

Confession (slide)

1 John 1 vs 5-10

Wesley (slide)

“Give me a hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and the gates of hell will be shaken and Gods kingdom set up on earth.” I would replace this with Jesus followers.

Proverbs 13 vs 8 (slide)

To fear the Lord is to hate evil;

The one thing that God hates, that grieves Him, that He is provoked by, and that He will destroy, is sin. The one thing that makes man unhappy, is sin. The one thing for which Jesus had to give His blood was sin. There is nothing good about sin. The first step in a relationship with God is dealing with sin and seeing it the way God does.

Today we talk about the discipline that actually helps remove sin and keep me in an abiding relationship with Jesus: The practice of Confession. Another word to keep in mind as you hear this is agreement.

1 John 1 vs 5-10 (slide)

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ 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, purifies us from all sin. ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

1. Only light can remove darkness (slide)

Light and dark cannot be in the same place. Darkness cannot get rid of light. It is merely the absence of light. The moment light is present darkness is gone. Only light can get rid of darkness. So, it is important to know what the light is and where to find it if I want to get rid of darkness.

Matt 4 vs 16 (slide)

the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

John 1 Vs 9-12 (slide)

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive

him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

JESUS came as the light of the world that would remove the darkness. Some reject Him but to those who receive Him the light enters and transforms. For me to live and walk in the light I surrender to Him living in and through me. The life of surrender is a life that walks in the light. This is where true fellowship is found. As we walk in the light together being like Jesus, we also find true fellowship with each other. I have found this all over the world. I see the light in others, and we are brothers.

As we embrace this way of living, darkness is exposed, and we are purified. We were born into darkness and Jesus now comes and His sacrifice and shed His blood purifies us. My believing and accepting this cleanses me. It could only be one who was innocent that could carry my sin. You couldn't die for me cos you are guilty. We have no way of getting rid of our own darkness. Only light can get rid of darkness. His name is Jesus. That is why no one can come to the Father but by Him.

2 Cor 5 vs 21 (slide)

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Only He was worthy to pay the price.

Can you begin to see how great the price was that paid for our sins?

When I recognize my sin and my desperate need for a Savior, the cross takes on a whole new meaning. Its power is activated in me, darkness is removed and forgiveness and cleansing flows.

Can you see why confession is so important in our lives on an ongoing basis? As the Holy Spirit convicts us in our Christian walk, that practice of confession marks us as a true believer and God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When I am walking (present continuous) in the light, my darkness is constantly being exposed and so confession becomes a constant discipline for me. If I walk in the darkness, I do not have my sin exposed because it just blends in with the darkness and the practice of confession plays no part in my life. This is why it is so dangerous to not call out sinful behavior in my life...it breaks fellowship with God, and I get used to darkness. If I am walking in darkness and yet say I am in fellowship with Christ I am deceived because it's simply not possible. Paul tells us that light and darkness cannot be in fellowship.

There is a difference between struggling with sin and being OK with sin. I never want to be OK with sin because it is sin that produces darkness in me that breaks my fellowship with God. (my exp)

It is critical that we call out the darkness in our lives it affects intimacy with Christ. How has growing up in America created possible sinful compromise in your heart that you are not aware of? Fear, greed, comfort, racism, South Africa- superstition, racism. Every culture has its darkness. Are you numb to any of this? Have you allowed God to call it out in your life? What price are we paying for not calling it out? Without confession I cannot be free from the darkness. Confession is the first step to inviting the light to invade my darkness.

2. No one is without sin (slide)

John is very clear about this

Elton John “Sorry” seems to be the hardest word. Kids, spouses, politicians. Nobody likes to admit they are wrong even when all the evidence is there.

Man does not want to acknowledge his sinfulness and depravity. Jesus is denied as a Savior because we cannot accept the depravity of man

I am a good person, I have good moral values, I have never hurt anyone, I can reform myself when needed, I can live a responsible life. So, what's the problem?

As long as I understand myself and the world, have good moral values and use science and tech for moral causes why do I need someone to die for my sin? Man rejects the idea of a sinless Son of God coming and dying for his sins because that means he has to admit that he is.

Guilty of being sinful

Unacceptable to God

Cannot make it to God on his own

Out of fellowship with God

Do enough good deeds to outweigh the bad (Muslims)

Problem is doing good does not remove my sin

If we claim we have no sin God is then a liar. The whole reason Jesus came into the world was because of the sinfulness of humanity. When I say I don't need saving, my sin is not a problem, I have no guilt, just do a little good, I make a mockery of the cross and make God out to be a liar.

