

## Restoration – Confession

The New Bible Dictionary states that the word ‘confess’ has a twofold reference. There is confession of faith and confession of sin. On the one hand, confession means to declare publicly a personal relationship with and allegiance to God. It is an act of open joyful commitment made to God in the presence of the world, by which a congregation or individuals bind themselves in loyalty to God or Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it means to acknowledge sin and guilt in the light of God’s revelation, and is thus generally an outward sign of repentance and faith.

We have already looked at “Restoration – Returning to the Word of God”. If we return to the Word of God this will lead us to confess what we have not obeyed in His word. Confession is a vital aspect of our restoration.

Confession is a verbal expression of faith. It is saying what you believe in your heart.

Nehemiah 9: 1 – 38

### 1) Repentance and Confession go side by side (vs. 1 – 5)

- The word “confession” is used once in Ezra and once in Nehemiah.
  - Ezra 10: 10 - 11 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt. <sup>11</sup> Now make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives."
  - NE 9:1 - 3 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. <sup>2</sup> Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. <sup>3</sup> They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God.
- In both instances confession is a sign of repentance – a turning around from the lifestyle that they had been living that wasn’t pleasing to God to a lifestyle that would be pleasing to God.
- The people were wearing sackcloth and put dust on their heads. Without humility there will be no confession.
  - Humility is the willingness to be seen for who we really are. Pride will never confess sin or any wrong doing as it is ashamed to be seen as in the wrong in any way.
- Confession is a vital part of restoration.
  - James 5:13 – 16 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
  - Confession brings issues into the light so that they can be dealt with. Keeping them a secret keeps us in bondage. People can only be blackmailed if they have something to hide.

- If we have anger resentment and bitterness we need to confess it and verbally express forgiveness to the person who hurt you. If you can't do it to the person then pray and express it to God. However the more direct the confession to the one who hurt you the quicker you healing and restoration will be.
- Confess your sins to each other.
  - Does this mean that we need to stand up in front of the church and confess all our sins?
  - No. There are immature people sitting in the church who will abuse what you say.
  - Find a prayer partner who you can trust and build an open relationship with that person to the point of being able to confess sins to him/her. Along with confession pray for each other for complete healing.

## 2) The Prayer of Confession (vs. 5b – 36)

- Acknowledge who God is (vs. 5b – 6)
  - You alone are God
  - You are the creator of all things
  - You are the giver of life
  - You are worthy of all worship
- Acknowledge the ways that God chose and cared for His people in the past (vs. 7 – 15)
  - God made a covenant with Abram and kept his promise
  - God saw the suffering of His people in Egypt and rescued them
  - God led them through the Red Sea
  - God gave them the Law
- Acknowledge how God remained faithful to His people even when they went astray (vs. 16 – 21)
  - God did not desert His people when they made the golden calf
  - He still led the way with the pillars of fire and cloud and fed them manna in the desert
  - Even their clothes and shoes did not wear out
- Acknowledge how God kept His promise to His people in giving them what He promised (vs. 22 – 25)
  - He gave them the promised land
- Acknowledge that God disciplines his people when they are disobedient (vs. 26 – 30)
  - God handed His people over to their enemies who oppressed them
  - God abandoned them to their hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them
- Acknowledge that God is merciful but that He is also just (vs. 31 – 37)
  - “But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.” (v. 31)
  - In all that has happened to us you have been just.” (v. 33)

## 3) Confession leads to commitment to serve God (v. 38 (and 10: 30 – 39)

- Make a commitment to stop doing that which is displeasing to God and do what pleases Him even if it is a sacrifice.