Confession Of Sin

Intro: As the preacher closes his sermon during most worship serves today, he extends the Lord’s invitation for all to come to Christ and receive rest Mat. 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”) In this invitation, he details what one must do become a Christian.

One must have faith; Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” John 8:24 “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

Upon his faith he must repent of his sins; Luke 13:3 “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

He must make a confession of his faith in Christ as God’s Son; Rom. 10:10 “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Acts 8:37 “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

He must be baptized in water for the remission of his sins; Mark 16:16 “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

He then extends the Lord’s invitation to those who are already children of God, yet have allowed sin to come back into their lives: they must confess and repent of their sins; Acts 8:22 “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

During the singing of the invitation song, a member of the congregation walks down the isle, a response card is given to that one who then states he desires to make confession of sins.

I. WHAT IS CONFESSION?
A. “Confess” comes from the Greek homologeo.
   1. It consist of two parts:
      a. homo which means same
      b. lego which means to speak
   2. Thus it means to speak the same thing.
B. In becoming a Christian, one must confess.
   1. Rom. 10:9-10 “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. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
      a. This is not a confession of sin but of Jesus as God’s Son.
      b. What do we mean that it is to speak the same thing?
2. God stated Jesus was/is His Son.
   a. Mat. 3:17 “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
   b. Mat. 17:5 “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

3. In our confession of our faith, we speak the same thing God said: Jesus is the Son of God.

4. We have some examples of this confession:
   a. Upon Jesus question as to Who His disciples believed Him to be; Mat. 16:16 “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
   b. The Ethiopian; Acts 8:36-37 “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

C. Confession of sin

1. This is the same idea from a different standpoint.
2. God states that man has sinned; we state that same thing, “I have sinned.”
   a. Gal. 3:22 “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

   (1) The Scripture is God’s Word; 2 Tim. 3:16 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

   (2) Thus, God’s conclusion and statement is that all have sinned.

3. We must know: What is sin?
   a. 1 John 3:4 “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”
   b. Transgression of the law involves 2 areas
      (1) Sins of commission
         (a) Doing something which God has stated not to do.
         (b) Committing (actively doing some deed or act) an act which is contrary to God’s Law.

      (2) Sins of omission.
         (a) Things which one fails to do which God has commanded him to do.
         (b) Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
4. All have sinned:
      (1) God told Adam and Eve: Gen. 2:17 “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
      (2) Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and gave to Adam who also ate of it.
      (3) They transgressed God’s law (sinned) in doing something God stated not to do.
      (4) We could observe all men committing sin in their life (except Jesus).
   b. All sin:
      (1) Psa. 14:2-3 “The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”
      (2) Rom. 3:10-12 “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”
      (3) Rom. 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”
   c. As we look at our own life, we see sin in our lives.
      (1) We conclude that “I have sinned.”
      (2) In this we are saying the same thing as God; we have confessed sin.

II. CONFESSION OF SIN

A. Confession prior to baptism is not a confession of sin.
   1. This is a confession of one’s faith that Jesus is God’s Son.
   2. Acts 8:37 “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
   3. Often we hear of one extending the invitation stating that one must make a confess of sins prior to baptism. This is false.
   4. 1 Tim. 6:12-13 “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 13I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;”
B. Once we become a Christian, it does not mean we will never commit a sin.
1. There is a difference between being a sinner and one committing an act of sin.
   a. A Christian is no longer a sinner.
   b. 1 John 3:9 “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
   c. The Christian is walking in the way of God, not Satan; Rom. 6:18, 22 “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.... 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”
2. Yet, a Christian will commit sins.
   a. In writing to people who were walking in the light:
   b. 1 John 1:8, 10 “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
3. What must one who is a Christian do when he commits sin and needs forgiveness?
C. A Christian who sins must repent.
1. Repentance has always been a necessary part of forgiveness.
   a. He became a Christian; Acts 8:13 “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.”
   b. After seeing the apostles impart miracles to others tried to buy that power for himself; Acts 8:18-19 “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.”
   c. Peter’s rebuke; Acts 8:20-21 “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”
   d. What he needed to do; Acts 8:22-23 “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”
4. Offenses will come:
   a. Woe to the person through whom they come; Luke 17:1-2 “Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were better
for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”

b. Luke 17:3-4 “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

(1) There is the condition of repentance for there to be forgiveness.

