldn't have said and thought things that we shouldn't have thought.

[6 : 11] And sometimes we're all aware that we haven't done something that we should have done or haven't said something that we should have said or haven't thought something that we should have thought. In our conscience we're aware of God's law and sin is breaking God's law at the very beginning of the Bible God gives the human race just one clear instruction one law don't eat from that one tree you can eat from all the others you can enjoy all the others but don't eat from that one tree what did human beings do?

we broke God's law we disobeyed God's law and that was the first sin and that's the story of the human race ever since then we've been disobeying the law of God now let's think about this law breaking that we're all guilty of let's think about it a little more first of all to break God's law is an act of rebellion it's an act of rebellion against God's authority it's a rejection of his rule in other words it's to act as if God isn't God it's to act as if God doesn't matter it's to act as if God doesn't exist or if he does exist he's not very important he's not as important as you when you break God's law you're saying

I am more important than God we de-God God we resist his authority we resent his interference in our life we say I'll decide what's best for me I'll decide what's best to do I'll decide what makes me happy not you one of the Puritans said this it's one of my favourite quotes about sin he said sin if it were only strong enough would abolish God as a nuisance in his own universe sin if it were strong enough would abolish God as a nuisance in his own universe and our young people's worker at my church in Kendall or what used to be I've forgotten I'm retired haven't I but what used to be my church in Kendall until four weeks ago our youth worker this is what he says to our young people about sin sin

S-I-N sin S shove off God I I'm in charge N no to your ways shove off God I'm in charge no to your ways every time we break God's law that's what we do with God that's pretty serious isn't it so sin is an act of rebellion secondly it's an act of folly to break the maker's instructions is always an act of folly to think you know better than the maker is foolish it's an act of folly because God is not just our lawgiver he is also good and that means he's concerned for our welfare he wants to bless us he's concerned for our well-being he's not some tyrant who just wants to spoil our lives who just wants to restrict us he wants us to be happy and the only way to real happiness is to obey him our maker so to disobey our maker to break his law is to go against our own best interest it's foolish and it's also foolish because no one can get away with it we're sinning against God and God is all seeing and God is all powerful and God is completely just there is no way we will ever get away with rebelling against God there may be people here this morning rebelling against God you're never going to get away with it never

C.S. Lewis said that rebelling against God is a bit like a lunatic throwing snowballs at the sun so it's an act of folly to disobey God's law is an act of rebellion and it's an act of folly and thirdly it's an act of idolatry the first commandment says you shall have no other God before me and Jesus summarized in Deuteronomy summarized the first commandment as you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength we've got to worship God but when we choose to disobey God well we think that something else is more important than God or something else will make us happier than God will make us and so we worship an idol we worship something else a created thing or even ourselves and our own desires we worship another God instead of the God who loves us and who created us it's an act of idolatry in the Old

[12 : 09] Testament in the Old Testament the prophet said that it's like a wife rejecting her husband because she thinks another man will make her happier than her husband will make her so to break God's law to rebel against God is as serious as that it is an act of idolatry so are you getting the message sin is serious it's an act of rebellion against God it's an act of folly and it is an act of idolatry and finally on this first point of what is sin it is an act that reveals our heart it's an act an outward act that reveals our inward heart because the Bible says the problem is with what it calls the heart the heart is the real inward you your deepest thoughts your deepest desires your deepest drives and behind every outward sin there's an inward attitude there are thoughts there are desires and those thoughts and desires are against God and they're in our hearts the tenth commandment says you shall not covet now coveting isn't an action it's not something you go out and do to somebody it's not an outward action it's an inward attitude in the heart it is always wanting more and it's being discontented with what

God has given you and it's being envious of those who are more successful than you or have got more than you it's that attitude of heart that is discontented and envious of others and behind every sin there is this covetousness behind every act of adultery there is discontent with one's wife with one's husband there's the desire for something that God hasn't given you behind every act of stealing there's grieve the desire for more discontent envy of others behind behind every act of murder there is anger and ill will and the refusal to be reconciled to somebody the refusal to heal a relationship a murder is simply a bad relationship that's reached its ultimate conclusion most bad relationships don't actually end in murder thank goodness but every bad relationship is a potential murder and therefore

