

Confession

October 8, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "Confession." Thank you to everyone who was involved in the video. The scripture reading is Romans 10 1 to 9. Happy birthday this week to Tina and a very happy 70th anniversary to John and Jo.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning everybody. It seems like that we're excited to be together today when I listen to you chatting away and getting reacquainted and visiting. Welcome to everybody who is here and to those of you that are joining us online and we hope that our time together can be worthwhile. You know, there is a trend out there that people are deciding to meet in church different ways by either either online like this but I like really to meet with people in time and space and that's a good time good thing to be together and we have some good things planned for today.

As far as birthdays go we have a some major birthdays this week and Lynn's having a birthday and we're going to be celebrating that in the potluck after the service and you can see the the details of who's involved there. And prayer requests. Allister, Don and Barb's grandson, broke his elbow at school; had to have surgery but he's home recovering. And I remember breaking a thumb when I was at school one time and when I was in grade 8 and had to have a cast. That was kind of traumatic thing so need to be prayerful on his behalf. And Jim's mother-in-law--that would be Linda's mother--passed away recently we're praying for her family as they mourn. So would you join me with me in prayer.

Our Father in heaven, we are grateful for this opportunity that we can be together that we have health and strength to be here. we pray for those who can't because they're confined at home with illness. We pray for Allister as he is recovering from his elbow surgery. At such a young age that might be feel very traumatic and we pray that your peace will be with him. We pray for Linda's mother who passed recently and for the family that is connected with her and mourn her. We pray that they might find comfort in you. We're thankful that we can be together, we're thankful that we can remember that Jesus died for us and that he rose again to give us life and hope in the in the hereafter. We pray, Father, that we might live our lives with respect to his, his principles and his teachings and that we--that your spirit might guide us, that we might be your people. Your hands and your feet and as we leave this building we can say the church is leaving the building to be the church in the community.

We pray for courage to know when to open doors and help us to know how to pass through those doors and the events in our lives armed with your spirit to be your ambassadors. We pray Father that we might be attentive during our service today and find encouragement from your words encouragement from the sermon encouragement from communion and encouragement from the singing that when we leave this place we'll feel built up to be your people. In this regard we give you thanks and praise and in Jesus name we pray, amen.

Communion

I'm finding more and more that I have to write down what I want to say because I may wander off in any direction for a long time. So hopefully this is concise and gives you something to think about. As we

gather each week to have communion it's a remembrance but there are so many facets to this action that we do. We, among many other aspects, actively take these simple emblems, the bread and fruit of the vine, Christ's body and his blood to remember the sacrifice and the love of God expressed in Christ. Now, our thoughts are individually diverse and deeply personal. We are not all thinking the same things right now when we think about God, Christ and this remembrance but we declare our faith or our allegiance to God through Christ. Generally that's what we're doing. We may personally acknowledge sin to God and to those gathered around us but the confession of our faith is more than just an opinion. It's like a vow in marriage. It's like receiving citizenship in a country. You have made this connection. If I am God's person, if I am or we are God's people, we don't start each day wondering who we are or why we're here or to whom we belong. You belong to Jesus. I'm reminded of a video a long time ago with the Lion King and the cloud where the dead father lion is communicating to his son who is confused and doesn't know what he wants to do. Remember who you are and that's the turning point in the whole thing. Remember who you are and so this is a turning point for our week. We are to remember who we are. We're united with him, Christ in his death and resurrection. We belong to him.

So, what we are saying is that we belong to, we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Our allegiance is to him, to his standards of life and love. This is the good confession and it's as much a call to action as it is a declaration of Jesus or our own identity. By our participation here with these remembrance emblems in the Lord's Supper, we're making that good confession. Jesus is the Son of God, in remembrance and until he comes. It's a constant reminder and we need it. We are kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others. The way God lives toward you. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father we are so thankful for the gift of your son and for this remembrance that we have that reminds us to whom we belong. We ask for your strength, your guidance and may your spirit direct us to live out our God's identity, your identity in us through Christ and it is through Jesus we pray a blessing on these emblems. Amen.

Reading

Romans 10:1-9

Good morning. Good morning. The reading this morning is Romans 10 verses 1 through 10. Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is a combination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. Moses writes about this about the righteousness that is by the law. The person who does these things will live by them. But the righteousness that is by faith says do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down or who will descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does it say? The word is near you, it is in your mouth and it is in your heart. That is the message concerning faith that we proclaim. If you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart, that God raised him from the dead, he will be saved.

