

The Declaration Of Confession

By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Table of Contents

Forward		3
Chapter 1	Confessing Christ	4
Chapter 2	Confessions of Christ	10
Chapter 3	Confession of sin	11
Chapter 4	Examples Confession	16

Forward

Romans 10:9-10

For 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. [10] For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.

Without believing and confessing Jesus Christ, a person cannot be saved.

Several key characteristics of Jesus Christ

- (1) Christ has always existed with God;
- (2) Christ is equal to God because he *is* God (John 1:1ff; Col. 1:15-19);
- (3) Though Christ is God, he became a man in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation for all people;
- (4) Christ did not just have the appearance of being a man—he actually became human to identify with our sins;
- (5) Christ voluntarily laid aside his divine rights and privileges out of love for his Father;
- (6) Christ died on the cross for our sins so we wouldn't have to face eternal death;
- (7) God glorified Christ because of his obedience;
- (8) God raised Christ to his original position at the Father's right hand, where he will reign forever as our Lord and Judge.

How can we do anything less than praise Christ as our Lord and dedicate ourselves to his service!

Chapter 1



Confessing Christ

Romans 10:9

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Have you ever been asked, “How do I become a Christian?” These verses give you the beautiful answer—salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart. People think it must be a complicated process, but it is not. If we believe in our hearts and say with our mouths that Christ is the risen Lord, we will be saved.

God will confess those who confess him.

Matthew 10:32

"Therefore everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

COUNTING THE COST OF FOLLOWING CHRIST

Jesus helped his disciples prepare for the rejection many of them would experience by being Christians. Being God’s person will usually create reactions from others who are resisting him.

Those who confess Christ, God will confess him before the angels.

Luke 12:8

"And I say to you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;

The rich man in Jesus' story died before he could begin to use what was stored in his big barns. Planning for retirement—preparing for life *before* death—is wise, but neglecting life *after* death is disastrous. If you accumulate wealth only to enrich yourself, with no concern for helping others, you will enter eternity empty-handed.

Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

Philippians 2:11

And that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

At the last judgment even those who are condemned will recognize Jesus' authority and right to rule. People can choose to regard Jesus as Lord now as a step of willing and loving commitment, or be forced to acknowledge him as Lord when he returns. Christ may return at any moment. Are you prepared to meet him?

He who denies the Son does not have the father.

1 John 2:23

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

John is talking about the last days, the time between Christ's first and second comings. The first-century readers of 1 John lived in the last days, and so do we.

During this time, antichrists (false teachers who pretend to be Christians and who lure weak members away from Christ) will appear. Finally, just before the world ends, one great antichrist will arise (Rev. 13; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:10).

We do not need to fear these evil people, however. The Holy Spirit shows us their errors, so we will not be deceived. However, we must teach God's Word clearly and carefully to the peripheral, weak members among us so that they won't fall prey to these teachers who "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

Those who confess Jesus, God abide in him.

1 John 4:15

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

The Day of Judgment is that time when all people will appear before Christ and be held accountable for their actions.

With God living in us through Christ, we have no reason to fear this day, because we have been saved from punishment. Instead, we can look forward to the Day of Judgment, because it will mean the end of sin and the beginning of a face-to-face relationship with Jesus Christ.

Simon Peter confessed Jesus as the son of God.

Matthew 16:16

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The disciples answered Jesus' question with the common view—that Jesus was one of the great prophets come back to life.

This belief may have stemmed from Deut. 18:18, where God said he would raise up a prophet from among the people. (See John the Baptist's Profile; See Elijah's Profile; and see Jeremiah's Profile.) Peter, however, confessed Jesus as divine and

as the promised and long-awaited Messiah. If Jesus were to ask you this question, how would you answer? Is he your Lord and Messiah?

Nathanael confessed that Jesus was the son of God.

John 1:49

Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

Jesus knew about Nathanael before the two ever met. Jesus also knows what we are really like. An honest person will feel comfortable with the thought that Jesus knows him or her through and through. A dishonest person will feel uncomfortable. You can't pretend to be something you're not. God knows the real you and wants *you* to follow him.

Confess that Jesus is the Holy One of God.

John 6:69

"We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God."

There is no middle ground with Jesus. When he asked the disciples if they would also leave, he was showing that they could either accept or reject him. Jesus was not trying to repel people with his teachings. He was simply telling the truth. The more the people heard Jesus' real message, the more they divided into two camps—the honest seekers who wanted to understand more, and those who rejected Jesus because they didn't like what they had heard.

