



## Sunday Sermons

### Confession

Ryan Goodwin  
 08/07/05 - Sunday Evening

SERMONS

SUNDAY SERMONS

LESSON SERIES

COMMENTARIES

GOSPEL MEETINGS

AUDIO ONLY

#### Confession

Ryan Goodwin

There are many misconceptions about the act of confessing. Some believe that salvation comes by confession alone, while others do not consider it an act of salvation at all. As for confession of sins, a number of religious groups teach that one must go to a confessional to gain forgiveness for sins committed. Confession has become such a cheapened act as a result of the false doctrines surrounding it. Consider the "Salvation Prayer," as offered by the website of the Greenwood Baptist Church in Valdosta, Georgia: "Dear Jesus, I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and that You arose from the grave. I now ask you to forgive me of my sins and to save my soul. Amen." Check almost any denominational website, and a similar offer will exist for those wishing to be saved on the spot. Similarly, turn on many of the religious television programs, and at the end of the televangelist's sermon, he or she will lead the audience (both live and television viewers) through a "sinner's prayer." Upon confession, immediate salvation occurs for all participants. Beyond that, absolution of sins can be achieved through simple confession to a Catholic priest, or other denominational equivalent when such a doctrine is present.

What is confession, though? What does the Bible say about this subject? Is confession the only necessary step toward salvation? Is there more than one kind of confession discussed in the Bible? In this sermon, I would like to explore these questions from the Bible's perspective, offering scriptural proof of what God actually intends for confession.

#### Our confession of Christ as the Son of God

There are three types of confessions outlined in the New Testament. By the authority of the scriptures, the first of these three is our confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Without this profession of faith in the Son, all other acts of righteousness are worthless. There is no way that we can be saved unless we are willing to confess Jesus as Lord. What is so interesting, though, is that we will all confess Christ someday, though it may be all for naught at that point. Our Lord tells us "not everybody who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21). A day will come when the King will return to this world in a cloud, surrounded by a host of angels, and all the people of the earth will finally know for sure that Christ is Lord! Unfortunately, confession on the day of judgment is confession that is too late. Consider another scripture; "For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:11-12). What a sobering thought! On that great and terrible day, every single person who rejected the Gospel, every single skeptic who needed more evidence, every single unbeliever who just did not feel the need for Christ, every single teacher of falsehood, and every single arrogant atheist will bow before God out of terror. We have a choice, therefore, to either confess now or later. As one writer puts it, "A willing confession now, with other things being equal, produces a blessing in this world and being confessed ultimately by Jesus before God and holy angels in judgment. A compelled confession at judgment will only add up to eternal condemnation" (Studies In Romans, Robert Taylor, Jr., 249).

"Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God that Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). This passage serves a wonderful companion to our previous scripture. Paul very clearly states every single knee will bow, and every single tongue shall one day confess Jesus. Some to be sure will reach the judgment seat having already confessed. These will get to enjoy the benefits of having Christ confess them before God (Luke 12:8-9). All others, however, will be forced to confess because of undeniable circumstances – there are no valid arguments that can be made by an unbeliever or an unrepentant sinner while standing before the Almighty!

What happens to a person who chooses not to confess Christ? Obviously, it means that our Lord will not confess him before God, but what are the ramifications of this state? "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist..." (1 John 4:2-3). "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:22-23). Whether the antichrist in this scripture is referring to Satan or to anybody who denies Christ, it does not matter – do we want to be either of them? How foolish it is to not confess our belief in the Lord, for there is no state more damned than being the antichrist – that is, diametrically opposed to the blessed Savior Jesus Christ! Why, then, do people not confess? Consider the motivation of the Jewish rulers in John 12:42-43, in which it is stated that they "loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." Though they believed in the Gospel, they were not confessing Christ

believes, resulting in righteousness, with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” The opportunity to be saved is for all of us, for there is no distinction made in this passage between Jew and Gentile, slave or free man, male or female ([Galatians 3:28](#)). One step on the road to salvation is no further away from us than in our own mouths – amazingly, so few people choose to take advantage of it! How said it will be on that day when God will condemn so many people simply because they did not believe, repent, confess, and be baptized! Unfortunately, many will take this verse to mean that confession alone saves us (i.e., the “sinner’s prayer”). A closer look at the verse, however, reveals that within the context of the verse belief is also a necessary step to heaven. So what is it? Does confession alone save us? Or does confession *and* faith? The answer is that it is both, for we cannot just look at Bible verses independently from the rest of the Bible! If that is so, then we could easily argue that baptism and belief are the only requirements to salvation ([Mark 16:16](#)), or baptism and repentance ([Acts 2:38](#)), or even baptism alone ([1 Peter 3:21](#)). The fact is that all of these things are necessary because they are interconnected, just as [Romans 10:10](#) is saying! Our faith not only manifests itself in a desire to repent of our sins, but also to confess to the world that we believe. That confession, however, is meaningless without the action (baptism, repentance) to back it up. Moreover, those actions are worthless without the faith ([James 2](#)).

