

We Are The Church: Confession

Confession frees us to once again engage in a full relationship with God and others.

Confession can be an uncomfortable word. We often associate it with guilt, punishment, embarrassment, or shame. But Scripture presents confession differently. Godly confession is not about being crushed by our sin; it is about bringing our sin into the light of God's grace.

Over the next five days, we will explore three biblical dimensions of confession:

1. **Confessing to God** — receiving forgiveness and freedom.
2. **Confessing to Others** — breaking the power of isolation.
3. **Confessing Christ Before Others** — openly declaring that Jesus is Lord.

As you work through each devotional, don't simply read the words. Allow God to search your heart.

You don't have to manage the mask. You don't have to pretend you have everything together. You can step into the light.

DAY 1: DROP THE MASK

1 John 1:9

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

We are remarkably good at hiding. We hide our struggles from our friends. We hide our weaknesses from our families. Sometimes we even try to hide things from ourselves. And when we come to church, we can become especially good at putting on the right face.

Someone asks, "How are you doing?" we say, "Blessed and highly favored!" Meanwhile, inside, our souls feel like a tangled pair of Christmas tree lights that have been sitting in a damp basement since 2014.

The truth is, God isn't fooled by the mask.

But here's the good news:

God already knows—and He still loves you.

When we confess our sins to God, we aren't informing Him of something He didn't know. God already knows our thoughts, our failures, our attitudes, our choices, and our secret struggles.

Confession is simply agreeing with God about what is true.

We stop making excuses. We stop calling anger "just stress." We stop calling gossip "sharing a prayer request." We stop calling greed "being financially responsible." We stop defending what God is asking us to surrender. We simply say: "Lord, You're right. That was wrong. I confess it. I need Your grace."

And when we do, God doesn't respond with condemnation. He responds with forgiveness and cleansing.

Romans 8:1 reminds us: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Confession isn't God's way of humiliating you. Confession is God's invitation to freedom.

REFLECT

- Is there something I have been trying to hide from God?
- Am I making excuses for something God is asking me to surrender?
- Do I truly believe that God's grace is greater than my failure?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Spend 10 quiet minutes alone with God today. Don't explain. Don't justify. Don't make excuses. Simply tell God what He already knows. "Lord, I confess..." Then thank Him for His forgiveness and grace.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that I don't have to hide from You. You already know everything about me, and You love me completely. Give me courage to stop making excuses and honestly confess the things that are keeping me from You. Thank You that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Cleanse my heart, renew my spirit, and help me walk freely in Your grace.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

MY RESPONSE

Today I am surrendering:

DAY 2: BRING IT INTO THE LIGHT

James 5:16

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

Yesterday we talked about confessing our sins to God. Today we take the next step.

Confession to others.

This can be even more difficult. We may be willing to admit our failures to God because we know He already knows everything. But telling another person? That's different. What if they judge me? What if they look at me differently? What if they don't understand? What if they tell someone else?

Those fears are real, which is why biblical confession to others requires wisdom and trust.

James isn't telling us to stand up in church and announce every embarrassing detail of our lives. Biblical confession isn't public humiliation. It is gospel-centered honesty within safe Christian community.

Sometimes confession sounds like: "I've been struggling with pride." "I need help with this temptation." "I'm carrying bitterness that I can't seem to release." "I've been struggling spiritually." "I need someone to pray with me."

The enemy wants you isolated.

He whispers:

"You're the only one." "Nobody else struggles like you do." "If people knew the real you, they wouldn't love you."

But confession breaks that lie.

The moment we bring something into the light, its power begins to diminish.

Think about mold growing in a dark basement. As long as the basement stays dark and closed off, the mold continues to spread. But open the door. Turn on the lights. Let fresh air in. The environment changes.

That's what authentic Christian community can do. When we confess to a trusted, mature believer, two things can happen.

First, the illusion of uniqueness is shattered - You discover that you're not the only person who struggles. Second, you experience the grace of community - Someone can pray with you. Someone can encourage you. Someone can hold you accountable. Someone can remind you of God's promises when you have forgotten them.

We were never designed to follow Jesus completely alone. God's church is a body. We need one another. That doesn't mean everyone needs to know everything about you. It means you need someone with whom you can be honest: A trusted friend. A mature Christian. A pastor. A mentor. A small-group leader. Someone who loves Jesus, loves you, and will lovingly point you toward Christ. Sometimes the first step toward healing is simply saying: "I need help."

REFLECT

- Am I carrying a struggle completely by myself?
- Is there a trusted Christian with whom I can be honest?
- Have I allowed fear of judgment to keep me isolated?
- Is there someone who needs me to offer grace and a listening ear?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Identify **one trusted, spiritually mature person** with whom you can be honest.