After many of Jesus' followers had deserted him, he asked the 12 disciples if they were also going to leave. Peter replied, "To whom shall we go?" In his straightforward way, Peter answered for all of us—there is no other way. Though there are many philosophies and self-styled authorities, Jesus alone has the words of eternal life. People look everywhere for eternal life and miss Christ, the only source. Stay with him, especially when you are confused or feel alone.

Thomas confessed that Jesus was Lord.

John 20:28

Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Have you ever wished you could actually see Jesus, touch him, and hear his words? Are there times you want to sit down with him and get his advice? Thomas wanted Jesus' physical presence. But God's plan is wiser. He has not limited himself to one physical body; he wants to be present with you at all times. Even now he is with you in the form of the Holy Spirit. You can talk to him, and you can find his words to you in the pages of the Bible. He can be as real to you as he was to Thomas.

Jesus wasn't hard on Thomas for his doubts. Despite his skepticism, Thomas was still loyal to the believers and to Jesus himself. Some people need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions, questions lead to answers, and the answers are accepted, then doubt has done good work. It is when doubt becomes stubbornness and stubbornness becomes a life-style that doubt harms faith. When you doubt, don't stop there. Let your doubt deepen your faith as you continue to search for the answer.

Philip confessed that Jesus was the son of God.

Acts 8:37

And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

These verses contain one of the most comforting promises in all Scripture. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms: persecution, illness, imprisonment, even death. These could cause them to fear that they have been abandoned by Christ. But Paul exclaims that it is *impossible* to be separated from Christ. His death for us is proof of his unconquerable love.

Nothing can stop Christ's constant presence with us. God tells us how great his love is so that we will feel totally secure in him. If we believe these overwhelming assurances, we will not be afraid.

Those who confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is from God.

1 John 4:2

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

“Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits” means that we shouldn't believe everything we hear just because someone says it is a message inspired by God. There are many ways to test teachers to see if their message is truly from the Lord. One is to check to see if their words match what God says in the Bible. Other tests include their commitment to the body of believers (1 John 2:19), their life-style (1 John 3:23-24), and the fruit of their ministry (1 John 4:6).

But the most important test of all, says John, is what they believe about Christ. Do they teach that Jesus is fully God and fully man? Our world is filled with voices claiming to speak for God. Give them these tests to see if they are indeed speaking God's truth.

Can only say that Jesus is Lord by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:3

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Anyone can claim to speak for God, and the world is full of false teachers. Paul gives us a test to help us discern whether or not a messenger is really from God: does he or she confess Christ as Lord? Don't naively accept the words of all who claim to speak for God; test their credentials by finding out what they teach about Christ.

Chapter 2



Confessions of Christ

Matthew 10:32

"Therefore everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

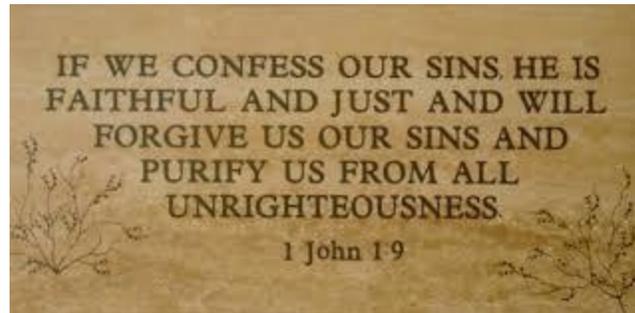
The Son of Man will confess those who confess him.

Luke 12:8

"And I say to you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;

We disown Jesus when we (1) hope no one will think we are Christians, (2) decide *not* to speak up for what is right, (3) are silent about our relationship with God, (4) blend into society, (5) accept our culture's non-Christian values. By contrast, we acknowledge him when we (1) live moral, upright, Christ-honoring lives, (2) look for opportunities to share our faith with others, (3) help others in need, (4) take a stand for justice, (5) love others, (6) acknowledge our loyalty to Christ, (7) use our lives and resources to carry out his desires rather than our own.

Chapter 3



Confession of sin

Confession will free us to enjoy fellowship with Christ. It should ease our consciences and lighten our cares. But some Christians do not understand how it works. They feel so guilty that they confess the same sins over and over; then they wonder if they might have forgotten something. Other Christians believe that God forgives them when they confess, but if they died with unconfessed sins, they would be forever lost.

