

Confessing Our Sins

Scripture Reading:

Hymn: 408

1 John 1:7, 9 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 cleanses us from every sin.

Prov. 28:13 He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will obtain mercy.

- I. The importance of confessing our sins:
 - A. Confession will bring you into a recovery of intimate fellowship with the Lord—1 Tim. 1:5.
 - B. Confession of sins is the start of the practice of the vital groups.
 - C. Confession of sins is the base of serving the Lord.
- II. The practice of confessing our sins:
 - A. The cycle in the spiritual life—1 John 1:7, 9.
 1. The eternal life.
 2. Fellowship of the eternal life.
 3. The divine light.
 4. Confession of sins—the blood of Jesus washing us from all our sins.
 - B. Confession of sins must be thorough.
- III. The two aspects of confession:
 - A. Confessing to God—Psa. 32:5; Prov. 28:13:
 1. Confessing the sin of individualism and individuality.
 2. Confessing all your defects, shortcomings, wrongdoings, mistakes, transgressions, trespasses, outward sins, and inward evils, and asking for the Lord's forgiveness.
 3. Confessing your sinful nature, its defilements, its attachment to the contamination of the world, and its oldness, and asking for the Lord's cleansing with His precious blood.
 4. Confessing you dispositional problems and your peculiarity in your character.
 5. Denying your self, your habit, and your old way of doing things—Matt. 16:24.
 6. Having no more confidence in yourself and no more trust in your natural ability.
 7. Loving all the members of your group with an equal love in the love of God.
 8. Condemning all the self-exalting views and dropping all the divisive opinions.
 9. Forsaking all self-preferences and disregarding all personal tastes.
 - B. Confessing to man
- IV. The result of confession of sins
 - A. Receiving God's forgiveness and mercy—1 John 1:9; Psa. 32:5.
 - B. Enjoying the joy of life and salvation, the growth in life, and the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - C. The spirit being released, revived, and strengthened with vitality.

Reference Books: *The Important Topics of the Bible*, published in Chinese but not in English, Lesson 24; *Messages for Building Up New Believers*, Message 21; *Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, Message 10-11; Elders' Training, Spring of 1998, Message 1 in the afternoon; *The Training and Practice of the Vital Groups*, Chapter 8.

Excerpts from the Ministry:**The Importance of Confessing Our Sins**

You must have a start by going to the Lord until He enlightens you, until He shines on you. Then you will fully realize where you are and what you are. Spontaneously, you will begin to repent by saying, "Lord, I am dead." While you are saying you are dead, the Lord will say, "You are dead because you are sinful. You are dead because you are dirty and filthy." The Lord will shine on you and show you that you are like a person buried under the earth with layer upon layer of dirt. You have to get out of that by making a thorough and detailed confession to the Lord so that you can be forgiven, washed, released to emerge from the depths of your fall. This thorough repentance and thorough confession will bring you an intimate fellowship with the Lord. (*The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups*, p. 87.)

I want to see that each of you is fully enlightened by God. If you go to Him again and again, He will shine upon you. He will enlighten you. He will bring you into the light. He will expose you to the uttermost. Then you will repent to the uttermost and even weep before the Lord. You will tell the Lord, "Lord, I am so dirty and sinful. I am rotten and corrupted." Spontaneously, you will make a thorough confession to the Lord. You may confess to such an extent that you would forget to eat. While you are driving to your office, you may still be repenting to the Lord with tears. I wonder how many of us have passed through this stage. (*The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups*, p. 88.)

I say again that you must have a time to go to the Lord. You must go to the Lord again and again until you get enlightenment and are exposed in His light. If you come to Him, He will expose you, and you will repent and confess. Then you will be brought into His intimate fellowship. ...Only one thing counts—for you to contact the Lord by yourself. To do it with anyone else will be a frustration to you. You must go to Him directly by yourself. (*The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups*, p. 90)

There is the need of a real start among us today. There must be some contact between you and the Lord. When I had times with the Lord on the top of that hill, I had to repent and confess. This brought me into an intimate fellowship with the Lord. (p.91) ...You need to stop yourself from all other things. Go to a closed room, to a mountaintop, or to some other place to be with the Lord for a personal time. The only thing that has helped me and that can help you is to contact the Lord directly. No one can escape from the Lord's presence. He is the source. Go to Him and you will be enlightened. (*The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups*, p. 92.)

