

<b>Book</b>	Psalms – Study 5
<b>Topic</b>	Praying our Confession
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- A. Why should we confess?
- B. How should we confess?
- C. What happens when we confess?

### **A. WHY SHOULD WE CONFESS?**

Confession is admitting that I messed up, admitting that I don't have it altogether, admitting I haven't improved. It is like God looking at you and saying, hey you came back. I thought that you confessed that particular sin and then you are back again with the same old sin again. It also means that I have to change. A lot of us don't want to change. We like our sin. It is a fact and we struggle with that. So therefore, we don't like to confess.

#### **Blessing in Forgiveness:**

We confess because we actually have blessing. There is blessing in forgiveness.

**Blessed** is the one whose **transgression** is forgiven, whose **sin** is covered.  
**2 Blessed** is the man against whom the Lord counts no **iniquity**, and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.

Psalms 51 talks about blotting off of transgression, scrapping off, washing off and beating of the dirt, cleansing us which is basically purification. In this particular case, you have got rebellion. Forgiveness is lift up or throw away. We have got Jesus Christ and because of his sacrifice on the cross for us, all our sins are covered. So, the idea is lifting off, the other one is covering and the third one is does not impute. So, this is accounting language. This means on one part we have got debit, suddenly it becomes credit. That's all it means.

So, this is the dimensions of sin and God takes care of that and when we are forgiven, we are blessed. The word blessed we learned in Psalm chapter 1, which is basically not more than happy, it is filled with potency for life. It also talks about the future that is eternal reward. So, it is joyful spiritual condition of those who are right with God and the pleasure and satisfaction that arises from that.

So, the pleasure and satisfaction and joy and happiness that you actually have because you are right with the most important person in the world. So, in the

sorrow of guilt and the joy of forgiveness gives you the blessing of confession. You actually need both, it is like having sweet and sour pork. If there is no sweet, it must be contradicted with the sour. If it is not sour there is no sweet. So, it is actually both, the sorrow of guilt and the joy of forgiveness.

The second reason of why we need to confess is that we need to reconnect with the truth.

2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Deceit means you are telling lies. When you actually confess, you are realigning your life, instead of living a lie you are reconnecting with the truth.

1 John 1:5-6 (ESV) This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, **we lie and do not practice the truth**

So, we are aligning. So therefore, when we actually confess, we are realigning our life with the main principle of the universe, which is reality and truth. The truth we can either deny it, ignore it or we can distort it. Only three things you can do with truth and most of us either deny it, distort it or we ignore it.

Confession in Hebrew is giving testimony to the truth. It means coming to a relationship, realigning with the truth again.

Trump says, *"I have great relationship with God. I have great relationship with the Evangelicals," "I like to be good. I don't like to have to ask for forgiveness. And I am good. I don't do a lot of things that are bad. I try to do nothing that is bad." "I think if I do something wrong, I think, I just try and make it right. I don't bring God into that picture. I don't."*

Trump has no relationship with the truth and you cannot live without relationship with the truth. Lance Armstrong, tour de France winner seven times, said,

*You overcome the disease (he had testicular cancer), you win the Tour de France seven times. You have a happy marriage, you have children. I mean, it's just this mythic perfect story, and **it wasn't true.***

It looked beautiful, but it wasn't true.

1 John 1:8 (ESV) 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the **truth is not in us.**

So God seeks to bless us by realigning us with the truth. He wants to forgive us, lift up throw away the sin, cover it out and make sure it is not imputed to us.

3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.  
4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

So, this part is about relief. Why do I confess? To get relief from the pang of guilt. You cannot continue to live your life if you don't confess, because your sins will cause the pain of guilt. Lance Armstrong actually said that it wasn't the happiest time of my life when he actually lied and won the tour de France seven times. In his interview with Oprah Winfrey

*Was it hard to live up to that picture that was created? "Impossible. Certainly I'm a flawed character, as I well know, and I couldn't do that." I certainly couldn't handle it, and I was used to controlling everything in my life. I controlled every outcome in my life."*

There is something that happens to us when we are guilty, something happens to our psychology, it is there, whether you admit it or not, you could be smiling and then waving your hands but in an unguarded moment you will see the pain come out.