You don't have to tell them everything today.

Start with one sentence:

"There is something I've been struggling with, and I could use someone to pray with me."

Then let the conversation begin.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for giving me the gift of Christian community. Forgive me for the times I have isolated myself because of shame or fear. Give me wisdom to know who I can trust and courage to be honest with them. Help me also become the kind of person others can trust with their struggles. Make our church a place where people find grace, truth, forgiveness, healing, and hope.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

MY RESPONSE

Someone I can reach out to:

Something I would like them to pray about:

DAY 3: FORGIVEN AND FREE

Romans 8:1

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

There is a difference between conviction and condemnation.

Conviction says: "This is wrong. Bring it to God."

Condemnation says: "You are hopeless. You will never change."

Conviction draws us toward God.

Condemnation drives us away from Him.

The enemy wants us to confuse the two. He wants us to believe that because we've failed, we are failures. Because we've sinned, we are disqualified. Because we've fallen, we can never get back up. But the Gospel tells us something different.

Jesus doesn't minimize our sin. He overcomes it.

Confession isn't about pretending our sin wasn't serious. It is about recognizing that God's grace is greater than our sin. That's why 1 John 1:9 is such a powerful promise: "He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Notice the words:

Faithful.

Forgive.

Purify.

God doesn't merely forgive the record. He begins transforming the person.

This is where confession becomes more than an emotional release. It becomes part of our relationship with Christ.

We confess because we want to walk in the light. We confess because we want to become more like Jesus. We confess because we don't want sin controlling our lives. We confess because we want freedom.

Think about carrying a heavy backpack all day. At first, you adjust to the weight. Eventually, you may hardly notice it. But take the backpack off. Suddenly you realize: "I didn't realize how heavy that was."

Unconfessed sin can be like that. We become accustomed to carrying guilt, resentment, shame, secrecy, and regret. We convince ourselves it's normal. But Jesus says: "You don't have to carry that anymore."

The cross is God's declaration that forgiveness is available. The empty tomb is God's declaration that transformation is possible. You are not saved because you successfully hid your failures. You are saved by grace. And God's grace doesn't simply forgive our past—it begins shaping our future.

Today, don't rehearse your failures. **Repent of them.**

Don't sit endlessly in shame. **Receive grace.**

Don't allow your past to become your identity. **Remember whose you are.**

You are not your worst mistake. You are not your darkest moment. You are not the thing you wish you could take back. In Christ, you are forgiven. And because you are forgiven, you are free to move forward.

REFLECT

- Am I allowing guilt from my past to define me?
- Have I confessed something but continued punishing myself for it?
- What would it look like to truly receive God's forgiveness today?
- Is there a sinful pattern God wants to begin transforming in me?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Write down one thing you have already confessed to God but continue to carry emotionally.

Write underneath it:

"God has forgiven me. I don't have to keep carrying what Jesus carried for me."

Then spend time thanking God for His grace.

PRAYER

Father,

Thank You for the forgiveness I have through Jesus Christ. Help me distinguish conviction from condemnation. When You reveal sin in my life, give me the courage to repent. When the enemy reminds me of my past, remind me of Your grace. Help me stop punishing myself for what You have already forgiven. Continue transforming me into the likeness of Jesus.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

MY RESPONSE

A burden I am choosing to leave with God:

A truth from God's Word I will remember:

DAY 4: DON'T HIDE YOUR JESUS

Matthew 10:32

“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.”

There are some things we don't mind talking about: Our favorite sports team. Our grandchildren. A great vacation. A new restaurant. A movie we loved. A hobby we're passionate about. When something matters to us, we naturally talk about it.

So what about Jesus?

Jesus calls His followers to openly acknowledge Him.

Jesus wasn't calling His followers to be rude, argumentative, or obnoxious. He was calling them to be unashamed. There is a difference.

Being unashamed of Jesus doesn't mean forcing conversations where they don't belong. It doesn't mean winning every argument. It doesn't mean being disrespectful toward people who believe differently. It means that Jesus isn't a secret part of your life. Your faith is not merely something you practice for an hour on Sunday.

Jesus is Lord on Monday. Jesus is Lord at work. Jesus is Lord at school. Jesus is Lord at the restaurant. Jesus is Lord in your home. Jesus is Lord online. Jesus is Lord when everyone agrees with you—and when they don't.

The Apostle's Creed gives us a beautiful example of public confession:

“I believe in God...”

“I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord...”

“I believe in the Holy Spirit...”

Christianity has always been a faith that is confessed. We don't merely believe silently. We declare what we believe. But there's something even deeper happening.

What we confess with our lips reveals what we treasure in our hearts.

If Jesus has truly changed us, eventually that change begins to spill over.