Jesus says if you're aware of a bad relationship go and put it right quickly before you appear before the judge it's in the heart you see and Jesus said it's out of the heart of man that evil thoughts and all kinds of other awful things proceed so can you see how serious sin is we talk about sin and John in this letter in verse after verse talks about sin and sin and it's clearly a problem that needs to be dealt with and it's a problem because it's an act of rebellion against God it's an act of folly it is an act of idolatry is an act that reveals the state of our heart so that's what we mean by sin now the second thing I want to do this morning is mention two wrong ways in which we can deal with sin two wrong ways in which we can try to deal with sin and they're both in the passage that was read and they're both fatal okay the first the first wrong way of trying to deal with sin deny that we are sinners denying that we are sinners look at verse 8 if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us and look at verse 10 if we claim we have not sinned we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives for sinners to deny that they are sinners is self deception says John we're deceiving ourselves but it's worse than that for sinners to deny that they are sinners is to make God out to be a liar the whole bible says that sin is the problem the whole bible is about sin and God's solution to sin and if we say that we're not sinners then we're making God and his word out to be untruthful verse 10 if we claim we have not sinned we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives if you've got a hospital for tests and the tests come up with something serious a serious illness and you then deny that you've got that serious illness you are deceiving yourself but worse than that you're calling into question the competence of the medical profession the people who diagnosed your condition they're saying you're saying they don't know what they're talking about and if we deny that we are sinners we're not only deceiving ourselves we're denying the truth of

God's word we're saying that God is a liar so that's one thing you mustn't try to do to deal with sin you mustn't deny that sin is a problem but this is what we do isn't it we try to balance out our sins with good works to make us appear less sinful that's like somebody with a terminal cancer going to the gym for an hour every day and showing everybody what good exercises he can do doesn't cancel out the cancer does it of course it doesn't still got cancer we blame other people well he deserved it he drove me to it it's in my genes I can't do anything about it I had an unhappy childhood we refuse to call sin by its real name

I've made a mistake the politicians say when he's found out not until he's found out usually I made a mistake or I behaved inappropriately or I let myself down anything other than calling sin sin it's absolutely fatal to try and deal with sin by denying that we're sinners and then the second wrong way of dealing with sin is by pretending that sin makes no difference to our relationship with God pretending that sin makes no difference to our relationship with God and this is another form of self-deception and the likelihood is that John wrote this letter in order to deal with this very problem many scholars think that the false teachers that John is writing against in this letter who had left the church and confused the church by doing so many scholars think that it was an early form of what became known as

[20 : 25] Gnosticism you don't need to know a lot about Gnosticism but one thing you do need to know when you're reading John's letter is that they said that sin isn't a problem they said God's a spirit and we're spirits really but our spirits have been trapped in earthly material bodies but our bodies don't matter bodily appetites they don't matter God is a spirit you're a spirit it's your spirit and your relationship with the God who is a spirit that matters you can do what you like with your body it doesn't affect your relationship with God that's probably what some of these false teachers were saying it's exactly what some celebrities say I keep hearing about celebrities who are serial adulterers sometimes and they turn out to be very spiritual people they turn out to be involved in some kind of new age spirituality or something but it makes no difference to the way they live their lives at all they say oh God isn't interested in things like that and so they can meditate and have a spiritual experience while they're living in sin and John says oh no you don't verses five and six this is the message we have heard from him and declare to you

God is light in him there is no darkness at all if we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness we lie and do not live by the truth so that's another way in which we can deceive ourselves says John if you think you can have a relationship with God who is light while you're walking in darkness you are deceived you're deceiving yourself light and darkness are opposite they're totally incompatible they cannot coexist God is light and he can have no fellowship with darkness he must judge he must punish he must react negatively against the darkness and so the very one of the very first things that

God says to mankind is in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die and the very first lie recorded in the Bible is you will not surely die you can sin and God won't mind it's a lie you mustn't try to deal with sin that way so I hope you're still with me so far we've made two points so far point number one was what is sin it's rebelling against the God who made us it is an act of rebellion it is an act of folly it is an act of idolatry it's an act that reveals what our hearts are like so we know what sin is and we've looked at two wrong ways of dealing with sin to deny that we're sinners and to claim that we can be sinners and still have fellowship with God and that's a lie ok so far this morning

I've been giving you the bad news I want to give you the good news now there's no use giving you the good news until you've heard the bad news because the good news will be totally irrelevant to you unless you really believe and take seriously the bad news if you don't take seriously what I've said so far what I'm going to say will just oh that's interesting and just go on and have your dinner that that is not the way to deal with this this is a serious matter so how does God deal with sin how does God deal with sin how does God deal with sin that's the subject I've been given this morning well he won't come to terms with it he won't come to terms with sin the God who is light will not pretend that sin isn't darkness so says

John God deals with sin through what he calls the blood of Jesus Christ his son look at verse 7 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 purifies us from all sin now that might sound strange to some of you if you're new to this sort of thing that might sound very strange language blood the blood of Jesus purifying us from sin what does it mean what's it all about well when you read the word blood read death death John is saying that cleansing from sin came at the cost of the death of Jesus the blood of Jesus but blood means just a little bit more than death blood means not a natural death it means a violent death it means that

[26 : 28] Jesus was put to death that's what blood means he was put to death his life blood was shed that's what the word blood means here and actually blood means a sacrificial death death a sacrificial death that's why in chapter 2 verse 2 John says that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world so if the whole world were to believe in him then what he did when he died is enough to cover the sins of the whole world so blood means the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ let me explain that because I'm trying to talk this morning to people who haven't heard this sort of thing before I don't know whether there's anybody here like that

