

## **A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLES**

### **“The Necessity of Confession”**

#### **Introduction-**

*In our last lesson we examined confession in light of confirming testimonies; professing our faith, in other words. We now need to look at the necessity of confessing our sins if we are to be effective in our prayers for people. The church is to be a house of prayer for all peoples. Sin, both personal and corporate, hinders our prayers.*

*Confession of sin and acknowledgment of sinfulness is part of the process of salvation. We repent from sin and confess the Savior from sin, the Lord Jesus Christ. This message is to the church. We will be primarily dealing with the sin of the saints and the confession thereof.*

***What is sin?** Plain and simple, it is disobedience to God. I was taught once that sin was broken fellowship with God. Sin isn't broken fellowship. Broken fellowship is the result of sin. It is impossible to sin and not negatively impact our relationship with God and others. All relationships are corrupted and tainted by sin. Any motivation, thought, or action that is contrary to God's declared will is sin. And because God is just, He must deal with sin.*

#### **What is the impact of sin on the effectiveness of our prayers?**

Prov 28:9

One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination. NKJV

*Sin makes our prayers abominable to God. The Law is codified in the Ten Commandments and the Ten Commandments are summarized in the Two Commandments (Love God, love your neighbor). What prayer does the Lord hear from the idolater? “Lord, forgive me for worshipping other gods.” What prayer does the Lord hear from the thief? “Lord, forgive me for stealing.” What prayer does the Lord hear from the adulterer? “Lord, forgive me for committing adultery.”*

Isa 1:15-18

15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood;

16 wash and make yourselves clean. **Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong,**

17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. NIV

*Not only are we to confess, we are to repent, which means to stop doing wrong. We do ourselves no favor when we approach the throne of God with blood on our hands.*

Ps 24:3-5

3 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior. NIV

*Having a clear conscience when we approach the Lord in worship should be a primary motivation in our confession of sin.*

Ps 66:18-20

18 If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;

19 but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.

20 Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me! NIV

*If we approach God in prayer and yet cherish our sin, He doesn't listen to our prayer. If I discipline one of my children and send them to their room and the cry and howl but are still disrespectful and disobedient, I hear them – but I don't listen. But when they repent, aren't we able to hear a true plea for forgiveness even if it is whispered?*

2 Chron 7:14-16

14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

16 I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. NIV

*This was God's response to Solomon's prayer regarding the Temple. We, the Church, are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. If we defile His temple with our sins, how are we to fulfill our purpose in offering prayers up for all people? We need to humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways.*

*None of this should be new to any of us. And nothing that follows should come as a huge surprise. We know we should confess our sins. But often, our actions show that we really don't believe that God sees everything and judges everything. I think that when we begin to understand some of the nature of our God when He judges and His system of judgment, we will be motivated continually confess our sins and keep the record clear. It should also be a great motivation not to sin in the first place, which is the preferable action.*

## I. Talionic Justice

### A. A definition of the principle

*Talionic justice means that the punishment is equivalent and corresponding to the crime. We see this principle in the death penalty for murder. God's system of justice is talionic.*

Gen 9:6

"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. NIV

Ex 21:23-25

23 But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life,

24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,  
25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. NIV

Lev 24:17-22

17 "If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death.

18 Anyone who takes the life of someone's animal must make restitution--life for life.

19 If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him:

20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured.

21 Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a man must be put to death.

22 You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born. I am the LORD your God." NIV

Matt 5:38-39

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'

39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. NIV

*Jesus didn't change the law. He commanded that we should change our response and not seek our own vengeance. But the nature of God's justice is still talionic, tit for tat. We see this exemplified over and over in Scripture.*

