

From the Ashes - Confession

#1. Jesus experienced temptation of every kind and was able to overcome it.

#2. When we choose to exercise humility, we look most like Christ to the world around us. Our example was the washing of the disciples feet...

#3. Confession is the process of recognition of sin, turning from it, and experiencing the forgiveness of God.

Prayer: "God, I confess today that I have made decisions that have broken my relationship with you and others. Forgive me for the mistakes I have made. Free me from shame and guilt that I may walk in the newness of life that you offer me in your Son. May my life be transparent before you and may you help me to live my life with wisdom."

Big Idea: Confession is the process of recognition of sin, turning from it, and experiencing the forgiveness of God.

- Having a regular practice of ***searching our lives*** and *coming into the light*
- Can cultivate a life full of ***grace and mercy*** -
- As we ***rise from the ashes*** of *past sins* and *poor decision* in our lives.

Proverbs 28:13 - *Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.* Prov. 28:13 – ref. 1 John 1:9

1 John 1:8:10 - ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

- **The false teachers denied that sin breaks fellowship with God because they denied even having a sinful nature, so they also denied that their conduct involved any sin at all.**
- **That lie ignores one basic truth: All people are sinners by nature and by practice.**
- **At conversion, all our sins are forgiven – past, present, and future.**

- Yet even after we become Christians, we still sin and still need to **confess it**.
- This kind of **confession** is **not** offered to gain God's acceptance but to **remove the barrier to fellowship** that our sin puts between us and him.
- Many people find it ***difficult to admit*** their faults and shortcomings, to God.

To recognize our sinful weakness takes **humility and honesty**, and most would rather **pretend** that they are fine.

- But we need not fear revealing our sins to God – ***he knows them already***.
- **He will not** push us away, no matter what we've done.
- Instead, **he will draw us to himself**.

The false teachers refused to **take sin seriously**.

- They wanted to be considered Christians, but they saw ***no need to confess*** and ***repent*** of their sin.

Confession frees us to enjoy fellowship with Christ.

- It should ease our consciences, take away our shame, and lighten our burden of guilt.

In **admitting our sins** and receiving Christ's cleansing, we are agreeing with God that we are turning from it, not concealing them, and relying on His power!

Intro: Share **my personal story from childhood** about a time I just could not bring myself to **confess** to wrongdoing for **fear of the consequences**.

I remember as a kid one time when I **broke a neighbor's window** playing baseball and I was terrified to tell my parents for **fear of their reaction...**

- **Admitting failure is difficult.**
- ***Confessing and coming clean when we are at fault is not an easy task.***

I'm sure many of you here today have a similar story to the one I just shared.

Honestly, we probably all have numerous stories that sound eerily similar.

Thankfully, **the stories end differently when God gets involved**.

Hebrews 12:1 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

- **With God**, we are promised forgiveness when we confess our sins.
- When ***we bring ourselves into the light*** we are able to live free, unburdened, or hindered by **the sin that so easily entangles**
- So that **we can run the race** set before us...

Confession is the **3rd topic of our 5 weeks** together in our journey to **abundant life**.

Obviously, Jesus led a sinless life so we won't see any specific examples from His life including sin.

Because of ***Jesus' sinless life and humble sacrifice*** we can experience **the unrestrained forgiveness** of the Father over our sin.

As I said in week 1, ***you are not broken beyond repair.***

Jesus is ***the reason we can confess*** and ***experience forgiveness*** in our lives.

This divine ***forgiveness*** is truly ***amazing grace*** and it is ***such a different response*** to **our wrongdoing** than what many of us ***grew up experiencing.***

Our teaching today is going to follow the story of ***an arrogant son*** and his journey ***from the ash heap*** back to ***the arms of his father.***

-----Main Teaching-----

I. **We Squander It All** - ***This story is where most of our stories begin. We are convinced we know how to run our lives better than God does.***

- We take ***all he has given us*** and ***we waste it*** on living however we want.
- We make ***bad decisions*** and ***hurt ourselves*** and ***others*** in the process.

This is also the story of the younger son, ***the prodigal son;***

Luke 15:11-13 - The Parable of the Lost Son - ¹¹ Jesus continued: *“There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.*

- The word used here for wild living is only used once in the New Testament.
- It describes an extravagantly wasteful lifestyle.
- *It may seem like the right thing* for a time...
- After all, the younger son, he was only spending his rightful inheritance.
- **Eventually**, the money runs out, the parties come to an end, and the nerves wear thin.
- It’s at this point **we realize we’ve squandered it all**.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah; Isaiah 53:6 - *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way;*

- That’s not the end of *the prodigal’s story* nor is it the end of ours.
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II. No Longer Worthy - Continuing in Luke 15 we read; **Luke 15:14-20** - ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

There needs to be a time in each of our lives where we simply come to our senses and realize that –

Our life will never be what it was meant to be *apart from the Father.*

- ***My prayer is that none of you here*** have to lose everything, become shattered, or have your dreams reduced to ashes...

The good news is,

- ***We are able to make the decision*** to head home at any time.
- Some of us simply have to come to the end of our worth -
- And realize that ***in Christ alone*** we are found **worthy before the Father.**
- **Not based upon anything** we can or cannot do -
- But based upon the finished work of **Christ on the cross.**

As the younger son reaches his end, ***look at the confession*** he was practicing:

- ***“Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you...”***
- **He recognizes the depravity of his life**
- **He understands his sin** not only touches his earthly father but **His heavenly Father** as well.

II. Alive Again – Luke 15:20-24 - ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

- This is one of the most **beautiful scenes of compassion** in the entire Bible.
- The younger son reaches the bottom and begins heading home.

Even while he's still a long way from home, his father sees him and **RUNS** out to meet him.

- You can almost hear the son's muffled apology coming through the sound of his father's warm embrace and smothering kisses.
- The younger man's humility, confession, and willingness to return home after having lost everything says a lot about his true character.
- Yes, he was physically starved and yes he was in a foreign land ***with nothing to show***.

There at rock bottom, What really mattered became clear to him.

- **The abundance** of food, mercy, compassion, warmth, etc... of his father's house called him home.

How many of us need to ***humble ourselves*** this morning, confess our sin against God and others, and **return to the Father?**

CLOSE:Application - Pastor - ***share my own story of repentance and faith...***

The whole point of sharing is to set up the opportunity to ***invite others to confess and repent***.

Let me ask you, ***what's keeping you from the Father today?***

Anger? - Unforgiveness? - Offense? - Unmet expectations? - Past hurts?

What can be confessed, repented of, and healed today?

James 5:16 - ¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. ***The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.***

As Christians, our most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer.

Come home today. Let's pray together.