There is a study by a group in the Journal of Experimental Psychology published in 2014 and they looked at the wait actually intensifies the experience of guilt. They asked people about whether they felt guilt and they have two sets of people. One set carrying heavy backpack, one set carrying light backpack and it turned out those with heavy backpack experienced higher levels of guilt compared to those who actually experience lower levels of guilt. They actually carry lighter back. So actually the psalm says, your hand is heavy upon me. It is actually describing the actual psychological pressure of guilt. When you have guilt, you actually feel like a weight on you.

There is a publication by Milton Horowitz in 1956 and he says in a review of confession and psychological freedom.

*This is the path to freedom for it immediately clarifies his psychological position, removes him from a **highly** negative situation, frees him from pressure, and to a great extent, removes his guilt.*

The idea of partial confession, by confessing to only part of one's transgression is attracted to a lot of people because they expect the confession to be more believable and guilt relieving. They are not confessing at all. So, if you say, I don't confess, I am perfectly innocent, people won't believe you. So, you confess half and then you can escape.

Five experiments were conducted involving 4,167 people from all over the United States. Cheaters who confessed just part of their wrongdoing were also judged more harshly by others than cheaters who didn't confess at all.

So, if you are going to do partial confession, better not confess, you know why, if you don't confess at all people look at you better. Partial confessions don't work. Studies show that

- Partial confessions vs Full confessions
  - expressed higher regret
- Partial confessions vs No confessions
  - increased feelings of guilt, shame and anxiety,
- Full confession vs Partial confessors
  - were more relieved and less guilt

So, based on these psychological studies, the best thing is to do full confession. Second best thing to do, don't confess. The worst thing to do is partial confession.

*"Paradoxically, people seeking redemption by partially admitting their big lies feel guiltier because they do not take complete responsibility for their behaviors. True guilt relief may require people to fully come clean."*

Former Rap artist G Dep actually one day walked into the police station and confessed to a crime of killing somebody 20 years ago. They actually put him in jail for 15 years. He confessed because he wanted to clear his conscience. For 20 years of his life, even though he escaped there was a guilt that sapped his energy, that was a burden. That's what it does to you psychologically.

We confess to respond to God's patience

**6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.**

This verse tells you there is a timeframe for you to confess, because if you don't confess at a particular time, there is a threat. That represents some danger. Why are we supposed to repent? Because we need to respond to God's patience. God is very-very patient. But the patience cannot be interpreted as inaction, because they actually potent to a greater danger. The only three options for us when we sin, the passage of time. God gives you this time and there are three things that will happen:

1. You confess
2. God will discipline you
3. Your heart will be so hard that you won't feel anymore guilt and you will die with an impenitent heart, which is worst. Better to be disciplined by God.

If you don't confess, it gets worse and worse and you actually believe that you didn't sin at all and then you go to a part of your life from where you cannot come back. So therefore, you have to confess because you want to respond to God's patience.

## **B. HOW SHOULD WE CONFESS?**

The only way we can do that, that's called letting the word acknowledge our deeds. The only way we can actually do that is let the word of God examine our needs. We acknowledge our sin to God and actually in the Greek the word confess means, homologous, that means to be of the same mind. Which means you and God have the same mind, you confess to somebody that means the person to whom you are confessing too must have the same mind as you. That means you change your position.

We actually have to acknowledge our real sin. Sometimes our conscience can actually falsely condemn us. For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and He knows everything. So, we need to change our perspective.

Psalm 51: 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned

So, if it is God to God alone then we have sinned. We have to take His perspective, not your own, not even your conscience. You have to measure it against the word of God. Justin Timberlake focuses on himself

*Listen, I know it's been a rough week for everybody," he said. "What occurred was **unintentional** and completely regrettable, and I apologize if you guys were offended."*

This is not a kind of confession that you want, because you focus on yourself.