Our conversations change. Our priorities change. Our attitudes change. Our relationships change. Our choices change. Our compassion changes. Our willingness to serve changes. Our lives become a living confession.

The world doesn't just need Christians who can explain Christianity. It needs Christians whose lives make the Gospel visible.

So today, don't hide Jesus.

You don't need to shout. You don't need to argue. You don't need to win a debate. Simply be willing to say:

"Jesus is important to me."

"I'll be praying for you."

"My faith has helped me through this."

"I believe Jesus is Lord."

Sometimes the simplest confession can open the door to a much deeper conversation.

REFLECT

- Am I comfortable letting people know that I follow Jesus?
- Have I ever kept my faith quiet because I was afraid of how others would respond?
- Does the way I live support what I say I believe?
- Who in my life needs to see and hear the hope of Jesus?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Look for one natural opportunity today to acknowledge Jesus.

It might be through your words. It might be praying with someone. It might be sharing your testimony.

It might simply be responding to a difficult situation with Christlike love.

Don't force it. Just don't hide it.

PRAYER

Jesus,

Give me courage to confess You before others. Help me live in such a way that my words and actions point people toward You. Keep me from being ashamed of my faith, but also keep me from being arrogant or argumentative. Give me humility, wisdom, compassion, and boldness. Let my life become a daily confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

MY RESPONSE

Someone who needs to see the hope of Jesus through me:

One way I can acknowledge Jesus today:

DAY 5: STEP INTO THE LIGHT

Hebrews 10:23–25

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”

We’ve spent the last four days talking about confession.

Confession to God. Confession to others. Confessing Christ before others.

But confession isn’t meant to be an event that ends when the devotional ends. Confession is a way of living in the light.

Hebrews 10 brings all of these ideas together.

We are invited to draw near to God. We are invited to hold firmly to our hope. We are invited to encourage one another. We are invited to spur one another toward love and good deeds.

And we are told not to give up meeting together. Why?

Because Christianity was never intended to be lived alone. God wants us in relationship with Him and with His people. Confession opens the door. Grace keeps us there. Community helps us continue.

And our testimony points others toward Jesus.

Imagine what would happen if the church became known as a place where people didn’t have to pretend.

A place where people could say: “I’m struggling.”

And someone responded: “Let’s pray.”

A place where someone could say: “I failed.”

And someone responded: “God’s grace is bigger than your failure.”

A place where someone could say: “I need help.”

And the church responded: “You don’t have to walk through this alone.”

A place where someone could say: “Jesus changed my life.”

And the church responded: “Tell us your story!”

That kind of church becomes a picture of the Gospel. Because the Gospel isn’t about pretending we’re perfect.

It’s about admitting that we need a Savior. The cross reminds us that God knows the worst about us and loves us anyway. The empty tomb reminds us that our story doesn’t have to end with our failures. And Christian community reminds us that we don’t have to walk the journey alone.

So today, step into the light.

Bring your sin to God. Bring your struggles to safe Christian community. Bring your testimony to the world.

And then keep walking.

You don’t have to be perfect. You simply need to be honest, surrendered, and willing to let Jesus continue His work in you.

Confession frees us to once again engage in a full relationship with God and others.

Confession is not a prison sentence. It is a passport to freedom.

REFLECT

- What has God shown me about confession this week?
- Is there something I still need to confess to God?

- Is there someone I need to seek out for prayer, accountability, forgiveness, or reconciliation?
- Am I willing to openly live as a follower of Jesus?
- What is one step God is asking me to take next?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Take the Step Into the Light Challenge.

Complete these three actions:

- ☐ **Look Up** — Confess something honestly to God.
- ☐ **Reach Out** — Talk with a trusted Christian about something you are carrying.
- ☐ **Speak Up** — Find a natural opportunity to acknowledge Jesus before someone else.

Then ask God:

“Lord, what does faithful living look like for me from this point forward?”

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for meeting me in the light. Thank You that I don't have to hide from You, and I don't have to walk alone. Give me courage to confess my sin, humility to receive forgiveness, wisdom to seek godly community, and boldness to confess Jesus before others.

Help me become the kind of Christian who doesn't merely talk about grace but lives it.

Help me become the kind of church member who creates a safe place for others to find healing.

Help me become the kind of disciple who is unashamed to say that Jesus is Lord.

Thank You that Your grace is greater than my sin, Your forgiveness is greater than my failure, and Your love is greater than my fear.

May my life become a daily testimony of Your transforming power.

In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

MY 5-DAY RESPONSE

God is showing me:

Something I need to confess to God:

Someone I need to talk with:

Someone who needs to hear my testimony:

One step of obedience I will take:

MY CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.

On the third day He rose again;

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy universal Church,
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.

Amen.