This is the heresy that John is going after. Instead of denying our sin we should confess our sins. Confession of sins is therefore one of the evidences or proofs that one is indeed a new creation in Christ. The individuals in verse 8 and 10 would see no need for confession of their sin, for they have deceived themselves into believing the lie that they have no sin that needs confessing.

No man is ever kept out of God's kingdom for his confessed badness; many are kept out for their supposed goodness (slide)

Luke 18 vs 10-14 (slide)

¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax

collector.¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.

If one be not a sinner,
then for him there is no Savior.

I am surrendered to Christ because I need a Savior. The day I confessed/agreed/admitted that I was a sinner and could not save myself was the day Jesus' sacrifice of love on the cross became a reality for me. It helped me start the journey to understanding who I really am.

Adam syndrome

So, there is a problem with claiming I have no sin BUT there is also a danger of not owning my sin and blaming others. It happens all the time. It's the spirit of Adam.

Blamestorming

We blame family, doctors, teachers, friends, employers, fast food restaurants, TV, Phones, government, environment and our go to guy for everything else...the devil. We even blame God! We blame him for our personality types and for the circumstances we have encountered. We don't want to take responsibility for our sinful actions.

The broken world we live in has led to evil things being done that have compromised so many people's ability to choose the light (sins of the father). When I have been a victim of someone else's evil and it has produced a sinful response, these are the hardest sins to confess eg unforgiveness. BUT the fact that we are made in His image means we have the power of choice and it's what I do with my choices that I am responsible for. My response to anything in life is my choice (my experience with young folk...choice is everything...owning sin...wounding from young but owning sin. Wounds do not justify sinful behavior, but it is so important to understand the connection between healing and overcoming sin. Sin is the fruit. Lies born out of pain are the root. We need to do the work there which will help overcome my desire to want to sin.

4. The journey of confession (slide)

We are all guilty and so must go on the journey of confession.

The salvation journey starts with a confession and then becomes an ongoing spiritual discipline.

Confession is public and private. There are times when I go to God and times when I need to go to man to. Obviously if I have sinned against someone, I need to reconcile but where it is my own private sin, I can go to Him.

1 Tim 2 vs 5 (slide)

⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,

There is One mediator

James 5 vs 16 (slide)

¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

How do I know when I should go to a brother or sister---check the fruit- am I free from sin and guilt? Bringing something into the light with a brother tends to break the power because darkness has to leave. Who do I confess to? Priest? Priesthood of all believers?

Someone who understands their own brokenness. I don't care what you have done...do you want to be free that's all that matters to me. (Uz Pastor). Nothing that shocks me... What shocks me is how easily I can choose to sin...but for His grace. When I realize that we are part of a fellowship of broken vessels I can then be free to be authentic and move into healing.

Billy Graham – Jim Bakker

3 parts to confession (slide)

1. Examine your heart (slide)

Psalm 139 vs 23-24

Search me, God, and know my heart; me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Search me God...soul under His gaze...church...fellowship...in the Word
Specific rather than general. General confession enables me to avoid guilt. I name them

Sins of the heart – pride, greed, anger, fear
Sins of the flesh – gluttony, laziness, lust,

Ones I am not calling out because they have become normal...greed, lust, racism, pride, selfishness. Listen to the Spirit. He cannot live with darkness.

Tonight...opportunity (**slide**)

2. Sorrow (slide)

When I see my sin the way He does it causes sorrow within me.

Much more than merely *admitting* that we did the wrong action -- we could do that boastfully -- cf. a terrorist setting off a bomb and then calling the local media to claim responsibility -- he is not really confessing to the crime -- there is no submission there -- no agreeing that what was done was wrong and despicable -- no desire to be cleansed and changed. Godly confession brings sorrow and desire for cleansing and change. This describes revival.

If you track revivals in history, they begin here. Overcome with godly sorrow over their sin.

South Africa

During one of these prayer meetings. God's presence filled the place. Each one was so burdened by his or her own sin that they continued to call upon God for forgiveness and pleaded with Him that he would cleanse them. Everyone continued praying simultaneously. Dr. Andrew Murray, the pastor of that congregation was urgently sent for. What he found there seemed very disorderly to him and he tried to quieten the people down, saying, "Silence please, this is chaos. I am your minister sent from God ... Be quiet!" However, no one took any notice of him, but simply carried on praying. Each one was aware only of his own burden of sin and kept on crying out to God for forgiveness, but the weight of guilt, shame and sin just became more intolerable. Murray tried in vain to get them to sing a hymn – with no effect. The Spirit of God was moving with the power of revival and no one could stop it.

