

## **“Of Repentance unto Life” part 11, WCF 15.6.2, The Nature and Duty of Confession to One Another**

2021.08.29 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 15.6 (TPH p928)

VI. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof;<sup>(l)</sup> upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy:<sup>(m)</sup> **so, he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended,**<sup>(n)</sup> who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.<sup>(o)</sup>

<sup>(l)</sup> Ps. 51:4, 5, 7, 9, 14; Ps. 32:5, 6.

<sup>(m)</sup> Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9.

<sup>(n)</sup> James 5:16; Luke 17:3, 4; Joshua 7:19; Ps. 51 throughout.

<sup>(o)</sup> II Cor. 2:8.

**Prov 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.**

▫Confessing and forsaking sin receives mercy

**1John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**

▫Because God has promised forgiveness to those whom He brings to repentance, and because God has perfectly satisfied for the guilt of those whom He brings to repentance, when He gives us that part of our repentance in which we confess our sins, we can know that the faithfulness and justice of God are working together to guarantee both our forgiveness of sin and our cleansing from all unrighteousness.

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

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Our father in heaven.

We thank you for how sure we may be of your mercy and.

The fact that that certainty comes from your everlasting love, your son, whom you gave, and that everlasting love his perfect obedience, the completeness of his attending sacrifice.

And that you give him and these things fully to us through the faith.

Also what you give us.

We thank you that you give us repentance with that faith.

We pray that your Holy Spirit would help us now as we look at some of these passages that talk about repentance and your mercy and what it looks like when that repentance is expressed.

To you and to others, pray that you would give us a healthy biblical experience of this.

That we would much enjoy having reconciliation with you.

When we need it with one another, praying for one another and the confidence that we may have when it comes out of that reconciliation.

Who bless your name for all these things we want to know them better.

We want to experience them.

We want you to be glorified as our savior as you give them to us.

So help us in our study.

Now we pray in Jesus name Amen.

So section 6 as a whole in the chapter on repentance says.

As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God praying for the pardon thereof, upon which and the forsaking of them he shall find mercy.

So he that scandalized with his brother or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin to declare his repentance to those that are offended.

Who are thereupon to be reconciled to him?

And in love to receive him.

We got through the first section last week and we come to the second part upon which and the forsaking of them he shall find mercy.

So upon his making private confession.

To God, which happens by prayer for pardon to God, that when that happens, and he is resolved, and forsaking his sins, so it's not just words to God, but.

A reflection of.

Of the repentance in the heart that the Lord has given him, he shall find mercy.

This is the way God responds to us when we come to him through Christ, confessing our sin.

And resolved against our sin, and that becomes the basis you see that little word.

So after the the footnote M.

So he that scandalizes his brother and so forth, that becomes the basis for how we confess to one another, and how we ought to respond to one another when we hear confession. And you can remember that perhaps most plainly in the Lord's Prayer.

There forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We're not telling God that he needs to be like we are.

We're telling him that it is his forgiveness that he has produced in us.

That is, the fruit of our being in Christ and requiring out to him for that for ourselves, even as he has begun.

To show the reflection of Jesus in us.

So there's kind of that that that balance between the 1st.

Two footnotes of this section in.

Westminster Confession 15 and the 2nd 2 footnotes, L&M being between US and God and N&O being between us and one another.

So, upon which and the forsaking of them he shall find mercy. The first footnote we received is a prooftext is proverbs 28, verse 13 he who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes then

Will have mercy.

And so you have again the scripture splitting all of humanity into two groups. Now we know that these two groups may be identified in various ways. It's very important to remember that the group #2 whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Don't become group #2 by their confessing or by their forsaking, but by their being joined to the Lord Jesus through Faith.

So our confessing our sin or or forsaking our sin does not in any way.

Get the mercy for us.

It's Christ who gets the mercy for us and our confessing and forsaking our sin is not in any way that which gets Christ.

For us, the Bible is very clear that it is only believing in Jesus that gets Jesus for.

For you but everyone.

Who is in Group #2? Who believes in Jesus and through that faith that the Lord gives you in Jesus?

He gives you Jesus righteousness.

Jesus is sacrifice and therefore your righteousness with God and your forgiveness.

Everyone in that group also gets.

Confessing and forsaking sin, that too is a gift of God that comes in his saving work in us, and so all of humanity is split into these two groups.

He who covers his sins will not prosper.

But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Now, one of the difficulties about these two groups is that sometimes those who belong to God through faith in Jesus.

You who trust in Christ for forgiveness, and if you trust in Christ for forgiveness, that means you are right with God and there's nothing that can ever undo that.

And yet, many of us who are in this group.

Go through times and seasons in which we cover our sin.

Men in which we pretend ourselves to be better than we are before God and before men just like Jesus.

Told his disciples that there are.

When he tells them that there if you pull up the tears, you're going to pull up some wheat too, that that reminds us that there are wheat who act like tears.

And so one of the one of the incentives, one of the things that God, knowing that we are weak, knowing that we have that remaining sin, in which we even are.

