

On Confession

Psalm 130 || *Pastor Russ Hightower* || 26 April 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What gave you joy today?

Worship: 1 John 1:8-10 (*Read aloud three times, spend time in reflection listening for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for Psalm 130

Why Do We Need Confession? (v1-2) – Fear and guilt are endemic to the human condition. Deep down, we know this because things are not as they should be. There is a brokenness about us. We sin. And we need to be rescued from all of this because we cannot save ourselves. We are drowning, desperately in need of God's mercy.

What Confession Is Not (v3) ...And What It Is (v4,7-8) – One great fear about confession is that we will be rejected. At our most vulnerable – just when we've been humbled enough to face the depths of our sin – we fear God will withhold His mercy. We accept that our sins bear a real cost, and we start believing no one could forgive us (let alone love us) because of them. But the language of confession isn't self-loathing. True, no one can live up to God's standard. But the point is that we are drowning, and the Good News and our hope is that we have a loving Father who has come to rescue and redeem us, whose love is bigger than our brokenness. Confession is therefore an awakening, returning to seeing things with God's perspective. It's recognition that God has already done everything necessary to save and heal us... and being left in awe of His staggering greatness.

What It Does (v5-6) – As we feel the power of God's love for us, reverence takes root in our hearts. For even when we are unfaithful to Him, God's promise is to be faithful to us. His love is truly unfailing. All of this points to the Gospel, where Jesus atoned for our brokenness. Here, we find hope and assurance. Confession is no longer a compulsion of guilt but a liberating, joyful act in response to the cross. And because of this hope, confession offers us: Patience. Because God has ultimate patience with us, we can always be more patient. Freedom to be honest about ourselves, free from criticism – both personally and with the world – because God has redeemed us.

Discussion Questions (*It's better to wrestle deeply with a few good questions than to gloss over many.*)

- What is confession and why do we need it? What is confession not?
 - What does the language and emotion of true confession look like?
 - Explain how the promise of forgiveness produces fear of the Lord?
 - From this Psalm, how does a person who fears the Lord respond to life's challenges?
 - Name the things we learn about God and His redemption in this Psalm and sermon?
 - Which verses give you hope and why?
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What Can We Be Praying For?

As a group read this prayer of confession together from the Book of Common Prayer. “Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.”

Engage & Experience

Incorporate an element of confession into your group prayer time and personal prayer time by using the acronym A.C.T.S. to pray. (**A**=adoration, **C**=confession, **T**=thanksgiving, **S**=supplication)