As an example of this concept, let us consider the Ethiopian Eunuch in [Acts 8:26-39](#). The man obviously had a desire to learn, which is necessary for any of us if we expect to become better Christians day by day. His desire led him to accept the education of the scriptures, which led him to question the status of his soul. This questioning caused within him a desire to make his life right with God, which was manifested in both confession and baptism, one after the other. These acts were not isolated – he was not saved by faith one day, decided to confess a week later, and then make the leap to baptism after reaching spiritual maturity. He needed all of these steps to be saved, for he did not “go on his way rejoicing” until all these things were complete!

### Our confession of sins

There is a second type of confession that is discussed in the Bible, which is our confession of sins to one another and to God. Unfortunately, this practice has not been immune to the degrading desires of false teachers, and thus carries with it a number of misconceptions. Most notably, a great number of supposed believers are convinced that one should only confess his or her sins to somebody who is specially ordained for it. The practice of confessional began to be common in 1215 “after the Council of Lateran, and originated with Innocent III, known as the criminal pope of the inquisition. It is therefore a human invention, the continuance of which depends on the ignorance of its origin” (*Bulwarks Of The Faith*, Wallace, 174). Essentially, every Catholic church has a small section of the building partitioned off from the main hall. In this box, sinners come to confess their deeds before a priest. There is absolutely no Biblical authority for such a practice! Consider that it was not existent in either the Old or the New Testament – the Jews became angry with Christ when he claimed to have the power to forgive sins ([Mark 2:7](#)). David wrote in [Psalm 32:5](#) that he would confess his sins to God alone, and [Isaiah 55:7](#) tells us that it is God alone who will pardon us abundantly. In the New Testament, there is no command or example for confessional, and an honest look at the scriptures will clearly teach otherwise.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” ([1 John 1:9](#)). Is there any mention of confessing our sins to a priest in this verse? Is it a priest who tells us that sins are absolved? Of course not, for it is with certainty that we agree with the Jewish leaders when they say that it is God alone who forgives sins! Beyond our confession to God, it is also necessary that we confess our sins to one another – not because our fellow men can forgive us in the same way as God, but because we need their forgiveness when we do wrong to them. “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed...” ([James 5:16](#)). “It means members to each other as members – and applies to sins against each other, and to the duty of forgiveness, when we ask God to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. The New Testament teaches two confessions of sin, first to God; second, to anyone wronged” (Wallace, 178). So what kinds of sins need to be confessed publicly? Indeed, it is only those sins that have become public, and involve more people than just ourselves. David prayed to God in [Psalm 51:4](#), “Against Thee, and Thee alone have I sinned and done what is evil...”

Furthermore, the idea of a man-oriented confessional essentially denies the all-sufficiency of Christ as our Advocate with the Father ([1 John 2:1-2](#)). According to [Hebrews 4:14-18](#), Christians have full and complete access to God through Jesus, and may come boldly without human mediation to the “throne of grace.” “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). According to the Bible, I do not need a priest to forgive me of my sins – all I need is a sincere heart, a clear act of repentance, a desire to amend any damage done to others, and the power of the blood of Christ!

### Christ's confession of us

There is a final type of confession discussed in the Bible, and this one is accomplished by Christ alone. “Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven” ([Matthew 10:32-33](#)). It is comforting to know that our Lord will go before the Almighty and speak on our behalf – though we do not deserve such a confession. The warning, however, is that unbelief and disobedience will only lead Christ’s denial of us before the Father. Which path do you choose? “If you believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart” ([Acts 8:37](#)), confess Him before God and man, and be baptized you can be saved ([Mark 16:16](#)).

#### Share Online



#### Email to a Friend

From  Email Address

To  Email Address

Add your personal message or comments here.  
(A link to this page will automatically be included your email.)



I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA

[Privacy](#) · [Terms](#)

Send

← [Go Back](#)