

Spiritual Practices - Confession

Week 6

Confession is a spiritual practice that allows us to receive the grace and mercy of God and experience forgiveness and healing. Forgiveness moves us into right relationship with God and healing frees us from decisions and sins and sorrow of the past. This is all made possible because of the cross and resurrection of Jesus – without it confession would just be a therapeutic sharing. There is the possibility of redemption for us because of Jesus. On the cross, Jesus took all of the sin and evil and selfishness of humanity for all time and carried it, let it kill him, redeemed it, cleansed it, and thus provided a pathway to reconciliation for all those who look at him and believe – “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).

This reveals to us is that our sin and selfishness and pain and sorrow and shame no longer have power over us. *In confession, we step in to the freedom purchased for us on the cross.* When we confess, we open ourselves up to receive the forgiveness God has for us and we are healed from our sin and shame. That is good news!

Sin separates you from God and makes relationship with Him more difficult – “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Sin that goes unconfessed steals your peace and joy – “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer” (Psalms 32:3-4).

God wants to shine light into those dark places of your heart and heal you. He wants to put his hand on your wounds not to harm you or to shame you but to heal you and save you. Trust his love. Trust his gift of forgiveness and grace.

Confession is both private and communal. It is a grace gift from our Father that you and I can individually seek forgiveness and healing through confession to God whenever we need. Christian fellowship is also a grace gift from our Father – we can share our burdens with each other in trusted Christian community and receive a word of forgiveness in Jesus’ name. In communal confession we experience together the freedom purchased for us on the cross – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

4 Questions:

1. Confession is a challenging practice – why is this? What makes confession a challenge for you?
 - a. If you find it easy to confess, share some insights with the group about why that may be.
2. What happens to your relationship with God, with others, and with opportunities God gives you **when you refuse to confess**?
3. What happens to your relationship with God, with others, and with opportunities God gives you **when you choose to confess**?
4. What would it look like for you to start practicing confession in your walk with Jesus?