

# FORGIVE US

## THE LESSON: 1 JOHN 1

The 622 service that we've been using (and that we just said together) includes a prayer of confession. Coming before God in honest prayer makes us aware of the damage that our sin has done to our relationship with him. What do we do about that? We confess our sin and ask his forgiveness. And the wonderful thing is that God *does* forgive us! So the prayer of confession is followed by one for pardon. The sacrifice of Jesus has made it possible for us to have a fully repaired relationship with God!

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Let's take a look at scripture. Of the 27 books in the New Testament, 21 of them are "epistles". The epistles are letters written to the early Christian churches by writers who had apostolic authority to encourage, instruct and correct them (and us!). We're going to take a look at the epistle called 1 John, written by John the Evangelist, who was one of Jesus' disciples and who also wrote the fourth Gospel. As is true in the other epistles, John was concerned about the believers he was writing to and wanted to make sure that their faith was on the right track.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Spend some time remembering that God knows and loves you completely. Then spend some time considering his perfect holiness or "light". Turn your mind to quiet, private confession:

- What are the sinful thoughts in your heart that are exposed in God's light?
- What are the sinful words you have spoken that are exposed in God's light?
- What are the sinful things you have done that are exposed in God's light?

Ask God to forgive them all and to enable you to begin afresh from this moment. Then pray with the words of 1 John 1:9: *Thank you God, because when I confess my sins, you are faithful and just to forgive me and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Amen.*

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY, BCP PAGE 138)

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## 1 JOHN 1: **THE REPAIR KIT (FOR SIN)**

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from Jesus and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

<sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.