(2) If no repentance, then there is no forgiveness.

D. A Christian must confess.

1. John writes to Christians.
2. 1 John 1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
3. There is no sin relating to God; 1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
4. If we sin, we do not have fellowship with God; 1 John 1:6 “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:”
5. For one to have the continual cleansing from sin, he must walk in the light; 1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
6. Even though he is walking in the light, he will commit acts of sin; 1 John 1:8, 10 “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
7. The condition placed upon that continual cleansing is confession of sin.
   a. 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
   b. He must speak the same thing as God concerning our sin.

III. TO WHOM DO WE CONFESS

A. Roman Catholic Church teaches that we are to confess to the priest (Auricular Confession).

1. They misuse; Jam. 5:16 “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
2. This passage shows the error of the practice.
   a. It teaches to confess “one to another” not to a superior (the priest) while he does not confess to you.
   b. The Christian does not need a Catholic priest to approach God, since Christ is every Christian’s mediator.
c. This passage is one confessing their sins to another while that one is confessing his sins to you.

3. Guy N. Woods “There is nothing in the word ‘confess’ itself which indicates whether the confession is public or private; but the context in which it appears does, inasmuch as it is to one another; and this, by implication, means that the confession is to be as public as the sins committed.... *It is, therefore, a practical rule that the confession should be as public as the sin.*”

**B. Confession (repentance) should be as public as the sin.**

1. Mat. 5:23-24 “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

   a. One brother has sinned against another, so the sinned against brother has *ought* against him.

      (1) The one sinned against his brother is to go to that brother (not someone else) and make things right with him.

      (2) We are to make things right with that one whom we have wronged.

   b. The obligation does not change if we sin against a few brethren; we must make it right with those few.

   c. If the sin was of such a nature that it is impossible (from a practical standpoint) to go to every person we have sinned against, then the confession (repentance) would need to be public.

2. Mat. 18:15-16 “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

   a. A brother sins against me.

   b. I am to go to him (not someone else) and try to restore him to myself and God.

   c. If he confesses and repents, fellowship has been restored.

   d. The confession is to the one whom he has sinned against.

3. The one who commits sin is to confess to those against whom he has sinned.

   a. If the sin is against one person, the sinner confesses to that one person (and no one else).

   b. If the sin is against several, the sinner confesses to those people (and no one else).

4. Some sins are public in nature.

   a. An example of such would be when one fails to attend the worship services of the church.

      (1) It is a sin against God
(2) It is a sin against the church
(3) It is a sin before the unbelieving world.

b. In such cases, public confession of sin is necessary.
   (1) The one who has sinned is confessing to those who know
       the sin.
   (2) It would be impossible to go to each person against whom
       he has sinned.

IV. I HAVE SINNED
   A. We only find this exact phrase 19 times (KJV, and ASV).
   1. It is said by:
      a. Pharaoh
      b. Balaam
      c. Achan
      d. King Saul
      e. King David
      f. Shimei the son of Gera
      g. Job
         (1) Possibly
         (2) It appears as if Job is not actually saying that he has sinned,
             but instead challenging his friends to point out the sin in his
             life which would cause the difficulty which he is presently
             in, and that if he has sinned then why will God not forgive
             him and take away this evil
      h. Micah speaking for the remnant
      i. Judas
      j. The prodigal son
   2. The passages where it is found:
      a. Exo. 9:27
      b. Exo. 10:16
      c. Num. 22:34
      d. Jos. 7:20
      e. 1 Sam. 15:24, 30
      f. 1 Sam. 26:21
      g. 2 Sam. 12:13
      h. 2 Sam. 19:20
      i. 2 Sam. 24:10, 17
      j. 1 Chr. 21:8
      k. Job 7:20 (ASV has “If I have sinned”)
      l. Job 33:27
      m. Psa. 41:4
      n. Mic. 7:9
      o. Mat. 27:4
3. Few have stated it, and some of these who stated “I have sinned” were not sincere, as is evidenced by their lives.

