

Bite Size Bible Study

Confession of Sin #67

By Pastor Lee

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NIV)

The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Mark 1:5 (NIV)

Most of us have had these and other verses thrown at us since before we began attending church. Probably the person that urged us to accept Jesus used one or more of these verses. They are in such common use that they lose much of their meaning. So often they are part of a scare tactic to get a person to church. I contend that even the person using them has not thought through the implications and actions that these words demand.

We probably said something to the effect that “yes we are sinful” and let that be all that we felt was necessary for Jesus to forgive us. But is that the reason we need to confess our sins? Just to be “saved”. Did that change our behavior or how we live?

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)

We need to look at each of our sins and determine in our own mind that what we did was wrong. Then go through the long and hard process of trying not to do that again. Only by first confessing (recognizing) our sin, then understanding why it was wrong, can we begin the process of maturing into the person God wants us to become.

God will forgive us every time we come to Him with the right attitude and intentions. Unlike some people who will hold it against us even though we try to make amends; God is anxious for us to mature into the person He created us to be. At present we are not. We are still growing and maturing. We do things that are right and proper, and we do things that are not. Those “not” things need to be corrected and He has given us mercy and grace to make the mistake and still not be destroyed because of it.

Sometimes it is a painful lesson and He doesn’t keep us from the pain, but His forgiveness is still present within the pain. Pain often speeds the understanding of the inappropriate action.

The verse in Mark tells us that they confessed their sins and were baptized. Baptism is the outward sign of the receiving of the Holy Spirit given by Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given to help us to not only see our mistakes but to make the necessary changes in our behavior to correct them.

If, however, we decide to continue to sin with no intention of correcting that behavior, our confession is nothing more than “hot air”. That is what Joshua was telling the nation of Israel when they entered the Promised Land.

*Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. **He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.** If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.”* Joshua 24:98-20 (NIV)

They were to continue serving God and not foreign gods. Unfortunately they did not continue to understand the reason for this command and eventually were sent into exile, and were no longer a nation. But God was a just God and redeemed them over and over again.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

As we remember a sin that we have committed, I believe that it is important to consider each one individually and begin to understand why that behavior was inappropriate. Then begin to take steps to eliminate the cause that made us make that mistake. Jesus has forgiven us for each and every sin but wants us to understand why He died to give us that privilege.

Jesus prayed: ¹¹*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.* ²⁰*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,* ²¹*that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* John 17:11,20 (NIV)

Confession should lead to Repentance and a Change in Behavior

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