

CONFESSING CHRIST

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9-10

One of the most astonishing things of life is that so many people have lived as long as they have, "without God and without hope." Whether you think about life in this world or in the world to come, the greatest question that you will ever put to yourself or anybody else, the greatest business you will ever be called upon to transact is, and the greatest concern of your soul ought to be, "How can I with all my sin and all the indecencies of my life be justified in the sight of God and be saved from eternal death and hell?". Some of you are concerned about a hundred other things, but you had better be concerned about this one most important thing of all. And you had better neglect anything else than to neglect the salvation of your soul. You had better neglect your business, your lodge, your family, your health, or anything else than to neglect the way of getting right with God. If there is any way to get right. And there is a way. God has given it to us. It's His own prescription. It's His own remedy for our disease. I come to ask you to take it. If you refuse to take it, you cannot blame anyone but yourself for the consequences. The reason that some of you are so far away from God and in such a miserable plight is that you have been taking the devil's dope or medicine. You will never get any better until you cease taking the devil's medicine. But if you want health of soul and the salvation that God has worked out for you, let's see what God says we must do to get it. That we find expressed in our text.

This text contains two parts: Belief and Confession. To separate the two and to look for an independent meaning in each is a mistake; a heart believing unto righteousness and a mouth making confession unto salvation are not really two things, but two sides of the same thing. The two sides of the precious unity are inseparable and mutually indispensable. This is the order:---- belief with the heart first, and confession with the mouth afterwards. The latter is the natural result of the former.

Concerning belief, the text says, "If thou shalt believe in thine heart." Belief is with the heart. When we talk about the heart of man we usually mean the affections or emotions, but to the Jew the heart represented the whole spiritual man. According to the Old Testament, the heart is the source of all moral action, the source of the affections and purposes, and a symbol even of the mind and will. So Paul practically affirms that man believes with the whole of his nature. Not only his intellect and emotions and affections, but the whole nature in all its scope and powers are all taken up into this righteousness. The center of belief is in Christ and His resurrection. To confess Jesus as Lord implies a true faith in the incarnate, risen, and ascended Christ.

A belief in the heart always manifests itself in two ways:--

- (1) By an absolute trust in the objects of its faith. You can believe all you want to about Jesus Christ, and go to hell with your head full of belief like that. It's believing on Him in your heart that saves you because it's that kind of belief that leads you to trust Him and commit yourself to Him in order to be saved.

Alexander the Great had a favorite doctor who went with him in all the battles and someone who was jealous of him and wanted to get him out of the way wrote Alexander a letter saying that his doctor was going to put poison in his cup the next morning. He thought the Great General would order him put to death at once, but instead of that the next morning when they were all together Alexander read the letter before them, and before the doctor could reply he seized the cup and drained it before their eyes to show

his friend, the doctor, that he believed on him with all his heart, and was ready to trust his life in his hands.

- (2) The other way that a belief in the heart manifests itself is in the life. The fellow who believes in his heart and then confesses with his mouth is the fellow who delivers the goods. The fellow who believes in his head and confesses with his mouth is the fellow Jesus was talking to when he said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things that I say?". A man can believe in his head and you'll never know it unless he tells you with his mouth, but when a man believes in his heart his life will speak louder than any words can sound.

"If thou shalt believe in thine heart." Believe what? "That God hath raised Him from the dead;" raised Jesus up out of the grave. The resurrection of Jesus is the keystone of the Christian faith; you knock that out and the whole arch will come down with a crash. It is because of Who He is and what He has done that you shall be saved if you believe in your heart and trust yourself to Him.

There is no other way. A lot of people think it can be done by morality and culture and respectability, but that is all in their imagination. They are like the old Spaniard, Ponce de Leon, who hunted around down among the Florida Everglades and thought he was going to find a fountain that would give him perpetual youth when he drank the waters. The wrinkles were to smooth, the gray hair to become black, and the bent shoulders to straighten up. But did he find it? No. Why? Because it was only the hallucination of a deluded imagination. It was only in his mind. Likewise, some of you poor, deluded unbelievers imagine you are going to find salvation for your souls in paying your debts, and being decent, and keeping out of jail, but you can just search for it till you are gray-haired and wrinkled, and you will never find it. There is just one way to be saved according to our text.

