

## Overview of sermon

1. definitions of confession – sin, praise and belonging
2. prep for confession
  - a. sow in tears reap in joy - Ps 126:5
  - b. smoke detector (a story from Ortberg) – don't remove the batteries. Our conscience is there for a reason
  - c. Jesus and penal substitution - our penalty was paid by his substitution (a parable from Wilson)
3. forgiveness –
  - a. students' debts forgiven (a story from Ortberg)
  - b. the woman who anointed Jesus, Luke 7:36-50
4. fruit of confession –
  - a. confession that leads to salvation, Ro 10:9
  - b. living free, practicing the discipline - washing the disciples' feet, John 13:3-10
  - c. accuser of the brethren - safety from attack and accusation
5. corporate confession
  - a. confessing our sins to one another for healing Jas 5:16 – having a confessor – choose carefully – see Foster: Celebration of Discipline
  - b. living holy lives as a community – Joshua 7 and the defeat at Ai, challenging questions and mutual accountability
  - c. proclaiming the truth - breaking bread, worship and evangelism
6. response time during breaking of bread
  - a. salvation - if you confess with your mouth you will be saved
  - b. cleansing from a guilty conscience and baptism
  - c. prayer for healing
  - d. foot washing

## Introduction:

For the latest in our series on Spiritual Disciplines we are looking at 'Confession'. If the disciplines are a means of freedom, then what freedom is this discipline leading us into? It's a freedom from the crippling tyranny of a guilty conscience.

There are a number of aspects to the Biblical definition of confession and the following references give a flavour. For more detailed study please have a look at the accompanying notes on the website:

**Negative element - sin** When I freely and openly admit either privately or publically from an inward conviction that I'm "guilty as charged." [9] *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 ESV)*

**positive – praise** the proclamation and declaration of a deep conviction of fact that overflows in praise [15] *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (Hebrews 13:15 ESV)*

**mutual belonging and acknowledgement** Allegiance to Christ as Lord and Master and his acknowledging the faithful as being his loyal follower [32] *So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, (Matthew 10:32 ESV)*

### A modern Parable

But there is an answer to deal with the sin that triggers my guilty conscience. To explain it let me tell you an updated parable with thanks to Andrew Wilson and his God\*Stories....

There was a certain city who, against the advice and warnings of an environmental campaigner, built a nuclear reactor in their midst. He sent many an advisor to explain to them but time and again they ignored, or even attacked them.

Then one day it happened. The reactor began to malfunction, and just as the campaigner had predicted, a meltdown was imminent with thousands facing destruction.

The only way to save the city was for someone to enter the heart of the reactor and realign the fuel rods. But such an act would expose the person to lethal doses of radiation – a sentence of death. No-one could be found, but the campaigner and his son, knowing in advance that this day would come, have always had their plan ready. In an amazing act of grace, considering the plight of the people, the son enters the reactor and sacrifices himself to do the task.

It costs the father his son, and the son his life to rescue the foolish people who rejected them. With the son vomiting and slowly choking to death you might expect both father and son to regret their choice. But instead there is a deep joy in both of them, because the sacrifice of one has saved many. To the astonishment of those watching the video footage at a safe distance, as the son takes his last breath, he is whispering in triumph into his phone... 'Father,' he says, 'it is finished.'

[11] Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

(Isaiah 53:11 ESV)

This is the doctrine of penal substitution.

1. a penalty had to be paid for my sin
2. someone was substituted in my place to pay the penalty (Jesus)
3. it was God the Father himself who both chose the substitute and poured out the punishment on him

## Appendix A: New Testament Greek

### A Verbs:

1. Homologeō: literally, to speak the same thing, denotes:
  - a. To confess, declare, admit Jn 1:20, e.g. Acts 24:14, Heb 11:13
  - b. To confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of inward conviction 1 Jn 1:9
  - c. To declare openly by way of speaking out freely, such confession being the effect of deep conviction of facts Mt 7:23, 10:32 (x2), Lk 12:8, Jn 9:22, 12:42, Acts 23:8, Rom 10:9-10, 1Tim 6:12, Titus 1:16
  - d. To confess by way of celebrating with praise Heb 13:15
  - e. To promise Mt 14:7

Nb Mt 10:32 and Lk 12:8 convey the thought of confessing allegiance to Christ as one's master and Lord and Him acknowledging the faithful one as being his worshipper and servant, his loyal follower.

2. Exomologeō: stronger than homologeō – to confess forth freely, openly
  - a. Of a public acknowledgement or confession of sins Mt 3:6, Mk 1:5, Acts 19:8, James 5:16
  - b. To profess or acknowledge openly Mt 11:25, Phil 2:11
  - c. To confess by way of celebrating, giving praise Rom 14:11, 15:9

### B Nouns:

1. Homologia: confession by acknowledgement of the truth 2Cor 9:13, 1Tim 6:12-13, Heb 3:1, 4:14, 10:23

## Appendix B: Verses about confession

### Numbers 5:5 Confession and Restitution

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

**Joshua 7:19** Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise\* to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” \*Or *and make confession*

**Ezra 10:1** The People Confess Their Sin

While Ezra prayed and made **confession**, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly.