Oscar Pistorius ran the Olympic then he killed his girlfriend and then he is very upset and he actually apologized to the mum,

*"I beg your pardon, my lady, I'll speak up. I'd like to apologise and say that there's not a moment and there hasn't been a moment since this tragedy happened that I haven't thought about your family. I wake up every morning and you're the first people I think of, the **first people I pray for**. I can't imagine the pain and the sorrow and the emptiness that I've caused you and your family."*

We might not like him, but that's a perfect confession. It is perfect because homologous, means you same mind and you take the mind of person whom you hurt and the person whom you hurt is actually God. That means you crossover, instead

of defending yourself against God, you crossover to God's side and take God's position and attack yourself. So, every morning he wakes up and he puts himself in the place of his ex-fiancée's mom and feels her pain. That is a good confession.

I did not cover my iniquity.

So therefore, if you don't cover means you must take full responsibility. When we confess, as we apologize, we are also to take full responsibility.

(ESV) 1 Sam 15: 24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice

This is not a very good excuse. So, you can't, you have to take full responsibility, you don't cover it.

I said, I will confess my transgressions

You confess to God. When you confess, you have to make time to preach the law to yourself. So, you know, God's will in every area of life. You need to examine your life and consider where you are disobeying Jesus. Need to seek out specific sins you have committed, as well as, sins of omission. This is the time of meditation at night when you are actually praying.

There is a reason why specific sins are brought out. Sins of omission means that you should have done but you didn't do and that's a lot. God's transforming grace to change, it is true repentance. It is not just saying sorry, ask God to change you. You may not change immediately, you may not be even willing to change but at least you ask God to change, I mean you are willing for God to change. You cannot lie and tell God, hey God I come to you I repent of this sin, I won't do again. You know, you are bull-shitting God. You should come to God and say, it is not a good thing I did, I messed up and I don't really want to change, I confess to you but can you change my heart, so that I feel like how you feel, at least be honest, that's confession and then you will struggle with God. Then that time will come where he will change your heart.

There is a tension between unconditional forgiveness and conditional forgiveness. If you look at Romans 8

Romans 8:1 (ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This means that you are completely forgiven for all your sins today, tomorrow and the next year, but then why is it that Matthew says

Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV) 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Which means there is a forgiveness and there is an asking for it and there is a possibility that He will not forgive you if you don't forgive other people. So, there is a tension. Why is there this tension?

Bob George says, *Under grace, we need now only to accept the finished work of Christ (Hebrews 10:10) and we are completely forgiven of all our sins forever. After this, there is no sin in the believer and nothing we can do will ever change that fact. We are secure forever and free in Christ to do whatever we like (1 Corinthians 6:12).*

This is not true. Confession is to become a way of life

1 John 1:5-7 (ESV) This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say **we have fellowship** with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, **we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Now here we are talking about walk. Walk means the way you live, he is not talking about specific individual sins. It says, if the way you live reflects the fact that you are living in the light, which means you are trying to follow Jesus Christ or the way you live doesn't reflect Jesus Christ. It is like in darkness. So, you sin, you do not give a damn over sin and you don't confess your sin, it doesn't look as if you are living in the light. So therefore, if you actually walk in the light then the blood of Christ cleanses. It continuously cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:8-10 (ESV) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

So therefore, even though we have been forgiven of our sin, when we have fresh sins we actually need to confess them. As you confess them, God forgives you and then you carry on. It is a process.

John 13:9-10 (ESV) Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.

Peter took a bath, he is already cleaned. So, you just need to clean the feet, which means Jesus is saying you are justified by his blood on the cross and all you have to



do every day is to clean the feet only which means confess your sins as a continuing lifestyle. You don't have to go and bring the whole 9 yards out again, yesterday sin, the other day sin and all that, it is done, you just need to clean, which means only your feet.

Ephesians 1:3-5 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

When God looks at us, he looks at the beginning of time, at the end of time we are one, but for us there is a process. If you are God, you look at yourself. If we are sinners, we hear the gospel, we confess our sin, our sins of past and present are all forgiven. This is called justification, taking a bath.