Then, when a man believes, it's time for him to make his confession. Paul says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus." And when a man believes, really believes in his heart, you are not going to have any trouble getting out of him a confession with his mouth, or any other way that God asks him to make it. This is true because he realizes that Jesus Christ is well entitled to it, both for what He is and what He has done. He is also made conscious of the fact that confession is one of the required and reasonable evidences of faith. Also, he realizes that confession distinguishes the believer from the world. In other words, true confession is a proof of regeneration.

The Bible puts confession right along side of belief. God makes one fully as important as the other. God expects a man to stand up for his belief. God expects a man to stand up for Jesus Christ if he believes in Him. Christ said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven." Dwight L. Moody told a story of an incident which happened in one of his meetings which illustrates the very thing that Christ is talking about in this passage. Mr. Moody said that in his meeting many had given their testimonies when a Norwegian boy stood up and in broken English said, "If I tell the world about Christ, He will tell His Father about me." I am glad that Christ expects us to confess Him. I am glad that Christ says that we have to confess Him before men. I wouldn't give much for anyone who won't stand up for what he believes, and won't shout for it too. I like to think of that enthusiastic Irishman who was incessantly shouting for his own country: "Hurrah for Ireland!". One day when there was a bunch of them together and something was

said that started Pat and he shouted, "Hurrah for Ireland! Hurrah for Ireland!", there was an Englishman there who had stood it about as long as he could, and when Pat broke out this time the Englishman in disgust said, "Oh, hurrah for hell!" "That's right", said Pat, "I've my own for his own country." I like to see a fellow stand up for what he believes.

I. How Does Christ Expect A Man To Confess Him?

1. With his lips.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Christ expects us to speak up for Him and not be ashamed. I realize that it is not the easiest thing to do, but the Lord demands that we make a public confession of our faith.

2. In Baptism

Baptism does not save us, but we are commanded to "Repent and be baptized." So baptism is essential to obedience. Baptism is a symbol of a spiritual operation and it is a sign of obedience to the word of God.

3. By Joining the Church

The church is the only institution that Christ ever founded, and if we are Christians and have any regard for Christ we will get in the church and carry on in the ranks with our fellow-~~men~~ Christians.

4. With His Life

That goes without saying. It is the hypocrites in the church that invite suspicion on the whole crowd. It would be much better for the cause of Christ if some people did not make any confession at all until they are willing to back it up with a decent life. [If "what you are speaks so loud people can't hear what you say", then shut off the hot air and give God a chance at your hypocritical old heart and maybe He can do something yet for you before hell gets hold of you.]

II. Why Does The Lord Demand A Public Confession Of Faith?

1. For your own sake

Confessing Christ will strengthen your faith and give you a little spiritual nerve. A number of people want to be Christians. At least they think they do. They say they do. But they have a prejudice against coming out in the public. But it is the only way. Jesus Christ hung on the cross in public for us, and I think we can well afford to stand up in public for Him. If you only knew what it would mean for you to confess Christ, the satisfaction it would bring you, and the respect you would have for yourself, and the nerve it would give you, and the spiritual tonic it would be you would not waste any more time in confessing Him.

2. For the sake of others

When the ~~Chief~~ ^{watched down the} Justice of the Court of Appeals in the state of New York ~~aisle~~ in Rochester when Finney was preaching during the 1830's it was a signal for a break in the ranks, and every lawyer in the city before many nights had done the same thing, and that was the beginning of that great revival which swept over 150,000 souls into the kingdom, and whose influence has been felt all down the decades to our own time. You may not have an influence like that, but someone is watching you, and your example is worth more than you estimate. It is worth everything to you to stop and consider whether you are going to meet now the obligation that rests upon you, or whether you

are going to meet one day at the bar of God the responsibility for not doing it.