These Christians do not understand that God *wants* to forgive us. He allowed his beloved Son to die just so he could offer us pardon. When we come to Christ, he forgives all the sins we have committed or will ever commit. We don't need to confess the sins of the past all over again, and we don't need to fear that God will reject us if we don't keep our slate perfectly clean. Of course we should continue to confess our sins, but not because failure to do so will make us lose our salvation. Our relationship with Christ is secure. Instead, we should confess so that we can enjoy maximum fellowship and joy with him.

True confession also involves a commitment not to continue in sin. We wouldn't be genuinely confessing our sins to God if we planned to commit them again and just wanted temporary forgiveness. We should also pray for strength to defeat temptation the next time we face it.

If God has forgiven us for our sins because of Christ's death, why must we confess our sins? In admitting our sins and receiving Christ's cleansing, we are:

- (1) Agreeing with God that our sin truly is sin and that we are willing to turn from it,
- (2) Ensuring that we don't conceal our sins from him and consequently from ourselves, and
- (3) Recognizing our tendency to sin and relying on his power to overcome it.

Confess and pray for one another.

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness. But confessing our sins to each other still has an important place in the life of the church.

- (1) If we have sinned against an individual, we must ask him or her to forgive us.
- (2) If our sin has affected the church, we must confess it publicly.
- (3) If we need loving support as we struggle with a sin, we should confess that sin to those who are able to provide that support.
- (4) If, after confessing a private sin to God, we still don't feel his forgiveness, we may wish to confess that sin to a fellow believer and hear him or her assure us of God's pardon.

In Christ's kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers (1 Peter 2:9).

Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer. The results are often greater than we thought were possible. Some people see prayer as a last resort to be tried when all else fails. This approach is backward. Prayer should come first. Because God's power is infinitely greater than ours, it only makes sense to rely on it—especially because God encourages us to do so.

God forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 32:5

I acknowledged my sin to you, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

Sin brings anxiety.

Psalm 38:18

For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin.

Those who conceal his transgressions will not prosper.

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

It is human nature to hide our sins or overlook our mistakes. But it is hard to learn from a mistake you don't acknowledge making. And what good is a mistake if it doesn't teach you something? To learn from an error you need to admit it, confess it, analyze it, and make adjustments so that it doesn't happen again. Everybody makes mistakes, but only fools repeat them.

Something in each of us strongly resists admitting we are wrong. That is why we admire people who openly and graciously admit their mistakes and sins. These people have a strong self-image. They do not always have to be right to feel good about themselves. Be willing to reconsider—to admit you are wrong and to change your plans when necessary. And remember, the first step toward forgiveness is confession.

Those who sin have an advocate with the Father.

1 John 2:1

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin and if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

The Lord keeps his covenant and lovingkindness.

Daniel 9:4

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,

The captives from Judah had rebelled against God. Their sins had led to their captivity. But God is merciful even to rebels, if they confess their sins and return to him. Don't let your past disobedience keep you from returning to God. He is waiting for you and wants you to return to him.

The blood of Jesus cleans from all sin.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

How does Jesus' blood purify us from every sin? In Old Testament times, believers symbolically transferred their sins to an animal, which they then sacrificed (see a description of this ceremony in Leviticus 4). The animal died in their place to pay for their sin and to allow them to continue living in God's favor.

God graciously forgave them because of their faith in him, and because they obeyed his commandments concerning the sacrifice. Those sacrifices anticipated the day when Christ would completely remove sin. Real cleansing from sin came with Jesus, the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Sin, by its very nature, brings death—that is a fact as certain as the law of gravity. Jesus did not die for his own sins; he had none. Instead, by a transaction that we may never fully understand, he died for the sins of the world. When we commit our lives to Christ and thus identify ourselves with him, his death becomes ours.

He has paid the penalty for our sins, and his blood has purified us. Just as Christ rose from the grave, we rise to a new life of fellowship with him (Romans 6:4).

Hold fast the confession of our hope.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

We have significant privileges associated with our new life in Christ: (1) we have personal access to God through Christ and can draw near to him without an elaborate system (Hebrews 10:22); (2) we may grow in faith, overcome doubts and questions, and deepen our relationship with God (Hebrews 10:23); (3) we may enjoy encouragement from one another (Hebrews 10:24); (4) we may worship together (Hebrews 10:25).