**Then what about future sins? Are your future sins forgiven?**

Well, if you look in the future sins, you have confession and renewed repentance, and this actually applies the benefit of justification and all future sins are forgiven and you are basically progressively made holier and holier and holier until one day you are going to be perfectly holy. So, this is a process that actually happens. So, when you actually come to Christ in the sinner's prayer as it were, based on Jesus's sacrifice, the judicial wrath of God is removed, and you become an adopted son of God. You go into God's family, you move into his bungalow. Then you have got this future, sanctification. You live a repentant lifestyle, continuing forgiveness, continuing confession and the fatherly displeasure is removed, and you have got Jesus as your advocate, which means every time you sin, God is not happy. You cannot say, I am a child of God, when I sin God says, its okay you are my sin. God doesn't smile on our sins. Sin is sin, God hates sin. So, when you sin there is a displeasure of the father. When your son commits a sin, you discipline him. In that process, he becomes more and more like you. So, we are talking about a process of becoming perfect. So that is what is happening here. The fatherly displeasure is removed.

When we confess this awkwardness between father and son is actually removed and then you are your father are best friends again as it were. So, there is a process involved. So therefore, we call a sanctification cycle where you have got peace and joy, you sin, loss of peace and joy, you confess, God forgives you and then you have got peace and joy and then you sin again, this is called the engine of growth cycle. So, we shouldn't be afraid about confession, we shouldn't come to God in confession and feel keep feeling as if it all depends on you. It doesn't depend on you. You have to accept, you are a sinner. It is because you are sinning, you need a vacuum cleaner in your life. The vacuum cleaner is actually this engine of growth, which means peace and joy, you sin, loss of peace and joy, confession,



forgiveness, they are going there, it is all the time. It is a vacuum cleaner that goes on all the time and so therefore this confession is actually a blessing. So, this is how we actually grow.

Hebrews 12:11 (ESV) For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

So, this vacuum cleaner has to go on in order to train you for heaven, but if you don't confess, you carry on living in the darkness then you are not applying this way, which God sanctifies you and bring you to perfection. That is what it is all about. it is not about how clever you are, it is about applying it to your life. We need to do this all the time.

2 Samuel 7:12-16 (ESV) When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'"

In this process, just like David's son, he will not disown you, he will discipline you but he will discipline you so that you repent and confess, so that you continue to grow and that's what it is about. Joe Thorn is the founding and Lead Pastor of Redeemer Fellowship in St. Charles, IL. He says,

*The deepness and consistency of your repenting will have a direct impact on the liveliness of your faith and the brightness of your confidence. This is not because you repent so well, but because in repenting you know the darkness and trouble of your own sin, and the great work of grace in Jesus that overcomes it all.*

He is saying why do you need to repent, why do you have to be specific in your repenting, because this is the depth of my sin, I can see it, I can feel it, because of that I can see the height of his love, because even though this is so dark he actually forgives me. That means his height grows. Now as I repent and then bring more dirtier sins and dirtier sins and dirtier sins, the more it goes down, the height of his love becomes even greater and greater and greater, so therefore if you look on all that in the end your confidence, your faith, your joy and your holiness, all of this is accumulation because of the difference between the depths of your sin and the height of his love. So therefore, if you don't confess specific sins and as you grow closer in Christ, the sins become more and worse and worse and worse. Then you actually feel the height of his forgiveness is greater and greater and greater and

that's why you grow in love for him. You will find that you walk in your life and you don't feel love to what Jesus Christ and you don't feel intimacy with him, it is because you are not confessing. You only confess standard 5 sins and all the 650 you don't know, and you don't experience the forgiveness for that 650 sins.

Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little (Luke 7:47 ESV)

She confessed her sins, the more you confess, the deeper you will feel his forgiveness. It is between you and God, in the privacy of your own home. That's how you grow in intimacy. That's being missed in our Christian life, because it is hardly being talked about.

We need to distinguish between grief and self-pity

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. 9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you (Psalms 32:8-9 ESV)

He is saying, I am going to teach you, you want to do the easy way or the hard way. The easy way I teach you, the hard way I whack you.

Ex 10:16 Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. 17 Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the Lord your God only to remove this death from me."

Now here Pharaoh is not repenting, he got self-pity. This is not true repentance. There is no real confession.

(ESV) 1 Sam 15:30 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the Lord your God.

