



Confession

1 John 1:8-10

Sermon 39
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Spiritual Disciplines
Confession

Children sometimes tell their problems to worry dolls....telling the dolls is like confession It transfers some of the feelings, it off loads, it shares with something that cannot answer you back and will not judge you. This is good psychotherapy.

But it's not cleansing of sin and it's not the forgiveness we need as children of God.

Confess can mean two things: Profess and admit guilt. This sermon is about admitting guilt. Answer 4 questions

1) What it is 2) Why it is good 3) How to approach it 4) Receiving confession

God is redeeming us. His whole purpose is to have us in relationship with himself. LOVE and His great desire to forgive brought Jesus to the cross. His act on the cross was vicarious ("in place of"). It's a great exchange, He suffered for us, took our place. Salvation came to mankind through the cross. But salvation is also a process, the Holy Spirits continually ongoing rooting out of sin to restore us to the relationship God wants with us, approved and acceptable.

Confession is a "means of grace" because we receive God's grace. It is also a **spiritual discipline** - So there is something we have to do. It is a means of healing and transforming the spirit, which brings us to maturity. It involves: **sin; repentance; confession and receiving of forgiveness**

Sin is when we deliberately build our lives around ourselves rather than God. There is considerable damage done when we sin because we detach ourselves, or disconnect, from God, and people. Without confession, and repentance we move further and further away from God. **Psalm 26:2-3**

It's hard to admit we're wrong— it's easier to stay as we are. We are proud; afraid of what people will think, **we cannot bear to reveal our shortcomings to others.** We hide ourselves and live in hypocrisy. Fear and pride cling to us. We may lose something like a money making business or have to end an affair. But God's wholeness is better. **James 5:16 This is very hard!** Nagging habits, sins, bad attitudes and pride need to be brought to the fore, the light. Matthew 18:15; Matthew 5:23 These are commands, not suggestions. Confess to your brother. It is very hard and very painful for both parties. Yet God's ways always work to the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28)

John 3:19-20 why is confession good?

Jesus took all the dark powers and defeated them, by the light of His presence. When we confess we bring them to the light. Darkness refers to lack of understanding, blindness, sadness, evil, despair. Unspoken it will remain in the dark; confession brings it to the light. We are now responsible.

Sometimes we have to forgive ourselves. This is an area that we may not be able to see. Others can help because they see with a different perspective. We can be continually down on ourselves, always critical, and harsh. This actually is pride and requires repentance

Parable of the lost son

Luke 15:18-22a His son was willing to pay the consequences.

No relationship will ever be the same after a hurt and a confession. Hopefully it will be stronger, more open and trustworthy. But there will be scars and you risk losing all. Hopefully you will be forgiven by the person you have hurt, but we cannot bank on it. Do it anyway. God has forgiven you already.

What steps to take? 1) Examine yourself; 2) Experience sorrow; (don't justify) 3) Determine to avoid sin - be holy
A) It's a good idea to sit quietly for 15 minutes and wait. It's easy to DO stuff for God but not easy to wait. Write down what you sense.

B) You can use the cross diagram C) the 10 commandments (Luther used this method). D) Revise your day. E) Go through the Lords' prayer

You don't have to try to root out every last detail! God will deal with them as time goes on, if you make this discipline a habit.

To whom do we go?

Theologically every Christian believer can hear confession. But not everyone is qualified. We need: Someone we can trust; someone we can confide in; Empathy; understanding; someone who is spiritually mature, wise, compassionate, and a sense of humour!

1 Timothy 2:5

We are only God's agent, his hands his feet his ears. We are tangible when God can seem distant. We need to offer acceptance. PRAY that God will reveal any area needing the healing touch of God. Be quiet! EXPLAIN forgiveness is in Jesus Christ alone. It has been done. Ask aloud for healing for the wounds of sin. And NEVER try to fix the person.

- 1) Never pretend that the problem doesn't really matter. That is lying.
- 2) Forgiveness does not mean that the person will cease to hurt. There are always consequences.
- 3) The person will not forget. God will.
- 4) Don't think the relationship will be the same. It won't. It will be a new kind of 'normal'