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Upper Thames Missionary Church  
Palm Sunday 2021

A New Rhythm: Pt. 10  
Confession - NOTES

Anchor Passage  
1 John 1:5-2:2

Hosanna – God Saves!

Theme today – Confession – primarily to God, but I’m challenging you more specifically today, **to confess to one another.**

-v.7 -- the need to be in fellowship with one another, but it is only possible, it is revealed, through confession.

-hiding your sin is the same thing as hypocrisy

-The opposite of being hypocritical and hiding sin, is to walk together in the light which exposes **and** cleanses sin

**-think of it this way - just as a doctor uncovering your illnesses and sores is both embarrassing, uncomfortable, but absolutely necessary – so it is with confessing our sins to God *AND* one another**

How much more important is it for us to consider the terrible illness of sin that can poison our body not just for years, but for eternity?

John says in v. 8 that the same thing happens with people who do not want to expose their sin to be dealt with - they deny it. "if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves"

Not only are they lying to themselves and others, but they are cutting off themselves from relationship with God (he says if we do that - "the truth is not in us" )

So what is the solution?

"If we confess our sins" We must not deny our sin, but confess it.

CONFESSION Definition 1:

It is a laying before God and seeking forgiveness "it means speaking the wrongdoing, but also acknowledging the offence it has caused

- sin is not a mere action - it is a service to the enemy instead of God,

-John quickly adds that we can be sure of forgiveness and purification because God is faithful and just to forgive.

What makes forgiveness possible?

Again, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus comes to the centre here:

IN 1 John 2:2 we see that Jesus is both the living advocate and the atoning sacrifice.

1. Confession is only possible because of the cross
2. Christ's work of love THEN enables us to confess sins TODAY
  - Jesus didn't just take on individual bad things we have done "lower case s sins", he took the full force capital S SIN. - Sin as a power, sin as the enemy of God that seeks to corrupt his people.
  - **Think of it this way** - we are in a cosmic battle - "SIN" sets itself up as a rival to God - when you "sin" you are declaring your allegiance with the enemy, - how do we know this? Because the Bible talks about sin in this way - see Romans 7:11 - "For **sin**, seizing an **opportunity** through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me." Sin is an active force, not just a behaviour in us - when we "sin" we are walking in step with the enemy, not with God.
    - Jesus, though, defeated SIN on the cross, and therefore it has no claim on anyone who confesses their "sins" to God. - How do we know this? Because the Bible also says in Romans 8:3 -  
By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh  
-The crucifixion was the condemnation of SIN - SIN was sentenced to the death that would have been ours.

-without the **cross**, confession would be only psychologically therapeutic – it wouldn't objectively change us

-Spiritual Renewal cannot happen apart from confession.

CONFESSION Definition 2: confession is both an act of divine grace, and an act of human will

-confession is both corporate and individual

I think this comes partly from that fact that as Christians, we have trouble holding both of these things to be true

-the church is a fellowship of saints

AND

-the church is a fellowship of sinners

-we let shame trick us into thinking we are the only ones struggling with sin in the church -

-when we realize we are also a fellowship of sinners, then we are set free together to confess and received Christ's healing power and forgiveness as a whole community.

-until we confess together in community, we will languish alone.

-confession brings freedom!!!! – and when someone experiences freedom, that can be contagious : “freedom begets freedom”

### A Few Practical Tips

#### **Giving A Confession with A brother or Sister (or alone)**

1. **specificity matters** – just like when a child says “sorry” and you need to encourage them by saying “for what?”
2. Yet **don't become legalistic**
  - you don't need to comb through your day to confess every tiny thing that may have been a sin
  - "for as you often fall imperceptibly, so you are often raised up imperceptibly" 133
3. **set an endpoint to confession** - or else you'll carry on into a perpetual state of self-condemnation - the point of confession isn't always to be dogging yourself - it is an unburdening and a carrying on - confession will begin with sorrow but end in joy - then move on - don't worry - you'll be back again!

Who should you confess with?

should be someone you know and trust.

-someone who has made a habit of confessing their own sin

#### **If someone is confessing with you:**

– before you seek to help others, make sure you have confessed your own sin.

-if you have never been horrified by your own sin, you'll find it hard to empathize with someone else

-you don't need to be God - that means its not your job to be the judge or the comforter

-God may indeed lead you to console, but don't be too quick - your consolation is not what the other person needs, they need to know that God is listening, loving, and forgiving.

-you must pray - pray for the healing of the inner wounds that sin has caused - pray because you know those wounds yourself

-laying on of hands, blessing, not out of moral superiority, but our of common brokenness and common grace.

## **Preparing for Easter**

If the Spirit has led you toward a trustworthy brother or sister, confess the sin with them, as well, but at the very least, please feel free to come and open your heart of to God for Spiritual Renewal through confession.

Confess your sins before God – and be brave and ask God today – who is a brother or sister You can trust to be open and honest with and confess – God promises healing to those who confess to one another – James 5 says “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, so that you may be healed.”