Sermon

Good morning everyone. Thank you so much for being with us today. Who says church isn't fun? You had a good time today. Recently in our sermons we've talked about baptism and we've talked about repentance. Today I want to emphasize the word confession. It's one thing to confess our sins to God and that's a really good thing to do. It's another thing to confess your sins to each other and I often recommend that. Or husbands and wives can confess "I'm sorry for what I said today or something that I've done today." And all throughout the Bible confession is just part of our spiritual growth. In our baptism we confess that Jesus is Lord and confession is throughout the old and New Testament alike.

For example, way back in second Chronicles King Solomon said that when Israel sins against God and then repents and confesses God's name then God will forgive the sin of Israel and bring them back to the land that God gave them. When we confess our sins, God hears us. In fact, God delights to forgive. It's an interesting concept. God delights when we ask God for his forgiveness. In Psalm 35 it says my soul re-joice in the Lord and delight in his salvation. And many of us who are parents have experienced our children who have messed up, said something terrible, did something terrible and then coming to us with tears and broken hearts and asking for forgiveness. We wrap our arms around this child. We help them just as God does for us. Confession is good spiritual medicine. And if you ever find yourself distant from God, sit down and say God I want to confess I know you know what I've said and done but I want to talk to you. I want to share it with you. Sometimes there's just a big gap between where we are in God and God. We believe in God. We understand his word but really just to talk to him. How many times throughout the day do you just stop and talk to God? He says I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you, I'm always with you and if I'm always with you I can talk to you. And so I think it's important not just to say a prayer on occasion but to constantly remember that God is with us and confession is good spiritual medicine. He will not neglect us.

In Proverbs the writer says in chapter 28 the one who conceals sins does not prosper but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Be open to God because God is always open to us. In Matthew's account John the Baptist was preparing the way for Jesus and John was listening to the people who were confessing their sins and then changed their view of life by producing spiritual fruit in their lives and that was John the Baptist message to believe and to produce fruit. We should live like that today--love and joy with peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness gentleness and self-control. Confession is not a fault. Confession produces righteousness. It frees us from our bondage, just going to God and letting it all come out to him.

Now, it's not always easy to step out of the crowd and confess that Jesus is Lord and in our baptism we do that. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and we would say "yes" then that's our confession. We believe that part of our baptism is a physical demonstration of something spiritual that's taken place. That as Jesus lived and died and buried and rose again that we shall too and confession is part of all of that. In John chapter 12 it says many among the leaders in Israel believed in Jesus Christ as Lord but listen to this they would not confess their faith for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue. Now here's why for they loved the praise from men and women more than they loved the praise of God and unfortunately, it's true still today. But then there's the Apostle Paul telling us that if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead you will be saved. For it's with your heart that you believe and are justified and it's with your mouth that you confess and are saved. You see in our baptism typically just before someone is

baptized, we ask the question: "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior and that you're being baptized into Christ?" That's the confession, when they say "of course" or "yes" and then the baptism takes place.

So, in John 3:16 the most favorite text for most people is powerful. John 3:16 for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life. Death is not the end of us. And then in the book of Philippians—an optimistic powerful wonderful book—it says God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (as we have sung) in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. You see, communion reminds us of our good confession and communion is confession. It's a physical demonstration of "I confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" and I don't know if you want to do this but if you'd like to, I'd appreciate it. I'd like us to say out loud together Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father so if you believe this, I would like you to say it Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. Let's say it together Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. See you've just confessed. You've just confessed. That's the good confession. You can confess silently and you confess by living your life in a beautiful way but every once in a while I think it's pretty good that the entire church would say we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

Sometimes confession is used only in negative ways. I confess because I've sinned which is true, and I confess that but don't let that overwhelm you. Let that confession say I know that I've sinned God. I confess it to you, and you know that God will forgive us. That is a confession. And then in Hebrews chapter three, the writer says therefore brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling we share in the heavenly calling fix your thoughts on Jesus the apostle and high priest whom we confess. Confession is everywhere in scripture and then in James five and verse 16—confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. Here's why: the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. I mean, let's face it sometimes people would rather talk about other people instead of praying for them. We confess that we have messed up. We confess that we thought things that we shouldn't be thinking that we said things that we shouldn't have but God is always there as a loving father. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am always with you and then first John one nine if we confess our sins Jesus is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness and I particularly like the scripture in Acts where it says many people believed and openly confessed their sins to one another.