#### B. Examples from the Fall of Man

##### i. The serpent

❑ Was the most crafty of all the animals – Gen 3:1

❑ Was cursed above all animals – Gen 3:14

##### ii. The woman

❑ Was to be a helpmate and be fruitful – Gen 2:18; 1:28

❑ Her husband would rule over her and she would bear children in pain – Gen 3:16

##### iii. The man

❑ Was to eat freely and live forever – Gen 2:16; 3:22

❑ Had to toil for his food and die – Gen 3:17-19

#### C. Other Examples

##### i. Jacob

❑ Deceived his father for the blessing – Gen 27:15-29

❑ Was deceived by father-in-law for twenty years – Gen 31:41

##### ii. Joseph's brothers

❑ Sold him into slavery while they ate – Gen 37:25

❑ Sold themselves into slavery for food – Gen 42-45; 50:18

##### iii. Israel and the golden calf

❑ They sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry – Ex 32:6

❑ They drank the golden calf and laid down in death – Ex 32:20, 28, 35

##### iv. David and Bathsheba

- ❑ He killed Uriah with the sword of the Ammonites and took another man's wife in secret – 2 Sam 12:9, 12
- ❑ The Sword would never depart from his house and his wives would be taken publicly – 2 Sam 12:10, 11

[Note: This curse on the house of David was broken by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when He told Peter "No more of this!" Matt 26:51-51; Luke 22:51]

## II. We Cannot Hide Sin

Prov 28:13

He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. NKJV

### A. God sees all

Ps 139:7-12

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. NIV

Heb 4:12-16

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. NKJV

*We don't need to fall or wallow in sin. He can give us mercy and grace to get us out of it! But even when we do fall, rest assured that He sees everything.*

### B. What we hide, God will expose

2 Sam 12:12

For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' " NKJV

Acts 5:1-11

1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

- 2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.
- 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"
- 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."
- 5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.
- 6 Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.
- 7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
- 8 Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."
- 9 Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."
- 10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.
- 11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. NIV

#### Eph 5:3-8 NIV

- 3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.
- 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.
- 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.
- 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.
- 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

*We should not allow anyone to deceive us by empty words promising a better life by disobeying God's commands.*

#### Eph 5:11-18

- 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.
- 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.
- 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,
- 14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."
- 15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,
- 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.
- 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. **Instead, be filled with the Spirit. NIV**

C. Shame and guilt can't cover sin, only love can

*In guilt and shame, Adam and Eve covered themselves in loincloths. In love, God made coverings for them out of animal skins. Love covers a multitude of sins and the greatest love shown was when the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood for us. His blood cleanses the worshipper.*

Heb 9:13-14

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! NIV

Heb 10:19-22

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. NIV

### III. Confession – Levels of Exposure

#### A. Confession to God

Ps 51:3-4

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

4 **Against you, you only, have I sinned and** done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. NIV

1 John 1:8-9

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. NIV

*Truly, all sin is against God because He is Holy. His is the standard that we come against. But sin always affects others as well.*

#### B. Confession to the offended party

Matt 5:21-24

21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

- 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.
- 23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,
- 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. NIV

C. Confession to the Church

i. Sin is personal

Deut 24:16

Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin. NIV

*Regardless of influence, we are each responsible for our own sins and will receive punishment for them if they remain unconfessed. In contrast to Ananias and Saphira in Acts 5, look what happened in Acts 19 when there was public confession of sin.*

Acts 19:18-20

18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.

19 A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.

20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. NIV

ii. It has a corporate impact

1 Cor 6:15-20

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. NIV

*We are one body. When I take my body and commit sexual immorality with it, I am taking a member of the body of Christ and uniting it with harlotry. My sin impacts the body of Christ.*

1 Cor 12:26-27

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. NIV

iii. It needs to be dealt with prior to Communion

1 Cor 11:23-32

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. NIV

*By making room to respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit in church and confess our sins, we can be prepared to approach the Lord's table.*

#### IV. Guidelines for Confession of Sin in a Church Service

A. A confession needs to acknowledge the conviction of the Holy Spirit - John 16:8-11

B. A confession needs to be brief, with just enough details that the church understands the nature of the sin.

C. A confession needs to protect the reputation of others who may have been involved.

D. A confession needs to be made with humility and remorse (it is a confession, not a teaching).

E. A confession needs to be discreet – avoid defrauding by not giving inappropriate details of evil doing.

F. A confession needs to end by seeking the forgiveness of the church.

#### **Conclusion-**

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. NIV