The Practice of Confessing Our Sins**The Cycle in Our Spiritual Life**

When we live in the divine light, we are under its enlightenment, and it exposes, according to God's divine nature and through God's nature in us, all our sins, trespasses, failures, and defects, which contradict His pure light, perfect love, absolute holiness, and excelling righteousness. At such a time we sense in our enlightened conscience the need of the cleansing of the redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus, and it cleanses us in our conscience from all sins that our fellowship with God and with one another may be maintained. Our relationship with God is unbreakable, yet our fellowship with Him can be interrupted. The former is of life, whereas the latter is

based on our living, though it also is of life. One is unconditional; the other is conditional. Our fellowship, which is conditional, needs to be maintained by the constant cleansing of the Lord's blood.

In this section of the Word there is a cycle in our spiritual life, a cycle formed of four crucial things—the eternal life, the fellowship of the eternal life, the divine light, and the blood of Jesus the Son of God. Eternal life issues in its fellowship, the fellowship of eternal life brings in the divine light, and the divine light increases the need for the blood of Jesus the Son of God that we may have more eternal life. The more we have of eternal life, the more of its fellowship it brings to us. The more fellowship of the divine life we enjoy, the more divine light we receive. The more divine light we receive, the more we participate in the cleansing of the blood of Jesus. Such a cycle brings us onward in the growth of the divine life until we reach the maturity of life (*The New Testament Recovery Version*, 1 John 1:7, note 3, p. 1178.)

God is faithful in His word (v. 10) and righteous in the blood of Jesus His Son (v. 7). His word is the word of the truth of the gospel (Eph. 1:13), which tells us that He will forgive us our sins because of Christ (Acts 10:43); and the blood of Christ has fulfilled His righteous requirements that He might forgive us our sins (Matt. 26:28). If we confess our sins, He, according to His word and based on the redemption through the blood of Jesus, forgives us because He must be faithful in His word and righteous in the blood of Jesus; otherwise, He would be unfaithful and unrighteous. Our confession is needed for His forgiveness. Such forgiveness of God, which is for the restoration of our fellowship with Him, is conditional; it depends on our confession. (*The New Testament Recovery Version*, 1 John 1:9, note 2, p. 1179.)

The Two Aspects of Confession of Sins

There are two aspects of confession: 1) confession to God and 2) confession to man. To confess towards God is to confess everything we have sinned against God. Every sin we commit, in our view, whether it is against God or man, is against God. David killed Uriah and took his wife. In our view, we may see that David sinned against a man, offended man. But he said that he sinned against God. (See Psa. 51:1-17.) Therefore, he confessed that sin to God. ...Confessions to God cannot be general. You cannot confess your sins in principles only, saying that you are exceedingly sinful. You must confess your sins seriously, one by one, in detail. You should not bring a large “bag of sins” and cast it before God. You must open up your “bag of sins” and confess every item of sin. It is like what someone said, “You need to open up you bag and confess you sins. Thoroughly confess your sins one by one.” (*The Important Topics of the Bible*, published in Chinese but not in English, pp. 463-464.)

Confessing to God

Confessing the sin of individualism and individuality

In order to be blended together, we need to confess the sin of individualism and individuality. Our individualism is a kind of principle, a kind of policy, with us. Every one of us has his own policy, his on human logic. Our individualism becomes our logic. The educational system in America educates the young people to be individuals. The logic of being an individual, or the logic of individualism, is a sin in the eyes of God. We need to condemn individualism and individuality. In our church life we may be full of individuality. We may not care for others but may care only for ourselves. Even though we may love others, we may not care for others. In loving others we may still care for ourselves. This is individuality. We need to confess this

sin. As long as such germs remain within us, we cannot be one and we cannot be blended.

Confessing all your defects, shortcomings, wrongdoings, mistakes, transgressions, trespasses, outward sins, and inward evils, and asking for the Lord's forgiveness

To be blended by the Lord, we also need to confess all our defects, shortcomings, wrongdoings, mistakes, transgressions, trespasses, outward sins, and inward evils. We need not only to confess these things but also to ask for the Lord's forgiveness. The New Testament is full of the promise of the Lord's forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 10:43; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 John 1:9). The Lord is willing to forgive and even to forget (Heb. 8:12), but we need to confess. We should make a thorough confession so that we can be forgiven and justified. Then we can be blended.