So the question why do we find it so difficult to confess? Well here's a couple of reasons. Maybe we believe that people will reject us totally and completely if we confess some of the sins that we've committed. Maybe loved ones will turn their back on us. Maybe we believe God will have nothing more to do with us. Even though God says I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am always with you. Maybe if we confess people will tell other people our sins. Maybe if we confess people would judge us and even ridicule us and I'm sure there's not one person here today where that would happen. See, confession is good for our mental and spiritual health. Do you remember a time when you said something hurtful and later you felt so badly for what you said or did? Maybe as a child you ran to your parents and told them what you said and did that was hurtful and the parents listened and then wrapped their arms around you because they knew how badly you felt. See that's why we confess, and God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit wraps their arms around us and we remember their words. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I'm always with you and when we confess that we have sinned

I don't know how you would do it but I would do it this way. I feel God's arms around me. It's not a distant relationship. It's an absolute belief that God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit are beside us right now and we confess they wrap their arms around us. I don't know what heaven's going to be like but the first time we see God, we see Jesus, we see the Holy Spirit, I think there's going to be a lot of hugs.

Confession is good for our soul, but then can we learn from this confession? Can we grow? Can we help other people who are tied up in difficult life situations and just come beside them? I want to read in conclusion today just a couple of brief scriptures that I think is interesting because thank the Lord we don't live at the time of the first century where being a Christian was rough stuff, pretty violent, thrown into jail. We've read scripture so many times of what scripture said to Christians who stood against the emperor. They would not say the emperor is Lord, they would say Jesus is Lord and because of that they were imprisoned many times and on one occasion and many of you know this story and then I'll wrap it up. About midnight the apostle Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns while they were in prison and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a-an earthquake, a violent earthquake that the foundation of the prison doors were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open and everybody's chains loosed. The jailer woke up and saw the prison doors open. He immediately withdrew his sword, and he was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped and had they escaped they would be and then Paul with the prison doors wide open stayed there. He just stayed there. All the jail doors were open, everybody left except him. He just waited for the jail guards to come by. Unbelievable. They were going to take their own lives because they knew their lives were at risk because and then Paul just standing there says don't harm yourself, we're all here. The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They saw their lives were so different. Here's what he said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You and all your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in the house and at that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds. Then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house, said a meal before them, was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God, he and all of his family.

See, it's wonderful when we confess our sins to God. Confession is not a failure. Confession God loves. May you at some point today find the opportunity to just be one-on-one with God, one-on-one with Jesus, one-on-one with the Holy Spirit and talk. And if needs be, confess to the one who will always listen and who will always forgive. Amen.

Closing Reading

As we close our time this morning, I'd like to make our prayer Psalm number 27. "Lord, you are my light and my Savior, so why should I be afraid of anyone? The Lord is where my life is safe, so I will be afraid of nobody. Evil people might attack me, they might try to destroy my body. Yes, my enemies might attack me and try to destroy me, but they will stumble and fall. Even if an army surrounds me, I will not be afraid. Even if people attack me in war, I will trust in the Lord. I ask only one thing from the Lord, this is what I want most. Let me live in the Lord's house all my life, enjoying the Lord's beauty and spending time in his palace. He will protect me when I am in danger. He will hide me in his tent. He will take me up to his place of safety. He will help me defeat the enemies around me. I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy. I will sing and play songs to honor the Lord. Lord, hear my voice, be kind and answer

me. My heart told me to come to you, Lord, so I'm coming to ask for your help. Don't turn away from me. Don't be angry with your servant. You are the only one who can help me. My God, don't leave me all alone. You are my savior. Even if my parents leave me, the Lord will take me in. I have enemies, Lord, so teach me your ways. Show me the right way to live. My enemies have attacked me. They've told lies about me and have tried to hurt me, but I really believe that I will see the Lord's goodness before I die, and this is the blessing for the week. Wait for the Lord's help. Be strong and brave, and wait for the Lord's help. Amen. Have a good week.

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