Are tempted to cover our sin. He gives us proverbs 28, verse 13 and one of the things that proverbs often does in God's mercy to us, to help us walk by wisdom and walk in righteousness.

It'll is.

It'll set before us very clearly like the Lord says, the end of Deuteronomy, a way of.

Deaf and a way of life.

And he'll show us the consequences of the sin and the consequences of the righteousness.

And he says he who covers his sins will not prosper, but he, whoever confesses and forsakes them, will have mercy.

Now that helps us because one of the reasons we're often tempted to cover our sin is 'cause we think that that's going to help us prosper.

If I cover this in, I'm going to look better.

If I then admit this sin, if I try and make myself feel justified in this thing that I said or did wrong, my conscience is afflicting me and the word of God is accusing me or exposing me.

But if I if I just.

Keep silent about it before God.

It'll just it'll just go away and things will will be better, will be easier.

It's it's hard to admit how sinful I still am and God tells us he who covers his sins will not process.

Super, this is true sometimes in an earthly sense and always in an eternal sense.

And then he sets before us, not just the warning that that's that's harmful to you to try and hide or pretend away your sins.

But he also sets before us the blessing that comes with confessing, but whoever confesses.

Then for sakes.

Then we'll have mercy.

And sometimes you know that that's true and you're coming to God to confess and forsake your sin, but you even recognize in your own heart a desire, fleshly desire from your remaining flesh, leanness to kind of, keep a little bit of this in, and so we even.

Can ask God to improve our confessing and offer smaking, which are themselves imperfect and say, Lord you have given me Jesus because you desire to give me mercy.

He has earned mercy.

This is one of the ways.

In the paths of mercy to confess him for Syksyn helped me hate my sin.

More help me be quicker to admit it before you help me.

When my sin is against others to be quicker to admit it, confess it to them.

Ask to ask them for forgiveness so it's very.

Kind of short and compact verse, but when you think about what the Holy Spirit is doing in giving us this verse, you could see how the.

The prospect of mercy and the promise of mercy and the prospect of not prospering and the guarantee that you will not prosper helps us to leave off covering sin and instead confess it to God.

The second verse that they give us as first John one verse 9 we've included first John, one verse 8 to.

To get just a little bit more of the context there.

If we say that we have no sin, and again you can see the parallel between the first part there, he who covers us in will not prosper.

And if you can remember back to last week and most of you surely can, because it's one of your favorite psalms to request and sing.

When I kept silent, my bones aged and so forth and in Psalm 32 trying to cover or deceive ourselves about our sin.

First John, 18. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Notice that this is John who.

Was probably voted by the disciples in in where we have just been in Luke recently, at least likely to be the betrayer and he had his head on Jesus chest and in another one of the gospels when they wanted to directly ask.

Which one it was?

John was the one that they picked to say, Lord, who isn't there at the Last Supper.

And this is John now.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, probably some time into his, his growth in grace, even as an apostle by the Holy Spirit.

Having begun as as he says in his own gospel, the disciple whom Jesus loves, but he says, if we said.

Say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in US.

So whom is John including in what he says here?

In first John, one verse, eight and nine, he's including himself in all of these things, isn't he?

So there's no.

Point in our Christian life, in which we're going to outgrow in this life or be done with the facts in First John, one versus 8-9.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins.

He is faithful and just.

To forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, so probably should have included a little bit more of the context so that we could see.

Yeah, where the apostle right here in the same section says that it is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Yes, David.

Last question is you don't want to talk about it now.

When we talk about professions of CID.

A lot of what's going on.

2nd is the liberalism.

The church today with this.

Is shed for things that generations before us don't.

And so I was just wondering if you might want to just differentiate or slave so we don't get sucked up in that.

You know confession.

Balance what?

Yeah, there there are several things that are a problem with that, one of which is a lot of the things that are confessed when people are doing that are things that are not necessarily sins.

A lot of them are sins.

A lot of them, a lot of them aren't.

So God alone defines what sin is, but we are to confess the condition of our hearts and the specific things that come out of that condition and in scripture.

You have, UM?

Some things that look like what people who are pushing that and modeling that are talking about confessing sins of past generations.

But in Scripture it always includes present present actions of the same kind, and therefore it's a recognition.

That you are getting as you deserve and that you are not better than your father.

Which is if you think about it exactly opposite what many of those who are kind of in this wokeness that you're talking about are doing.

They're confessing the sins of their fathers as this, and it's a competing.

It's not Christianity, it's a parallel religion.

But in the religion of Wokeness.

One of the ways that you atone for your original sin of being, you know, however privileged you might be, is by showing you are so much better than your father's by confessing their sin.

So it's actually an exact opposite spirit of what Scripture teaches us to do with respect to our fathers and their sin.

When confessing our own sin, right?

So, Daniel, for instance, who is 1?

One of those servants of God in scripture, of whom the least negative is written.

Includes himself in the.

The shame the confusion have faced the sinfulness. He recognizes that it's not just his father's, but he himself who has deserved and those who are in his generation who have deserved because to God all love.

Some belongs both righteousness and forgiveness.

So there's I'm not sure where else.

