

The Most Important Confession

Romans 10:9-15

Intro

I assume everyone knows the show “Everybody Loves Raymond.” The person who plays the role of Raymond’s wife is the actress Patricia Heaton. She is a Christian and she believes that Jesus reveals our allegiance. She said, “I think Jesus is a scary subject. God you can make into anything you want. But confronted with Jesus you have to say, ‘I believe that or I don’t.’ It’s very powerful.”

(Source: Submitted by Bill White, Paramount, California)

Jesus reveals our allegiance. How true. Let’s look at a passage in the bible that speaks about this truth.

Confess

Romans 10:9 says, “*That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*”

This verse is a powerful statement of truth.

To understand the powerful statement of confessing of Romans 10:9, we must first look at who this letter was originally written to—the Christians in Roman. We must understand that according to Roman law only Caesar could be called “Lord.” In fact, there was a whole cult of Caesar worship.

In Latin, Roman believers would declare: “*Dominum Iesum!*” (Jesus is Lord!). Paul understood that for the Roman to publicly declare “Jesus is Lord” was a state felony often prosecuted with torture and often with death. Romans and others in the empire declaring Jesus as Lord were beheaded, crucified, and ripped apart by animals in the Roman arena. For those believers living in Rome, saying “Jesus is Lord” was synonymous with saying: “I am ready to be persecuted, tortured, and die for Jesus’ namesake.” You see only Caesar was Lord to the Romans, not Jesus - it would be treason.

I believe the power of saying “Jesus is Lord” has been lost in our culture of compromise. Certainly I am not saying that all Christians are guilty of this, but certainly many who claim to be. When I look at the history of the persecuted church, I see that the meaning of this verse does not escape those early believers. Consider, for example, the fate of the apostles. Here is how they died:

- Peter – was crucified upside down.
- Andrew – was crucified on an x-shaped cross.
- James – was killed with a sword. (Acts 12:1-2)
- John - died of natural causes, but still suffered immensely for his faith. He was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Domitian. According to Tertullian, John had been put into a cauldron of boiling oil in Rome, but suffered no injury.
- Philip – he too was crucified.
- Bartholomew – was beaten and crucified.
- Thomas – was speared to death in India.
- Matthew – was axed to death with a halberd.
- James, son of Alphaeus – was clubbed to death at the age of 94.
- Thaddaeus or Judas Lebbaeus – was also crucified.
- Simon Zelotes – another crucified.
- Paul of Tarsus – was beheaded.
- Matthias – was stoned and beheaded also.

What did it really cost those in the Roman empire to say: Jesus is Lord? It meant imprisonment, torture and death. Not only the Apostles but many Christians in the first 4 centuries and throughout the ages have suffered and died for confessing Jesus is Lord.

Certainly, you do not have to experience fierce persecution to embrace the Lordship of Jesus in your life. We do, however, need to keep in mind the following verses: "*Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*" (2 Tim 3:12).

That if you confess with your mouth (Rom. 10:9)

- To confess (homologeo) is to acknowledge or declare. To declare openly by way of speaking out freely, such confession being the effect of deep conviction of facts.

- Confessing Jesus as Lord is openly professing a relationship with Him and dependence on Him.
- It means standing by Him in all circumstances because He is the believer's own sovereign and ruler.
- It is paying the highest allegiance and commitment to your leader and master of your life.

- A person's word was trustworthy and it was a verbal promise and a contract to be kept & fulfilled.
- There was honour in a person's word. Today we have lost that.
- Professing Christ as Lord was hazardous - it would cost one's life.
- Confessing Jesus as Lord would be an act of treason because Caesar was Lord.
- Also to the religious Jews only God/Yahweh was Lord not Jesus - it would be blasphemous.

In Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus says, "*Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.*"

*Verbal confession therefore is a reassuring of faith.

Submitting to Christ's Lordship is such an integral part of salvation.

We read in 1 Cor. 12:3, "*Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*"

When the Holy Spirit brings faith and salvation to a heart, that heart proclaims the Lordship of Christ.

And believe in your heart (Rom. 10:9)

- Believe means to trust and rely.

- It's not just an assent of understanding but the consent of the will.

- God does not ask merely for intellectual acknowledgement to dogma but for personal commitment to Jesus as Lord.

In the book of James 2:19 we read, "*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*" James teaches that demons acknowledge truth about God. In a purely factual sense, they are completely orthodox in their theology. James' point is that people can hold such belief that is theologically correct but that does not include receiving Jesus as Lord.

People may be well aware of their sin, be under deep conviction about it, and even have an emotional sense of guilt from which they long to be delivered. But they do not repent and forsake the sin that causes the guilt, nor do they trust in Christ who can forgive and remove the sin.

In other words, some people can hold to good theology. Lead a moral life, acknowledge their sin,

desire eternal life, be very religious and yet go to hell.

Jesus encountered such superficial and false believers early in His ministry.

We read in John 2:23-24, *“Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people.”*

Those people apparently acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah and they believed that His supernatural powers were from God. But they did not submit themselves to Him as their Lord and Saviour.

That was also the response of the rich young ruler who appeared willing to do what Jesus told him in order to inherit eternal life – except acknowledge his sin and repent, as well as relinquish the riches which were his first love and then serve Jesus as Lord (Matthew 19:16-22).

Submitting to Christ’s Lordship is such an integral part of salvation. When the Holy Spirit brings faith and salvation to a heart, that heart proclaims the Lordship of Christ.

Is Jesus Lord of your life? Who sits on the throne of your life?

Are you ashamed to confess Christ before people?

I would like to share with you two well known people who were bold to make a public confession of their faith in Christ.

Conclusion

C.S. Lewis was one of the greatest literary writers of the 20th century. He was also professor at Oxford in England, a very prestigious college. He had an incredible conversion experience from atheism to Christianity. But instead of simply entering a monastery, he did worse. He ended up publicly explaining and openly defending his personal God to millions of listeners and readers. Such undignified behavior embarrassed the hierarchy at his college at Oxford and cost Lewis his chance of ever advancing to a higher position on the faculty there. Lewis learned that if you speak about beauty, truth or goodness, and about God as a great spiritual force of some kind, people will remain friendly. But he found that the temperature drops when you discuss a God who gives definite commands, who does definite acts, who has definite ideas and character. Lewis’ confession of Jesus as his Lord and Saviour cost him from advancing up to greater heights in Oxford. But he was not ashamed and he confessed Christ openly. (Source: Kathryn Lindskoog)

Donna Douglas, Christian believer

You probably know her best as Elly Mae in the Beverly Hillbillies (that started in 1962 and went on to 1971; it aired nine years). But Donna was a bold witness for Christ. It was said by her friend that Donna had a heart for the Lord and she was not ashamed in talking about her faith. She was very selective in the roles she chose to act, that they were decent and family rated. She passed away Jan. 1, 2015 at the age of 81. Till her last few years she gave a wonderful testimony of her faith in Christ. She was not ashamed of confessing Christ openly.

To confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour is the most important confession of all!