B. Abuses of Confession of sin.

1. “If I have sinned.”
   a. One should know if they have sinned or not.
      (1) If they have not sinned in the matter, they should not be confessing sin.
      (2) If they have committed sin in the matter, they should not place it only in the realm of possibility.
      (3) If they have committed sin, they should admit they have sinned.
   b. This is often a way to save face.
      (1) To confessing sin, one must humble himself.
      (2) “I have sinned” is a statement of humility.
      (3) To say “If I have sinned” removes humility.
   c. The Scriptures teach us the need for humbling ourselves under God.
      (1) This causes one to realize his need for God.
      (2) That causes us to realize that God is holy and righteous, and man has transgressed that holy nature.
      (3) Putting confession in the “if” category says that it is possible that I have not transgressed God’s nature; making oneself as good and righteous as God.

2. “If I have offended someone, I am sorry.”
   a. This is often used by liberals when engaging in things for which there is no Bible authority.
      (1) If someone challenges what they are doing, they use this as if the person was personally offended.
      (2) They do not believe they have done anything wrong.
      (3) While we should all be offended by sin; they leave it in that area while ignoring the sin.
   b. This says we have done nothing wrong, only placating you.
   c. The president of a “Christian University”:
      (1) Upon being challenged about some of the unsound speakers on their lectureship.
      (2) He wrote that they “deeply regret the extent it may have offended or alienated our friends.”
      (3) He did not believe they had done anything wrong.
      (4) Those who challenged us are the ones who did wrong.
         (a) He was saying your sensibilities are not according to what is right.
         (b) They were wrong by having the men they had and should have repented and removed the speakers.
3. Some make public confession of sin instead of going to the individual against whom they have sinned and making it right with that person.
   a. They are trying to evade what God said to do.
   b. Mat. 5:23-24 “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”
   c. Many seem ashamed to go to the one against whom they have sinned and confess to them.
      (1) They find it easier to walk down the isle and make a public confession of sin.
      (2) They might think the person wronged will think less of them.
4. Making public confession of sin when there has been no public sin.
   a. This is often seen when there is an especially emotional sermon.
   b. While no public sin in their life, they respond out of emotion.
   c. Sometimes there is sin known only to God:
      (1) Public confession of sin is not necessary.
      (2) One should go to God in private prayer in those cases.
      (3) If public confession of sin was necessary for every sin (public and private) then basically everyone would have to respond at every service.
5. Some make public confession of sin when they do not think they have done anything wrong.
   a. I had one state that they had not committed any sin, yet had not attended services for over a year (but able to go other places).
   b. Some do this because they know it is expected of them.
      (1) Others believe they have sinned.
      (2) They do not believe they have, but will go ahead and make a public confession to satisfy others.
   c. Some have tried to force a confession from one who does not believe they have sinned.
      (1) Some preachers have threaten to ruin another if they did not confess because they believe he has sinned.
      (2) This often happens over personality conflicts or to support one preacher-friend over another.
      (3) We are not discussing when preachers do teach error or commit sin from which we must withdraw fellowship from them.
6. Some want to tell of the wrongs others have done to them instead of confessing their sin.
   a. Mat. 18:15-20 “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16But if he will not hear
thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18Verily I say unto you, Whosoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

b. The purpose of making public confession of wrong is to confess one’s own sin.

7. Some have the desire to announce sin, not simply confess sin.
   a. Much of this falls within the realm of judgment and wisdom.
   b. Some will allow a person to make his own statement of confession of sin:
      (1) Some have taken the opportunity to tell off the elders, preacher, or another brother.
      (2) Some if very specific in their sin can cause difficulty within the local congregation.
   c. One does not need to announce the specific sin to confess sin.
      (1) David.
         (a) Said nothing about the specific sin; Psa. 41:4 “I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.”
         (b) David confessed sin in Psalm 51, but did not state the specific sin.
      (2) Sometimes it might be necessary.
         (a) One person needed to repent of more than one sin; was repenting of one but refused to repent of the other.
         (b) In such a case, it would be necessary to inform others of the sin he was repenting of and the sin he was refusing to repent of.

8. My advice: Elders should be the ones dealing with all responses.
   a. Elders oversee the flock and will give an account of the souls under their care.
   b. Elders are the shepherds of that person.
   c. Have the person write out his confession or tell it to the elder, who can then restate it to the congregation.

Conclusion: Confession of sin has been given by God to man to be restored to fellowship with God and other Christians, which all need at one time or another. We have to opportunity to go to
that one we have sinned against, confess our sin, and pray for God’s forgiveness. Such will bring us closer to brethren and alleviate problems between them. Let us never be too proud, rebellious, stubborn, or anything else that would cause us not to confess sin within our life when the need arises.