This is again self-pity. There is a difference between true repentance and self-pity. When you are actually disciplined by God, you will be very careful that whether your reaction is not like Pharaoh. Your confession will not be real because it is due to self-pity. So, we need to say to God, you either listen to God and you

### Change our Hiding Place

You are a **hiding place** for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance (Psalms 32:7 ESV)

When Adam and Eve sinned, when they came into the garden. Adam and Eve ran away from God, because they receive punishment. It means that you have to learn to make God your hiding place. That means like Peter, who ask God, Jesus please go away from me, I am a sinful man. When Jesus found Peter again, after he rose from the death, Peter full of sin, Peter betrayed him three times, but he run towards God.

Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, we can then find refuge in that blood, that whatever sin we have committed God shields us, it doesn't matter how bad it is. So therefore, we don't have to turn our act of confession into the way of earning forgiveness. That means we have to be very sorry, very bad, weeping, crying and then the more you weep, the more God forgives you. Sometimes we won't do that. That's not what saves you. What saves you is the blood of Jesus Christ. George Whitfield says,

*My repentance needs to be repented of*

Because he used repentance as works. That means I must be very sorry, I go to church, I write an extra bigger check this Sunday then God will forgive me. No, the check already written on Calvary 2000 years ago, you just need to confess.

Sometimes we cannot forgive ourselves, like Judas. Judas cannot forgive himself

And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself Matt 27:4-5

He cannot forgive himself because he is living by works and often if we use our measure of repentance as a measure of our confession then we are going to wind up on same thing.

So how do we confess

- ① Let the Word examine your deeds
- ② Take full responsibility
- ③ Confession to God
- ④ Change our perspective on the effect of our sin
- ⑤ Distinguish between grief and self-pity
- ⑥ Change our hiding place

### **C. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE CONFESS?**

Psalms 32:10-11 (ESV) Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. **11** Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Hebrew word for steadfast love is 'Hesed'. That beautiful loving kindness that will never ever let you go. When you confess that love surrounds the one who trusts the Lord and that becomes the basis of our joy, our gladness. So, every time you confess, God will forgive you and you will have His steadfast love around you and he will be your hiding place. So, you reconnect and having intimacy back with God.

### **When people criticize you because of your sin**

You only got two responses, are you a Christian who blows up or melts down. Blows up means, 'hey why you criticize me'. I never told lies, you tell lies, I am perfect actually, or somebody scold you and you melt down admitting that I am a sinner. Both of these are maladaptive responses to sin, because we all have sin. So, we either react by, when people be blowing up or melting down, either way it is not a good idea. So, when you actually receive criticism, take the criticism and then you take it back and you go and confess before the Lord, if it is true. If it is not true, say thank you brother.

You grow up protecting an image that you are perfect. We blow up thinking that we are sinless, and you are protecting your pride. The whole point isn't your reputation, the point is whether you are right before God. That's what you should be looking at, then I can take that I go home, I confess that, I got forgiven and I get blessing. So actually, the guy may be helping you, although his motive may not be helping you.

You melt down because you think you are going to be your self-esteem. If you got sin, your self esteem so fragile, one more sin, means your self-esteem is based on your own works and you have got so little of your own works, so little of your own reputation and one more criticism and you collapse.

### **Are you a safe person to confess to?**

Some of us feel guilty and public confession is good, it is being recommended in James. That happens in a privacy of a small group, life group and gamma group. Are you a kind of person that people can confess to, otherwise we confess to the person and then tomorrow you hear it in the News Strait Times. You should be a safe person to confess too. Because you only need one qualification and that is you are a sinner. I confess to you not because you are better than me, I confess to you because we both are sinners and we are using confession to support each other, to help each other grow. So are you a safe person or you a kind of person where people look at you, you are perfect one, no sin one. It is like bulletproof and that is wrong. If you are a vulnerable person, even if you are a Christian leader and people know your sin and know you are imperfect then that's the kind of person people want to confess to. People don't want to confess to people who are perfect. So, if people don't confess to you, there is something wrong with you too, because you are perfect. In this church, we don't want to be perfect, we need to be in line with the

truth. We don't deny the truth, we don't ignore the truth and we don't distort the truth and that will give us blessing in the end.

Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. (Psalms 32:6 ESV)