3. For Christ's Sake

When the inexorable justice of God demanded that you should die, and there was no hope for you, and hell stared you in the face, Jesus stepped in and took the blow for you, and yet some of you haven't had the manhood and womanhood to acknowledge Him, and you would like to sneak into the kingdom of God when so many people wouldn't know it.

you ought to confess Him. you ought to acknowledge Him. you ought to thank God for the opportunity of standing up for Jesus Christ. Don't be a coward. God is displeased with a coward, and He is calling on you now to show what kind of material you have in you. If you stand for Him here, He will stand for you in the judgment. Will you stand for Him? Then, do it now. All heaven is urging you on; all hell is trying to hold you back. God help you to make no mistake.

we are the only people on earth who are ashamed of their religion. You cannot find a man who holds any false doctrine of religion who is not proud of it. ---- A man who is in the service of Satan is not ashamed of it. You hear such men swearing on the street, proclaiming who is their master every day; they seem to be proud of the devil and to like to have everyone know that they are servants of his.

You see it is with the heart man believeth, and the next step is to confess him with the mouth; that is what the mouth is for--to confess Christ; to tell all that he has done for you.

Now there is nothing to hinder this whole audience from coming out on the Lord's side tonight, and confessing Jesus Christ to be their Savior; there is nothing but your will to prevent it. Satan has not the power to keep you from it if you will. Christ says, except a man become converted and like a little child he is not fit for the kingdom of God. Pride, I think, is the worst enemy we have. It keeps thousands of people out of the kingdom of God.----- A young convert got up in one of our meetings and tried to preach; he could not preach very well either, but he did the best he could--but some one stood up and said, "Young man you cannot preach; you ought to be ashamed of yourself." Said the young man, "So I am, but I am not ashamed of my Lord." That is right. Do not be ashamed of Christ--of the man that bought us with His own blood. Ought we to be ashamed to speak for His cause, to take our stand on His side? He might well be ashamed of us, for ten thousand reasons which I could show. But the idea of a poor, miserable, vile, blind, hell-deserving sinner being ashamed to own Christ. It is the strangest thing in the world.

12th chapter of Luke, the 8th and 9th verses:

Faith in the heart is that which will produce confession with the mouth.

"If thou shalt believe." It is of immense importance that we understand and realise the fact that all real faith lies in the heart. It does not dwell in the understanding; it does not lie in the province of the intellect; it is not the result of reasoning; no education will give it: it is in the affections. Faith is the belief of the heart. But why does God say, "Believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead?"

1. The resurrection is the seal of all.
2. That resurrection of Christ is our resurrection. We rise in Him, now, with a newness of life; presently, to a life in glory.

This kind of faith has in it the element of committal. It means leaning with all your weight on Jesus. It means venturing your all on the atoning blood of the Lamb. It means staking everything on the Word of a faithful God. It means risking much but gaining more. The soul that takes such a risk will never be let down. "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit," says Isaiah. To bring back a soul from thence means something. What kind of a faith is yours? Has it saved you? Mine has! It has saved me! Once I was blind, and now I can see.

Rom. 10:10. That is just what they say about us. They say that we Christians have allowed our hearts to run away with our heads--that we are very fond of enjoying our emotions and our affections, but are lax about exact thinking. So they go on to declare that our religion is little better than a sentiment, and that in it we are not seekers ~~of~~ for truth, but seekers after feeling.

None the less, I believe that St. Paul meant what he said. He knew that the kind of belief that really saves is belief of the heart; that what really matters about a man or a woman is what he or she loves; that in the conflict between head and heart the heart will always have the last word. And I believe he thought of Christianity as a supreme appeal by God to man addressed fundamentally to the heart. to the affections, to our capacity to love

And believe in thy heart, not a mere intellectual assent and belief, but a deeply fixed, cordial, loving faith, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved from death and have eternal life.

