

BIBLE STUDY

BOLDLY CONFESSING JESUS IS LORD

Do Not Be Afraid. Be of Good Courage.

By Peter J. Scaer

Paul writes, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). Christians are called to speak about that which their heart holds dear. Christians are called to be people of the truth, for Christ is the truth, and it is the truth that sets us free (John 8:31–32). We must never spread the lie, must never pretend that a woman can become a man, must never say that $2 + 2 = 5$.

Even as exercise makes our body stronger, so also must we exercise our faith. We confess Jesus in our prayers, in our hymns, and in the ancient creeds of the Church. But for our day, the simplest creed may be the most significant, namely, “Jesus is Lord.” To say such a thing is

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wonderfully basic but deeply profound. When we say that Jesus is Lord, we are saying that we belong to him. When we say that Jesus is Lord, we are saying that we will do what he says, that our lives will conform to his, that we will seek his approval alone, and that in all things we will say, “Thy will be done.”

To paraphrase Luther’s Small Catechism, we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ our Lord. The power of faith and confession comes not from within but is itself a gift. Read the story of Peter’s confession (Matt. 16:13–17) and find out what Paul has to say on the matter (1 Cor. 12:3). Who enables us to say that Jesus is God’s Son, and that he is our Lord?

Confessing the Truth and Receiving the Prophets

Pastors are called to be prophets, to speak the Word of God, especially in face of opposition and danger. That is the essence of confession. Ministers are specially called

to confess, to say to others what Christ has spoken to us in the Scriptures. And there are eternal consequences for preachers and for their hearers. To the faithful our Lord gives the crown of everlasting life. Likewise, the people of God are called to listen to and support faithful pastors who preach the truth in season and out.

What does our Lord say to his apostles in Matthew 10:32–33? _____

How are people to receive faithful preachers (Matt. 10:41–42)? _____

Read Romans 10:14–17. What does St. Paul teach us about the necessity of bold proclamation? _____

I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Many Christians do not feel confident and shy away from bold speech. This is true for many Christians who have difficulty expressing why marriage is between one man and one woman. In such a case, it is good to study the Bible, to read Genesis 1–2 as well as Mark 10:1–12. It is also good to remember that every child has a biological father and mother and deserves to know them as mom and dad. There is much to learn. But the first step in this process is to stand with the Lord and not be ashamed. Stand on God’s word, no matter what. If you are concerned, go to the Scriptures. Study the Bible. Ask your faithful pastor for guidance. Many people find it awkward to speak the truth about sexuality, especially as Paul talks about it in Romans 1:18–32. Remember that the world has never died for you, but the Lord *has* died for you.

Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16–17)? What does our Lord mean when he speaks about shame? _____

Can we be proud of our Lord and yet distance ourselves from what he says (Luke 9:26)? _____

Was our Lord ashamed of us (Phil. 2:5–11)? _____

What sorts of shame did our Lord endure as he went to the cross (Matt. 27)? _____

Whose Praise Do We Seek?

Many of us are afraid to speak because we are afraid of what others will think and say about us. We want to be liked, and we do not want to be labeled as “one of those Christians.” Our Lord speaks about rewards. If we seek the praise of people, we will have that, but nothing more. Instead, we should seek a heavenly reward (Matt. 6:1–4). The apostle Peter is known for denying our Lord three times (Matt. 26:69–75).

Have you ever been afraid to claim allegiance to the Lord? _____

Consider Peter’s boldness on Pentecost (Acts 2:14–42). Look at Peter speaking boldly before a council in Jerusalem (Acts 4:1–22). Peter and the apostles were beaten and told to be quiet. How did they react, and how did they speak about their suffering (Acts 5:27–42)? _____

Can We Have It Both Ways?

There is always the temptation to think that we can have our cake and eat it too. We like to think that we can be Christians on Sunday and go along with the world during the other six days of the week. If we love Jesus, we must embrace everything that he has done or said.

What teachings of Jesus do we need to follow (Matt. 28:20)? _____

What happens if we add or subtract from our Lord’s teaching (Rev. 28:18–19)? _____

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Jesus is our Emmanuel, God with us (Matt. 1:21–23). In many ways, our life in the church is like being in a small boat, tossed about by the waves.

Read Matt. 8:23–27. What can we learn from the disciples when they feared that their boat would capsize?

Read Matt. 10:26–33. Should we worry when we feel alone? Should we think that God will abandon us?

When we confess Christ, we give glory to God. But even more, our neighbor needs to hear the Good News. When we speak up, even under pressure, the world knows that we are not kidding around. And when others hear us speak about Jesus, they may also come to believe and have life eternal. Remember that even in the worst times, the Lord is our shepherd, and he is with us (Psalm 23). 🏔️



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