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SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

NORTH: Oct. 1/8 | SOUTH: Oct. 11/15 | CHAPEL: Oct. 22



CONFESSION

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This study guide was written by the Pastors at Hope Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND. Find this resource and others at [FARGOHOPE.ORG/RESOURCES](https://fargo-hope.org/resources)

CONFESSION

READ: Romans 10:9; 1 John 1:8-9; Luke 13:2-4; James 5:16

Luther is always helpful when he reminds us we are both saints and sinners at the same time! Often it is easier to focus on the “saint” side of our lives. There is nothing more burdensome for a group of Christians to be in fellowship together and pretend everyone is perfect and no one is really a sinner. Then we become shocked when a genuine, 24 carat sinner is suddenly revealed in our midst! As a result, we often choose to remain isolated by our sin. We end up pretending to everyone we are a Godly Christian but, in truth, we live a life of lies and hypocrisy. We forget we are saints AND sinners. Writer Frederick Buechner in his book “Wishful Thinking” describes the necessity of confession for our souls this way: “To confess your sins to God is not to tell him anything he doesn’t already know. Until you confess them, however, they are the abyss between you. When you confess them, they become the bridge.” There is wonderful freedom in our walk with Christ when we can dare to be ourselves...not perfect but forgiven Christ followers. To be honest before God and to live as authentically as we can with our brothers and sisters in Christ is true freedom. Each time we confess, we experience the freshness of God’s amazing grace when we remember that God loves the sinner so much but does indeed despise our sin. These words are ours to claim: “...if we admit our sins – make a clean breast of them – he won’t let us down; he’ll be true to himself. He’ll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.” (1 John 1:8) The old adage is true: Confession is good for the soul!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Why does it seem easier to confess our sins to God than to another Christ follower?
2. What do you need to admit to God so you can be honest with him and yourself?

3. What are you pretending not to know?
4. Our sin loves to dwell in the dark crevices of our heart. What does it mean when we proclaim that Jesus is the Light of world and he wants us to let our light shine brightly before others?
5. Why is confession an essential quality in our relationship with Christ?
6. How can unconfessed sin isolate a person from others?
7. Why is confession not a law, but rather an offer of divine help for the sinner?
8. Why do you think Luther included a section on Confession in the Small Catechism? If you have time, reread that section of the Small Catechism.

PRAYER

O God of such amazing grace, thank you that I can come before you in all honesty and openness. You will never be ashamed of my sins. I cannot out sin your mercy. Therefore, speak truth into my heart and help me to be honest with myself. In my confession, encourage me to be very specific about my sin rather than talk about “sin in general.” From my confession, help me to be willing to change, even though that may be hard. Make my heart warm and soft, that I may receive your forgiveness, and the benediction of your “depart in peace...and sin no more.” In Jesus’ name. Amen.