

Why Confess?

Psalm 32:1-5

Preface

As parents we work hard to teach our children the importance of effective communication skills. My wife is an English teacher so my children and I have endured years of having our grammar and sentence structures corrected. Of course at this point in my life I intentionally say things that grate on her like, "You reckon?" and "I ain't got none."

Illus: Her correcting people's English backfired on her one day when she and a little boy met at the door. He was holding himself and desperately trying to get to the restroom. He wanted her to get out of the way. With a tone of desperation, he said, "Me gotta go to bathroom!" Naturally Pam had to correct his poor grammar. She said, "No Joey it's I have to go to the bathroom." To which Joey responded, "Waa... where me go?"

Illus: Speaking of communicating, I am reminded of the story of the woman who went before the judge for a divorce.

"Do you have any grounds!" the judge asked. "Just two acres," she said.

"That's not it, lady. I mean do you have a grudge!" "No, we park the car in front of the house."

By now the judge was frustrated: "Does your husband beat you up!" She replied. "No, I get up before he does."

"Then why do you want a divorce?" the judge asked. "Because we just can't seem to communicate."

As you can see, the ability to communicate is important.

But, the most important communication you and I will ever do is our communicating with the Heavenly Father. The most important words we ever utter will be those spoken to our Lord.

You can communicate lies to your family and friends but you must speak the truth with God. We call this "Confession." The word confession comes from a Greek word that literally means to speak the truth.

David teaches us the importance of confession in the 32nd Psalm.

Scripture Psalm 32:1-5

¹Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ²Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. ³When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. ⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
Psalm 32:1-5 NIV

Introduction

We live in a society where true confession is almost non-existent. Today our idea of confession is to acknowledge something only after the evidence is stacked up against us and we have no choice but to confess. That is not confession.

Though it comes with enormous guilt and inner struggles, that approach may work for a period of time with people. But, it does not work with God.

God knows our heart, he knows our motives and he knows our actions. Nothing will work in our relationship with God but absolute honesty.

Illus: As parents we have all been in the circumstance where our children have done something bad that we know about and we must sit down and discuss the matter. We might be extremely disappointed in their actions but what do we want them to tell us more the anything else? The truth!

We want the truth because until they tell us the truth, no progress can be made. As long as our child is being dishonest we know the process of forgiveness, reconciliation and learning from the mistake is not going to move forward.

God is the same way. Until we openly communicate the truth with God, the healing and forgiveness cannot begin. But once there is real confession, the rich mending and growth takes place.

1. Confession is a Necessity (vs. 3-4)

In “Doctrines of the Christian Religion”, William Stevens calls sin, **“the fly in the ointment in man’s relationship with God.”**

Illus: A few months ago my wife picked up some lunch for us and brought it to the office. It was fried chicken, green beans and mashed potatoes and gravy. Not a very healthy lunch for sure. As I began to eat, I found a hair in the mashed potatoes. I began to look around in them and in a matter of a minute I had found 3 hairs. I threw the entire meal away. I could not stomach eating a single bite.

The Bible tells us our sin has a similar effect on God. In His righteousness, God cannot have anything to do with our sin. It must be confessed and removed.

Today I see two types of people as it relates to sin.

There are those who openly live in sin. From all outward appearances, sin has no detrimental effects upon them and doesn’t seem to bother them. People like this make the conscious choice to reject God’s teachings and do the things they know are not pleasing to Him. They don’t care what other people think and it appears that they don’t care what God thinks.

These are the people who chose to live together outside of marriage or chose to have affairs and promiscuous lifestyles. These are the people tend to commit crimes and cheat others using every means at their disposal for their own gain.

The other group is those people who do not commit such open and flagrant sins but rather sins very private in nature. Most of us fall into this group.

For this group, the evidence of their sin is less visible to the public and therefore easier to ignore. The sinner fools himself into thinking no harm is done since no one knows.

Perhaps the most obvious example of this group is people who spend time on the internet looking at pornography or places where they have no business. Before you breathe a sigh of relief, think about some of the other examples.

What about the person who puts on a nice front at church about being a Christian but at work you would never know it by their language? Is that not hypocrisy? What about the person takes things from their place of work, reasoning that they will never miss it because they have plenty? Is that not stealing?