I hope there is but even if there isn't it doesn't matter because it's always good to hear it again isn't it and we're coming to the Lord's table aren't we let me try and explain what I mean by Jesus is sacrificial death before Jesus came God taught his people Israel when they had sinned to offer an innocent domestic animal like a bull or a goat or a lamb or if they were really poor a couple of pigeons as a sacrifice to God for their sin so they would bring let's say a lamb to the temple and they would lay their hands on the lamb and they would confess their sin and then the lamb would be killed its blood would be shed the blood was the sign that its life had ended it had died it had been slain and that lamb died instead of the sinner the sinner deserved to die but the lamb died instead of the sinner put to death and assuming there was real repentance in the heart of the sinner the result would be the forgiveness of his sin the cleansing of the sinner so the animal died instead of the sinner the animal bore the sins of the offerer now this was temporary of course the blood of mindless animals could never cover the sins of human beings so this was only temporary it was just an interim thing and even in the old testament there is a clear hint in say the prophecy of Isaiah that one day

God would send a man who would deal with sin not a lamb but a man he called this man his servant God called this man his servant my servant he's going to deal with sin and the day came right at the beginning of the new testament when a prophet called John the Baptist pointed to Jesus Christ and he said look look at last the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world Jesus Christ is the one who God sent into this world to deal with sin so Jesus Christ even though he performed many miracles and even raised people from the dead the time came when he said to his disciples I'm going to Jerusalem and when I get to Jerusalem I'm not going to rain

I'm going to die I know exactly what's going to happen to me they're going to reject me they're going to spit on me they're going to crucify me I'm going to die that's why I'm going to Jerusalem so he did he went to Jerusalem and he was betrayed and he was arrested and he was put on trial and he was cruelly treated and then he was taken to Calvary where he was nailed to a cross and the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ God's Son did that for sinners his blood a sinless innocent man the Son of God his blood covers our sins and purifies us from all sins says in Isaiah he was wounded for our transgression he was bruised for our iniquity the punishment that brings us peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed all we like sheep have gone astray we've turned everyone to our own way but the

Lord laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all Peter says in his lesson Christ died the righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God Jesus died for sinners and that's why when he was on the cross there was darkness over the face of the earth at noon at noon there was darkness over the face of the earth Jesus cried out in a loud voice my God my God why have you forsaken me God withdrew from his son who was bearing our sin he was taking the punishment for us and when he died the curtain in the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom which symbolized the fact that sinners can now go into the presence of

[32 : 47] God because the ultimate sacrifice has been offered the blood of Jesus has been shed and we can be forgiven we can be purified from our sin God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day and he is now in the presence of God speaking in our defense says John if anyone sins we have one who speaks to the father in our defense Jesus Christ the righteous one he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world that is how God has dealt with sin it's the only way in which sin can be dealt with so what must you do John says you must confess your sin confess your sin the word confess literally means to speak the same thing in other words it means to agree with God means you go to

God and you say you are right God I am a sinner I deserve to go to hell I deserve your judgment and I need Jesus to be my savior we confess we speak the same thing as God about ourselves about our own hearts we stop trying to hide our sins we stop denying them we stop pretending that God doesn't bother about them we go to God and we say the same thing about ourselves and about our sins and about our hearts as God does in his word we agree with God I am a sinner I need a savior and then we trust God's word when he says that because Jesus died those who confess their sins will be forgiven and will be purified from all sin so will you do that this morning those of you who aren't Christian will you stop rebelling against God resisting

God breaking the maker's instructions behaving like a fool will you stop doing that and will you come to Jesus Christ the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and can take away your sin if you will trust him and he can bring you into a relationship with God and you can go on for the rest of your life getting to know this God better and better and better and one day you will be with him for all eternity how do you deal with sin not by pretense but by purification and by pardon three Ps God

God forgiveness Amen let's pray Father we thank you that you are a God of immense grace there was no need for you to do what you have done at all you could simply have written the human race off you could simply have destroyed us judged us as we deserve but we thank you that from the very beginning you have been planning this salvation you have been planning to send the Lamb of God you have been planning to send your Son to deal with the sins of the world thank you for such grace thank you Lord Jesus for being willing to come as our Saviour as our Redeemer thank you that we have a

Redeemer Jesus God's Son precious Lamb of God Messiah Holy One thank you and we do pray that there will be no one here foolish enough to reject God's remedy for sin we do pray that there will be no one here foolish enough to carry on on that journey away from you into outer darkness may your Holy Spirit turn sinners around this morning turn them to the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart as we gather around the Lord's table now may the Lord's table this morning perhaps for some for the very first time the time when they really appreciated what you did for them

[38 : 01] Lord Jesus at Calvary's Cross so may the Holy Spirit bless the word this morning we pray in Jesus name Amen