Confessing your sinful nature, its defilements,
its attachment to the contamination of the world,
and its oldness, and asking for the Lord's cleansing with His precious blood

We also need to confess our sinful nature, its defilements, its attachment to the contamination of the world, and its oldness and ask for the Lord's cleansing with His precious blood. Although we have been regenerated, we still have the old sinful nature with its defilements and its attachment to the contamination of the world. Our inward filthy nature is easily attached to the outward world. The reason that we are so easily attracted to the department stores is that within us something corresponds with the department stores. The department store managers have prepared the merchandise in their stores to correspond with our sinful nature. We all need to experience the death and resurrection of Christ to annul our sinful nature with its defilements and its attachment to the contamination of the world.

We also need to confess the oldness of our sinful nature. As long as we are natural, we are old. We need to confess all this and then ask for the Lord's cleansing with His precious blood. We need the Lord's forgiveness, and we also need His cleansing. Forgiveness is to justify us, whereas cleansing is to purify us, to make us clean. Then we can be blended.

Confessing your dispositional problems and your peculiarity in your character

We also need to confess our dispositional problems and our peculiarity in our character. We have many problems because of our disposition. All these problems prevent us from being blended together. We also have our peculiarity in our character. In general, a rough person does not have many peculiarities; the more fine a person is, the more peculiarities he has. The peculiar traits in our character also prevent us from being blended with others.

Denying your self, your habit, and your old way of doing things

We also need to deny our self, our habit, and our old way of doing things (Matt. 16:24). This will afford us the way to be blended together.

Having no more confidence in yourself and no more trust in your natural ability

After so much confessing we will have no more confidence in ourselves and no more trust in our natural ability. All these things need to be dealt with; then we can be blended together.

Loving all the members of your group with an equal love in the love of God

Furthermore, we need to love all the members of our group with an equal love. It is common for us to prefer certain saints over others. This shows that we do not love all the saints with an equal love. Philippians 2:2 says that we should have the same love for all the saints. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp.96-99)

Confessing to Man

Most of our sins are against man, therefore, we need to confess not only to God but also to man. The reason we need to confess to God is that all our sins offend God. However, the sins that we have committed, not only offended God, they also offended man. Whenever we confess our sins to God, certainly God would forgive us but God cannot forgive us for the ones against whom we have sinned. Therefore, we still need to confess to man. For example, you have sinned against your neighbor and have realized it. Then, you confess that sin to God and God would surely forgive you but your neighbor cannot forgive you. You still have to confess to your neighbor and ask for forgiveness. Otherwise, you are condemned before your neighbor and you are bound in his heart. If you would be released and forgiven by him so that you are free before him, you must confess to him. Therefore, the “confesses” here in chapter 28 of Proverbs includes confession to man. (*The Important Topics of the Bible*, published in Chinese but not in English, pp. 466-467.)

The Result of Confession of Sins

He (David) was suffering pain when he did not confess his sins to God. When he recounted that sin to God and did not cover his transgression by confessing what he had committed to God, God forgave him, surrounded him with the joyful songs of salvation, and caused him to be full of joy. Therefore, if we would receive the joy of salvation, we must confess our sins before God. ...Although many people have repented and been saved, they have never confessed their sins before God thoroughly. Therefore, after getting saved, they do not have much joy of salvation, also, they do not have much spiritual hunger, seeking, and growth. If they would enjoy the joy of the Lord’s salvation in full, they must come before God and confess their sins thoroughly. (*The Important Topics of the Bible*, published in Chinese but not in English, pp. 463-464.)

Therefore, whether we would receive the joy of salvation or remove the insulation with God, recover and maintain our fellowship with God or to receive God’s mercy and be blessed by God, we need to confess our sins to God. (*The Important Topics of the Bible*, published in Chinese but not in English, p. 466.)

Not only so, confessing our sins to men can cause our spirit to be released, thus, revived, strengthened, and vitalized. The spirits of many brothers and sisters are not free but appear to be dried, weak, and dead because after they offended others, they would not confess their sins to others. Sin causes our spirit to be deadened. Especially the sin of offending others will cause the conscience in our spirit to condemn us

before them, hence, our spirit cannot be revived but be deadened. Therefore, if we would have our spirit be free and strong before men, we need to confess our sins to men to remove the feeling of guilt in our conscience before them. (*The Important Topics of the Bible*, published in Chinese but not in English, pp. 468-469.)

Questions:

1. Why do we need to confess our sins?
2. How should we practice to confess our sins? Please give an example of how you practice confession of sins.
3. Please explain briefly the two aspects of confession of sins.
4. What are the results of confession of sins?