The statement of the preceding verse is explained by what occurs in actual experience. The apostle now naturally puts faith and confession in the order in which they take place. For with the heart man believeth, or For with the heart faith is exercised, unto righteousness in justification. But this is not enough. Faith must be followed by confession, without which it is but a dead faith. And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, unto its complete attainment. As faith manifests itself in confession and a life of obedience, so true confession implies faith. ---- Thus "the end of your faith" is "the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9).

The Lord when on earth among the Jews asked that they confess Him publicly; the Spirit still asks this.

Believeth unto righteousness. To believe unto righteousness is a believing which obtains righteousness, and to this faith of the heart must be added the confession of the mouth, in order to a full salvation.

"With the heart faith is exercised unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The confession of Christ is indispensable, for without it the evidence of justifying faith in the heart is incomplete.

If one believes with the heart, that belief brings him into righteousness, right standing before God, and if now he confesses openly in his life his adherence to Jesus, that confession leads on to the final salvation. Thus salvation is resolved into its two elements, a heart trust that provokes a true confession of his name. And yet the two are one; for confession without belief is either self-deception or hypocrisy, while trust without confession may be cowardice (John 19:38).

The tenth verse presents the words in the order of experience.

It is not the affections as distinguished from the intellect. Believing with the heart is in contrast with oral confession, not with intellectual belief. "Believing is a mode of thinking not of feeling.

"Confession is just faith turned from its obverse side to its reverse. When faith comes forth from its silence to announce itself, and to proclaim the glory and the grace of the Lord, its voice is confession."

The idea is the same, the confession of Jesus as Lord as in I Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11. No Jew would do this who had not really trusted Christ, for Kurios in the LXX is used of God. No Gentile would do it who had not ceased worshipping the emperor as Kurios. The word Kurios was and is the touchstone of faith. And shalt believe. Same construction. Faith precedes confession, of course.

With the mouth, Confession; with the heart, Belief. There are, says St. Paul, in the act of faith two moments, that of believing, that of confessing; they are two and not one.

There is centre and there is circumference, there is fact and the name which echoes the fact, -----lastly, there is the life of the soul, which is our faith, and there is the language whereby we live it, which is our creed.

Now, if a man really believes in his heart, the next thing he ought to do is to confess Christ, is it not? ----- The fact of the matter is that we are all moral cowards; we are ashamed to come out and confess Christ and take our stand on the Lord's side, and on the side of His religion. It is the only religion in the world that is worth having; it is the only religion in the world that gives life to man; but strange to say, I believe

Advantages of Confessing Christ:

1. It strengthens faith.
2. It is an evidence of regeneration.
3. It is an indispensable condition of salvation because:-
 - (1) God requires it.
 - (2) Not to Confess is to deny.
 - (3) Denial ~~is~~ implies want of faith and devotion.

Confession is but the necessary result of belief--the demonstration and exhibition. It is but faith showing itself in speech, even as works are but belief showing itself in action.

The man of the world finds it hard to understand how professing Christians can believe while their actions remain unaffected by their belief.

The object of faith:

1. In Christ as incarnate.
2. Faith in His life.
3. In His death.
4. In His Resurrection.
5. In His Ascension.

There must be no confession where there is not a believing. To profess what you have not is to make yourself a deceptive traitor, who pretends to be carrying on a very large business while he has no stock and no capital. To make a profession, without having a possession, is to be a cloud without rain--a river bed without water, a mere play-actor, a rotten tree, green on the outside but inwardly only fit to be tinder for the devil's tinder-box.

Conclusion:

1. Remember how dishonorable it is to say you believe and yet not to make confession. You are like a rat behind the wainscoat, coming out just now and then when nobody is looking and then running behind again. What! Is Christ to be treated as if His name were a thing to be avowed in holes and corners? No, in the face of the sun let it be said, "I do love Jesus who gave Himself for me."
2. How honorable will the confession be to you.
3. It will make you useful.
A secret Christian is a candle under a bushel, salt without savor
4. Grace is sufficient.
If grace puts you upon a pinnacle of the temple, depend upon it, grace will keep you there.
5. The reward is splendid.
"He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my father which is in heaven."