And then there are those who talk about others, those who lie for monetary gain or to make their stories more dramatic. And what about the way you treat other people? Do you treat your own spouse with love and respect as the Bible teaches? For many the sin is right in the home in the way they ridicule and belittle their God given spouse.

And then there is the area of service for our Lord. There are those who talk a big game about God but their spiritual life is virtually void. This is usually evidenced in sporadic church attendance, little to no giving to the Lord’s work in tithe or time. Though God calls for commitment their personal desires take precedent.

Regardless if you are in the group of Open Sinners or Private Sinners, the outcome is the same. Sin separates us from God. Sin eats away at our inner being and builds a barrier between us and God.

Today our churches are filled with people who do not see themselves as sinners. They see themselves as basically good people. The problem is that we compare ourselves to what society considers acceptable and unacceptable rather than to God’s standards.

Sin is anything that hinders our relationship with God. Sin has a way of dragging us down, weighting us down.

David said; ³ *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.* ⁴ *For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.*

Our catholic friends confess their sins to the priest. I don’t understand that when they can confess them directly to a loving God who is eagerly waiting to hear the truth from our hearts.

But at least they confess. We don’t even do that! Like the Pharisees, we try to work out our iniquities by being better. All the while, our sin is eating at us from the inside.

Confession is a necessity; confess your sins humbly before the living God.

2. Confession is Relief (vs. 5)

There is only one cure for sin – God’s grace. But, there is only one way to receive God’s grace and that is through confession and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We must do as David.

⁵ *Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

David describes what he did about his sin. Confession is the thing that our soul screams and begs for us to do. He did the only thing that will relieve the burden of sin – confess to the Lord!

1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God’s word says, if we confess, He is **faithful to forgive and cleanse our sins.**

Speaking in past tense, David begins our test with; “¹*Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.* ²*Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.*”

Illus: We have all heard the term, “Let’s bury the hatchet.” The problem with that is that nobody ever forgets where the hatchet is buried. **God doesn’t bury the hatchet, he destroys the hatchet!**

Illus: I remember a few years ago Pam was assigned a different classroom at her school. She came home complaining about the condition of the white board. For some reason writing from the past would just not wipe off. Being the industrious type that I am I immediately found some powerful cleaning solution that I assured her would get the board clean, but it failed. Over the next few weeks I sent her with all sorts of things including car wax. Nothing worked. The white board was permanently scarred.

Finally, she went to the principal and made her aware of the dilemma. Within a week Pam had a brand new sparkling white board. She had a clean white board upon which to write her future lessons and she was proud.

Notice that David says, “You forgave the guilt of my sin.”

For the forgiven, there is peace in a clean white board with God. God becomes our refuge, our hiding place and our deliverance. He mends our souls by forgiving the guilt.

Men can do all sorts of great things. Doctors can do amazing medical things these days. But only God can heal the wounds of sin. Only God cleanses our soul and makes our hearts clean.

Illus: Suppose you were out in the wilderness standing at the bank of a roaring river. You have all plenty of food and supplies at your campsite. On the other hand, your family is on the other side of the raging river and they have nothing on which to survive. How would you try to get to them? Swimming is out of the question and you have no boat so how would you get to them?

You would try to build some type of bridge. Sin is the raging river between you and God. The bridge was built long ago. It is Christ on the cross. You can cross that bridge if you will just confess.

- Confession humbles us showing us who we are and who God is.
- Confession changes us allowing God to impact our hearts.
- Confession frees us giving us power over sin.
- Confession cleanses us taking away the guilt and shame.

Like David, confess your sins before God and soon you will be singing the words of the old hymn.

I was sinking deep in sin,
Far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within,
Sinking to rise no more,
But the Master of the sea,
Heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me,
Now safe am I.

Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
When nothing else could help Love lifted me!

Conclusion

I want you to think now of one sin in your life. Perhaps it is something you did just this week. When preparing this sermon, I went through this exercise. It took me about 30 seconds to think of a sin I had committed this week.

Think of a sin in your life. Now confess it before the Lord.

God’s love is greater than His anger.