

Harold Wilson
Bible Study "Confession"
July 22, 2009

Harold: Father, we are here for you. We are well aware that we need You. We ask that you would take Your Word, that you would take it and bless it and feed us as only you can do. Thank you, Amen.

Harold: Last week we looked at REPENTANCE a little bit and tonight we would like to turn our attention to CONFESSION. We are trying to do a more 'laid back' Bible Study. We are sort of seeing where we are going as we are going through it.

I have two verses for tonight: The first one, John 9:22 "His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue." And, the second is 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."

Harold: You will note that in these two verses, there were two different things being confessed. In the first, there was a confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ. And in the second, it's confessing our sins.

Harold: Let's start by looking at the word "CONFESS." I went to the Greek and I got different words to explain it. One said covenant or acknowledgement, to promise, to speak agreeably to the fact, to acknowledge, such as an opinion or view, to declare ones faith. The English, Webster, seems to be saying that we are simply making a statement. Whereas, the Greek implies that we are agreeing or coming to an agreement with someone/thing/fact.

Harold: Let's take 'to confess our sins' -- let's talk about that for a moment. That is true when you look at the Greek words here -- it means that "I come to the place where I acknowledge that my sins ARE sins, and I look at them the same way God looks at them." I have read in many books that confession means "to be in agreement with God."

Harold: What do you think the difference is between someone who's bragging about their sins vs. someone who is confessing their sins? Both are acknowledging them.

Shep: One is telling people, one is telling God -- the one telling people is not saying there is anything wrong necessarily -- the one speaking to God is likely in agreement that it is wrong.

Harold: That's a good answer; that would be true. One of the big differences between bragging and confession is attitude. And again, like Shep's answer, it's coming to be in agreement with God

Harold: Many times, we have our own values and if we weren't raised in a Christian home, they are probably very different than God's so that, even after becoming a Christian, as we read our Bible. God's values are revealed to us and we get 'in agreement' with him -- acknowledge that ours are wrong and that His is right.

LJ: Acknowledging... a point where we are submitting to God?

Harold: Yes, to be in agreement with God is to submit to him.

Shep: I'm wondered out loud if we could be in agreement and not really submit?

Harold: Intellectually we can say that what He says is right, but if we are in agreement, we are in submission.

LJ: Or submit and not be in agreement?

Shep: Wondering if you are asking -- like we do it anyway because that's what we believe God wants us to??

Harold: If we are going through the motions because we 'have to' then internally, or in a relationship point of view, we are not in agreement - a confession is coming to an agreement.

Christianity is a relationship with God. It's alive, it needs to be fresh; it's not a set of facts in a book. So when I 'confess' to God I am coming to the place where I am agreeing with him, and that's where a lot of growth comes from.

Harold: I see generally two types of confession of sins. One is private and the other is public. The easy answer is -- when it involves something public, it needs a public confession. But when it is between me and God it needs a private confession and if it's between me and another person -- it's between the two of us, not the whole world.

Harold: I went to a school, Christian School, and we would have revival services twice a year. A pattern seemed to develop. It seems that a lot of girls developed bad attitudes towards a particular teacher and that every revival you would see a long line of students get up from the altar, then, go back to that teacher and make it right. In my opinion, many of these girls did not demonstrate, or outwardly acknowledge, their attitude towards this teacher. This was something that was between them and God and they needed to take care of it.

Harold: I believe if something actually transpired between the student and the teacher it needed to be dealt with. I don't think that every time my attitude was not positive that I would have to go confess that to a person. I don't think that is what the Bible is teaching.

Shep: It would seem that this teacher would be humiliated by the act of this long line of students coming toward her all of the time --- perhaps she really did have some issues of her own. Yes, the girls had a problem (to be made right with God) but to go to this teacher would almost be saying "you, teacher, are hard to get along with, so I am coming to apologize, because I don't like you." Perhaps the teacher needed to confess her own problem if that many students had issues with her -- but them going to her makes HER problem public. Their reason for going to GOD was their attitude toward this person -- whether or not this person was acting kindly.

LJ: I think it's like keeping clean... we usually shower in privacy, not publicly.

Harold: Good answer LJ!

LJ: And acknowledge sometimes we may need someone to "help scrub our back" - get to those hard to reach spots.

Harold: Right -- that would be where James 5:16 says 'Confess your trespasses to one another.'

Shep: That would be as in an accountability person -- rather than the whole congregation.

LJ: Yes, someone we know and trust to see us vulnerable (naked/transparent).

Harold: Okay, let's move on to confession of faith. Biblically, it is learning what the Bible says and agreeing with it - making it MY belief.

A couple of ideas First, it's like being on trial and we are asked if 'this is our belief' (or opinion or view) and we acknowledge that 'this is true'. I guess, generically, many people can acknowledge their belief and it not be what the Bible says, but that would not be a 'biblical confession of faith'. But, when God revealed Jesus they were in agreement with God and acknowledged that Jesus is the Messiah -- their confession of faith agreed with what God revealed.

And finally I was thinking some last minute thoughts. We confess to God many things. Not only do we confess sins, we confess faith. God reveals something to us, our faith is stretched and we agree with what he is revealing -- we confess our faith in Him

Harold: We can confess His faithfulness; we realize his working in our life and we acknowledge that this is His doing.

Harold: In conclusion, confession of sins is kind of a 'negative thing' in that we are in agreement with God about things that we have done wrong. And confession of faith is the positive -- things that God is doing, has done, who he is. We acknowledge these and our life is one in agreement with God. So confession is a continual process

Harold: Again Father, we thank you that we can look at your word, and that we can have a relationship with you we thank you that you have opened a way through Jesus to come to you be with us tonight, continue to speak to our hearts. Thank you, Amen