

# REVISITING THE CONFESSIONAL

## A DISPENSATIONAL LOOK AT FORGIVENESS IN THE CHURCH

*"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing... and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin."*

~ Leviticus 5:5-6

### 1. Confession Confusion

- a. Religious temples are where you go to offer sacrifices and appease gods.
- b. It is natural for people to visit churches to perform confession and get absolution.
- c. The priest (in cahoots with God) forgives sins after requesting you do penance.
- d. 'Do penance' was what sparked the Reformation for Luther in Matt 4:17
- e. Some churches ignore penitent work, but confession remains for forgiveness -1John 1:9
- f. *What good is confession if our sins are forgiven?* It's time to revisit the confessional.

### 2. Defining Confession

- a. Not mere believing truth, but verbal confession – John 12:42, Rom 10:9-10,14:11
- b. Not confessing truth, but confessing sins – Prov 28:13, Ps 32:3-5, Psalm 51
- c. Not simply for owning sin, admitting guilt, examining hearts, but for forgiveness of sins.
- d. 4 steps to RC Reconciliation (Confession): contrition, confession, penance, absolution
- e. Confession ~def. Declare sins w/contrition to receive forgiveness and reconciliation
- f. Penance ~def. Work done to make satisfaction for sins and make a sincere confession.
- g. Fasting, service, offerings, works of mercy, promises, prayers, act of contrition, Hallow.

### 3. Confession under the Old Covenant

- a. Confessing sins to a priest for forgiveness was explained under law - Lev 5:5-6
- b. Contrition, confession, penance, absolution (forgiveness) for Israel 2 Chr 6:24-26, 7:14
- c. Daniel confesses sin for the nation of Israel - Dan 9:3-5, 9:20
- d. Acknowledge sins and God will stop being angry and forgive – Jer 3:12-13
- e. They went to a Baptist to confess their sins (then Lutheran, Methodist) – Matt 3:5-6
- f. Confessions always appeal to covenant promise, never to the finished work of the cross

### 4. Confession under the New Covenant

- a. Work of mercy (forgive, help the sick) and be forgiven - Matt 6:9-16, Luke 5:20, 6:37
- b. Jesus appointed men to forgive sins under Israel's NT - John 20:21-23
- c. Repent, baptism, name of Jesus = forgiveness of sins – Acts 2:38
- d. Confession for forgiveness and fellowship in the new covenant -1John 1:6,9 (Lev 26:40)
- e. Confess your faults to one another for forgiveness and healing - James 5:15-16
- f. A failure to rightly divide apostles keeps confessions going in churches.

### 5. Forgiven Freely by Grace

- a. The dispensation of God's grace means God is not pouring out his wrath – Eph 3:1-2
- b. We are all ministers of reconciliation acc. to fellowship of the mystery – 2 Cor 5:18-21
- c. *What about contrition?* Grace can only be received by sinners – Rom 3:23, 4:5
- d. Forgiveness freely granted by grace thru faith in Christ's work – Rom 3:24-26, Eph 1:7
- e. No need for confession, penance, if justification is by faith w/o works – Rom 3:28, 5:1

*What if you sin again after justification?*

- i. Don't build up a religion for sin again- Gal 2:17-21
- ii. If we are doing penance, Christ died in vain – Gal 2:21
- iii. If the Christian life is confessing sin, then we are stuck in Rom 3:20, 6:1, 7:24
- iv. *Should we have a contrite spirit?* Yes, Col 3:12, 1Tim 1:15, Rom 5:8, Titus 3:2-5
- v. *Should we feel guilt/shame for sin?* Yes, Eph 4:30, 2Th 3:14, 1Cor 5:2, 2 Co 7:9
- vi. *Do we have peace w/God, love, joy, hope of glory?* Yes, by grace through Jesus Christ our Lord - Rom 5:2,21, 8:1-2

## **6. Crucified With Christ**

- a. Instead of confession, you need crucified with Christ.
  - i. Dead with Christ = dead to sin, do not serve sin, freed from sin – Rom 6:2, 6-7
  - ii. Crucified = you are cut off from the body of the sins of the flesh – Col 2:11
  - iii. Alive with Christ, all trespasses are forgiven already – Col 2:13, 3:13, Eph 4:32
- b. Acc. to the mystery, we cannot lose fellowship with Christ - Eph 3:9, 1Co 1:9, Rom 8:34
- c. Confessionals need closed for the Christian who is complete in Christ - Col 2:10, 18-23