**Ezra 10:11** Now then make **confession** to the Lord, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.”

**Nehemiah 9:3** And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made **confession** and worshiped the Lord their God.

**Job 42:1** Job's **Confession** and Repentance

Then Job answered the Lord and said:

**Daniel 9:4** I prayed to the Lord my God and made **confession**, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

**2 Corinthians 9:13** By their approval of this service, they\* will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your **confession** of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, \*Or *you*

**1 Timothy 6:12** Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good **confession** in the presence of many witnesses.

**1 Timothy 6:13** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before\* Pontius Pilate made the good **confession**, \*Or *in the time of*

**Hebrews 3:1** Jesus Greater Than Moses

Therefore, holy brothers,\* you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our **confession**, \*Or *brothers and sisters*; also verse 12

**Hebrews 4:14** Jesus the Great High Priest

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our **confession**.

**Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the **confession** of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

**CONFESS**

**Leviticus 5:5** when he realizes his guilt in any of these and **confesses** the sin he has committed,

**Leviticus 16:21** And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and **confess** over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.

**Leviticus 26:40** But if they **confess** their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me,

**Numbers 5:7** he shall **confess** his sin that he has committed.\* And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong. \*Hebrew *they shall confess their sin that they have committed*

**Nehemiah 1:6** let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, **confessing** the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned.

**Nehemiah 9:1** The People of Israel **Confess** Their Sin

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads.

**Nehemiah 9:2** And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and **confessed** their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

**Nehemiah 9:3** And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made **confession** and worshiped the Lord their God.

**Psalms 32:5** acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will **confess** my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

**Psalms 38:18** **confess** my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.

**Proverbs 28:13** Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who **confesses** and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

**Song of Solomon 1:2** The Bride **Confesses** Her Love

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine;

**Isaiah 45:23** By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.' Septuagint *every tongue shall confess to God*

**Isaiah 48:1** Israel Refined for God's Glory

Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord and **confess** the God of Israel, but not in truth or right.

**Daniel 9:4** I prayed to the Lord my God and made **confession**, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his

commandments,

**Daniel 9:20** While I was speaking and praying, **confessing** my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God,

**Matthew 3:6** and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, **confessing** their sins.

**Matthew 16:13** Peter **Confesses** Jesus as the Christ

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

**Mark 1:5** And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, **confessing** their sins.

**Mark 8:27** Peter **Confesses** Jesus as the Christ

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

**Luke 9:18** Peter **Confesses** Jesus as the Christ

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”

**John 1:20** He **confessed**, and did not deny, but **confessed**, “I am not the Christ.”

**John 9:22** His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should **confess** Jesus\* to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

\*Greek *him*

**John 12:42** Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not **confess** it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue;

**Acts 19:18** Also many of those who were now believers came, **confessing** and divulging their

practices.

**Acts 24:14** But this I **confess** to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,

**Romans 10:9** because, 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.

**Romans 10:10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one **confesses** and is saved.

**Romans 14:11** for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall **confess**\* to God." \*Or *shall give praise*

**2 Corinthians 9:13** By their approval of this service, they\* will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your **confession** of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others \*]Or *you*

**Philippians 2:11** and every tongue **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**1 Timothy 3:16** Great indeed, we **confess**, is the mystery of godliness: He\* was manifested in the flesh, vindicated\*\* by the Spirit,\*\*\* seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. \*Greek *Who*; some manuscripts *God*; others *Which* \*\*Or *justified* \*\*\*Or *vindicated in spirit*

**1 Timothy 6:12** Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good **confession** in the presence of many witnesses.

**1 Timothy 6:13** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before\* Pontius Pilate made the good **confession**, \*Or *in the time of*

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**Hebrews 4:14** Jesus the Great High Priest

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our **confession**.

**Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the **confession** of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

**James 5:16** Therefore, **confess** your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Or *The effective prayer of a righteous person has great power*

**1 John 1:9** If we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**1 John 2:23** No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever **confesses** the Son has the Father also.

**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,

**1 John 4:3** and every spirit that does not **confess** Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

**1 John 4:15** Whoever **confesses** that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

**2 John 1:7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not **confess** the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

**Revelation 3:5** The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will **confess** his name before my Father and before his angels.

### Appendix C: Questions for small groups or individuals to consider

1. Is there anything for which you need to receive the Lord's forgiveness? Spend some time allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to your attention anything that has not been dealt with, small or large. Repent and ask for God's forgiveness.
2. What about mutual and corporate accountability? – what does the Bible have to say about church discipline and what is its purpose? See Matthew 18:15-18 and 1Tim5:19-22
3. Who might make a good confessor? What would be their personal qualities and when and why might you want to make use of someone in this capacity?
4. How might we do more to confess the goodness of God?

### Appendix D: Bibliography

All biblical references from ESV Copyright 2001-2010 Crossway

Celebration of Discipline – Richard Foster

The Me I want to be – John Ortberg

God\*Stories – Andrew Wilson