



agreement

Washington, the seat of federal government here in the United States, has spoiled for us the New Testament concept of confession. For, at its heart, confession is not so much spilling one's guts over a wrong done, but agreeing with God that it is, indeed, wrong.

In Washington (as, I am sure, in seats of government around the world), agreement means that two or more sides have banged their heads together long enough, and sufficiently whittled away at each other's bargaining points to reach a grudging compromise called an "agreement." They have agreed to compromise. They have each agreed that their opponent is more wrong than they, but are willing to fudge the numbers, give a little and take a little, so they both can stand before a tangle of microphones and declare an "agreement."

When I was a little kid, my dad and I didn't negotiate a compromise on right and wrong. We didn't put our heads together, give a little, take a little, then declare an agreement on what I should or shouldn't do. No, either I "agreed" with my dad's position, or I got a warmed backside. That was it. There was no negotiation; if I didn't agree that Dad was right, I was wrong.

The palaver in Washington D.C. is a poor illustration of biblical confession. My childhood relationship with my dad, however, is an excellent illustration of how we are to confess that God is right in all things.

Our heart grows cold to God when we stop agreeing with Him. It begins to thaw when we confess that His ways are right.

In the Beginning

Our relationship with Christ begins, in its earliest moments, with two aspects of confession that are difficult to separate. It is even a challenge to determine which occurs first, for they are inextricably interwoven.

We come to Christ the first time because the Holy Spirit has convicted us of our sin and, instead of rejecting His ministry—as, perhaps, we have done before—we agree with it. We answer back, “Yes, I agree with You. I am a sinner, and I am in need of someone greater than I.” And the Spirit replies, “I know just the One.” The Spirit introduces us to Jesus, and in His righteous presence we confess our sins, admitting that we, in our own efforts, have fallen short of the mark for salvation. In this we are agreeing with the Godhead that we are in need of a Savior outside of ourselves. As a result, we confess (agree) that Jesus is Lord, and our only Savior.

Realignment

For the first-time believer, confession is conversion. It is at the heart of a point of transition, a moving from one system (the world’s) to another (God’s).

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through [Jesus Christ] is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Acts 13:38-39 NKJV

For the one who believes already, however, confession is *realignment*. It is a return.

“But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”’

“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

Luke 15:17-24

Confession, for the believer, is a renewal of grace, for it reacquaints us with the forgiveness of the One who never left us, but who waits patiently for our return.

Man is, at heart, a forgetful soul. He too easily forgets the joy of communion, and abandons it in favor of a cheap, tawdry substitute. The flesh is constantly tugging him in a wrong direction, off the path of righteousness and light, down a dark and dismal path that leads only to despair. The flesh is patient; it will happily settle for small victories as it waits for larger ones to come. It rejoices in every stolen moment, every small step down the darker road.

For the believer, confession is an act of admission—admitting to God that he, the believer, has been wrong and that He, God, remains right. There is no negotiation. There is no bargaining. The resident Spirit moves in the erring believer, reminding him of the sweet communion he has left behind and, spirit to Spirit, there is agreement that the path being trod is one headed into darkness rather than light. Sin has occurred. Confession is required.

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:8-9

O, that we could live every day in sweet, unbroken communion with the Lord. O, that we would remember that nothing, *nothing* is better than that. But until The Day, we remain flesh, and flesh will always yearn for the shadows.

Confession is the believer’s yearning to return to the light. It is agreeing with God that we have been on the wrong path, that our heart has grown cold to Him.

God’s continuing grace is His warming, thawing response.

*Saviour, 'tis a full surrender,
All I leave to follow Thee;
Thou my Leader and Defender
From this hour shalt ever be.*

*As I come in deep contrition,
At this consecrated hour,
Hear, O Christ, my heart's petition,
Let me feel the Spirit's power!*

*No withholding—full confession;
Pleasures, riches, all must flee;
Holy Spirit, take possession!
I no more, but Thou in me.*

*Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Oh, the peace of love divine!
Oh, the bliss of consecration!
I am His, and He is mine.*

Rebecca S. Pollard

NEXT WEEK: Grace