Ireland

This revival was characterized by a supernatural conviction of sin. Professor William Gibson wrote the following: "Even strong men have staggered and fallen down under the wounds of their conscience. Great bodily weakness followed ... With tears streaming down their faces and looks of unutterable anguish, they confessed their sins, appealing to the Lord for mercy with piercing cries ... I have never heard such cries before: 'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my sinful soul; Lord Jesus come to my burning heart; Lord, pardon my sins; O come and lift me from these flames of hell.'"

At Boroughshane, workers in a spinning factory were suddenly inexplicably seized by the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin. Within an hour 20 people were lying prostrate on the floor, crying out to God. The factory had to close for two days so that people could get their lives right with God!

On 29 June there was a very large open-air meeting in the Botanic Gardens in Belfast: 40,000 people attended. Deep conviction of sin caused many people to literally fall down on their faces and beg for God's grace. After this meeting, church services were packed daily. Often it was impossible to dismiss services and people only went home in the early hours of the morning

It's important that the "woe is me" is not taken as a destructive self-image thing because I am not defined by my sin (prodigal was always his son). Sorrow is a proper understanding of the gravity and weight of my sin and I see it the way God sees it. It's actually my unconfessed sin that keeps me away from home and giving the enemy ammunition to destroy who I really am.

Confession actually begins a journey to authenticity and freedom

Confession brings an end to pretense

Isaiah...woe is me...unclean lips

Paul...chief of sinners

I can assure you neither of these guys had problems with self-image, value or security. What this state does is to actually set me up to experience the incredible depths of the grace and love of God that sweeps me up and cleanses me and makes me into something beautiful. Jesus had you not come I would be nothing but a selfish depraved human. Now I have come home, and I live in a different place. I walk in the light with new desires new acceptance and new freedom. This is the power of confession which is the entry point into the kingdom.

3. Repentance (slide)

The fruit of godly confession is repentance. I acknowledge the darkness and want it gone from my life

Luke 3 vs 8 (slide)

⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

2 Cor 7 vs 10 (slide)

¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Godly sorrow grieves over the sin itself...worldly sorrow grieves over the consequence (I was caught, now I have to face this...)

True confession brings godly sorrow that leads to repentance. I turn and don't want to do this again. When darkness is removed, and light comes in my desires are transformed.

Fruit of revival in Ireland

People's lives began to change: There was a drastic decrease in prostitution as many prostitutes were saved. People started working responsibly with their money and began saving again. Political protest demonstrations ceased for the time being. Many factories closed temporarily so that workers convicted of sin could deal with that, because they could not continue working in any case. People were starting to grow and mature spiritually and answers to prayer were reported every day. There were spiritual bands and singing groups all over. Pastors ministered to crowds gathering in the streets.

This is what happens when God's people humble themselves and pray and seek His face and turn from their wicked ways.

Conclusion

The discipline of confession is a gift to you and me.

Confession of sins instead of seen as a "bad" thing, is in fact the best thing for a sinner to practice. Don't miss your opportunity to experience the blessed state of no shame that comes from confessing your sins to God, who faithfully forgives and cleanses.

Andrew Murray: (picture and quote)

You should learn that one of the greatest privileges of a child of God is, the confession of sin. It is one of the deepest roots of a powerful spiritual life.

It is only the holiness of God that can consume sin; through confession I must hand over my sin to God, lay it down in God, get quit of it to God, cast it into the fiery oven of God's holy love which burns against sin like a fire. God, yes, God Himself, and He alone, takes away sin.

Communion

Have you ever admitted your need for a savior? Jesus is calling. Cry out to Him today for mercy. Embrace what He has done at the cross.

Will you come home? Come to the table

After the elements are distributed, the lights will dim until the room is in darkness. We'll stay in darkness and silence for 30 seconds. In the darkness, contemplate how we walked in darkness, how we walk in darkness. Kneel and agree with Him, ask for mercy and forgiveness.

"Then we'll hear the reading of today's scripture, 1 John 1:5-10. Listen and breathe in the redemptive words...that the light will lead us home." *

Ushers distribute communion elements.