When you confess Jesus before men, Jesus will confess you before God.

Matthew 10:32

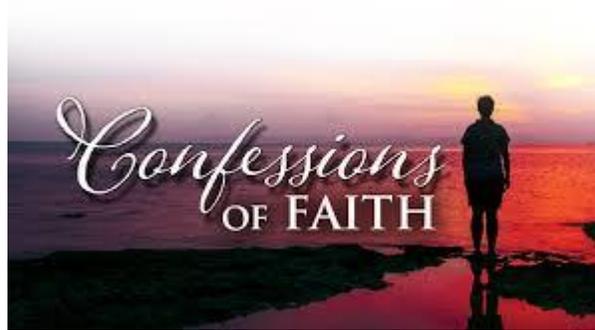
"Therefore everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

All iniquity in the heart must be removed.

Psalms 66:18

If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;

Chapter 4



Examples of Confessions

Numbers 12:11

Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account this sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned.

Aaron asked that the sin he and Miriam committed not be held against them. It is easy to look back at our mistakes and recognize their foolishness. It is much harder to recognize foolish plans while we are carrying them out because somehow then they seem appropriate. To get rid of foolish ideas before they turn into foolish actions requires eliminating our wrong thoughts and motives. Failing to do this caused Miriam and Aaron much grief.

Samuel prayed for the people

1 Samuel 12:19

Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil by asking for ourselves a king."

Only God can take away our sins.

2 Samuel 24:10

Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.

Our guilt is risen above our heads.

Ezra 9:6

And I said, "O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens.

After learning about the sins of the people, Ezra fell to his knees in prayer. His heartfelt prayer provides a good perspective on sin. He recognized:

- (1) That sin is serious (Ezra 9:6);
- (2) That no one sins without affecting others (Ezra 9:7);
- (3) That he was not sinless, although he didn't have a pagan wife (Ezra 9:10ff);
- (4) That God's love and mercy had spared the nation when they did nothing to deserve it (Ezra 9:8-9, 15). It is easy to view sin lightly in a world that sees sin as inconsequential, but we should view sin as seriously as Ezra did.

Nehemiah prayed for Israel.

Nehemiah 1:6-7

Let your ear now be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant which I am praying before you now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel

Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against you; I and my father's house have sinned. "We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which you commanded your servant Moses.

Nehemiah fasted and prayed for several days, expressing his sorrow for Israel's sin and his desire that Jerusalem would again come alive with the worship of the one true God.

Nehemiah demonstrated the elements of effective prayer:

- (1) Praise,
- (2) Thanksgiving,
- (3) Repentance,
- (4) Specific request, and
- (5) Commitment.

Heartfelt prayers like Nehemiah's can help clarify

- (1) Any problem you may be facing,
- (2) God's great power to help you, and
- (3) The job you have to do.

By the end of his prayer time, Nehemiah knew what action he had to take (Neh. 1:11). When God's people pray, difficult decisions fall into proper perspective, and appropriate actions follow.

God keeps his covenant and lovingkindness.

Daniel 9:4

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,

Peter fell at Jesus feet in confession.

Luke 5:8

But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

Simon (Peter) was awestruck at this miracle, and his first response was to feel his own insignificance in comparison to this man's greatness. Peter knew that Jesus had healed the sick and driven out demons, but he was amazed that Jesus cared about his day-to-day routine and understood his needs. God is interested not only in saving us, but also in helping us in our daily activities.

The man on the cross cried for mercy.

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

As this man was about to die, he turned to Christ for forgiveness, and Christ accepted him. This shows that our deeds don't save us—our faith in Christ does. It is never too late to turn to God. Even in his misery, Jesus had mercy on this criminal who decided to believe in him. Our lives will be much more useful and fulfilling if we turn to God early, but even those who repent at the very last moment will be with God in paradise.

The dying criminal had more faith than the rest of Jesus' followers put together. Although the disciples continued to love Jesus, their hopes for the kingdom were shattered. Most of them had gone into hiding. As one of his followers sadly said two days later, "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21).

By contrast, the criminal looked at the man who was dying next to him and said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” By all appearances, the kingdom was finished. How awe-inspiring is the faith of this man who alone saw beyond the present shame to the coming glory!



Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print