

Soul Business – Confession

Introduction

At the center of our Christian faith and tradition is the understanding that because of sin at work in us and the world, the relationship between us and God is broken. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to die for our sin, offering forgiveness of our sin and restoring a right relationship with Him. The first step to receiving the forgiveness of sins and to step into new life and life eternal with the Lord is confession. This step cannot be skipped. For why else would we need forgiveness unless something is wrong? 1 John 1:8 tells us, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” But we may be tempted to not practice confession. Why? Because looking at our broken and hurting places, being honest about our sin and confessing it can be painful. C.S. Lewis in his book, *Mere Christianity*, describes the process of confession and repentance this way, “Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death.” Although the spiritual practice of confession starts in our broken and hurting places, it ends in new life. 1 John 1:9 promises us, “if we confess our sin, (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” After having been caught and called out by the prophet Nathan for sinning against God and God’s people (2 Samuel 12), King David wrote Psalm 51. In it, King David confesses his sin and looks to God for a “new heart,” a “steadfast spirit,” and restoration to the joy of God’s salvation. God did restore King David. And in Jesus Christ, each of us are forgiven, freed and renewed when we confess, for as the saying goes, “there is more grace in Christ than sin in me!” And when the light of Christ shines on our sin, we are transformed. For, “everything exposed to the light is revealed by the light. ¹⁴ Everything

that is revealed by the light is light. Therefore, it says, *Wake up, sleeper! Get up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*^[c]”
(Ephesians 5:13-14, CEV)

Read Your Bible

- Psalm 51
- Luke 18:9-14

Apply God’s Word to Your Life:

1. When you hear the word “confession,” what comes to mind for you?
2. Read Luke 19:11. When have you felt like the Pharisee, either in prayer or in conversation with others?
3. Read Luke 19:13. When have you felt like the tax collector, either in prayer or in conversation with others?
4. Read Luke 19:14. Why is the tax collector justified before God and who is it who justifies him?
5. In Psalm 51:10-12 King David makes many requests to God about forgiveness and changes he desires. Which request stands out the most to you and why?
6. Psalm 51:17 tells us that God will not despise a broken and contrite heart. What does that tell you about God?
7. Considering the passages above, how do you imagine God looks at you as you confess your sin to Him and how does that make you feel?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Lord God, accept our humble confession of the wrongs we have done, the injustice to which we have been party, and the countless denials of your mercy we have expressed. Turn us toward the love offered in your Son, and cleanse us by your grace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (ELW, pg. 62)