Maybe in in the previous section where we talked about not just a general general repentance, but specific repentance specifically that we would that we would deal with that.

But that's when we're thinking about repenting and confessing.

I understand why you had asked that question because a lot of what we see in here in the broader church and children.

If you hadn't seen or heard any of this, just thank God for that.

It means.

It means your parents are keeping you away from the poison for a little bit longer, but the poison is out there and you need to learn how to deal with it, yes.

The reason I ask is because it's.

Within our own church.

Oh yeah, yeah, we've heard it in the AARP.

The the PCA is definitely.

Yeah more yes.

I won't talk about the PCA as an entire church, but within the PCA there's a large contingent that do the repenting and confessing that belongs to the false religion that's in competition with Christianity and even other religions.

Nominations now are recognizing things that have been said by those.

In the PCA and said, oh, that's a great example for all of us.

Yeah, and if you're not aware.

Of that, their argument sounds very.

Is very predictive.

Like we read this week about all day trip, who's done.

All kinds of things in the PCA or teachers.

Now he's become wolf.

It's because of this guilt we should feel.

And I I just don't want people to be deceived by that.

Yeah it.

Seems like a fool's errand to look for. More things to feel guilty.

Or when the apostle John late in his walk with Christ, is still writing the kinds of things that we have in first John 1 verses 8 and 9.

I would just like.

Seems to be that one of the key questions is undergirding all is this for whom did Christ stop right in his Calvinist?

We can say Christ died for people individuals personally.

Right, But this Armenian view that Christ.

Died just kind.

Of secure the possibility for all men.

And leads us I, I think tends toward.

The old Christ died for societal sense.

But, but we believe that Christ died for you.

And that means something.

And a lot of the gospel lost.

If we say well, Christ died for sin in general.

It it it?

It destroys the value of his death.

1st and the value of this person as becoming a real man.

Yes, when you're talking about.

Kind of the woke confession for personal.

Freedom from guilt before God, which is what most people are going after when they participate in that.

You know?

There is and this would need to be something that we talk about in another context, but there is in God's dealing with nations and dealing with churches the the the idea in scripture of sins against his name.

Where, yeah, as a corporate entity?

T there needs to be repentance.

We had if if you're moving through second Samuel, we just had this past week with Saul sinned against the Gibby Knights being a sin as a king and therefore.

Anyway, like I I was just about to get into the thing that I said would would take a lot of time.

Think would take a lot of time to untangle those things, but absolutely, if if we're talking about the mercy that you personally receive from God as a forgiving person, if you stop.

Part If you start along the road of equating or including in your confession, this kind of confession of the general sinless sinlessness, or, since sorry, sinfulness of everyone, then the counterpart to that of Christ atonement becomes blurred, becomes general, not specific for his sheep.

But he laid down his life.

For his sheep, and when you are laying hold of him as one who desires him as a A and atoned for sheep, you need to lay hold of him as a personally having sinned, and needed that personal atonement.

For your sin.

Sheep for whom Christ died.

So the apostle John is including himself and like like I said, this is actually one of the things that is helpful for me as far as.

Not needing to embrace the Wokie Yanity alternative.

To to true Christianity is.

I have plenty of my own sin even remaining sin in my life to confess and to rejoice over how God has invested his own character.

In forgiving me by what he has done in Christ, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in US.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I want you to notice that the apostle here includes doxology in the middle of the promise doxology, the glorifying of God.

The praise of God.

He'd just say if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But there's a couple things going on here.

The the first is that God himself has invested the display of his own character in our salvation, his glorious first.

Our salvation is second, something that he has decided to glorify himself in.

So he's made promises of salvation.

And in Jesus, all of those promises have their yes and Amen, and he who declares himself just as offering.



Forgiveness to sinners.

How can he do that?

Because Jesus himself has not only paid for the guilt of our sins.

But he also is righteous, and he is our righteousness before God.

When you believe in Jesus.

You are counted before God as righteous as Jesus.

Because Jesus becomes not only your atonement, but your righteousness.

So the apostle here says, this is how sure both your forgiveness.

And the current work of God cleansing you, which shall be completed in the day of Christ.

This is how sure your forgiveness and cleansing are.

God has invested the glory of his faithfulness and the glory of his justness in forgiving you and in cleansing.

God, of course, keeps all his words.

If he had just said if we confess our sins, he will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness.

We ought to be sure we ought to believe him.

It would be absolutely true.

But God, knowing the weakness of our faith.

And desiring to glorify his own character bolsters us.

He he gives us that that greater cause for confidence in his forgiveness and in his in his cleansing.

By saying this is one of the ways God is pleased to show himself faithful.

This is one of the ways that God is.

Pleased to show himself just by forgiving you according to his promises.

He's faithful by forgiving you and cleansing you according to his promises.

He's faithful by forgiving and cleansing you according to his justice.

Because that is the only right response to what Christ has done for those for whom Christ has died.

And so the faithfulness and justice of God both demand that you forget, be forgiven and be cleansed and are glorified in you being forgiven and being cleansed so.

You can see how well that works, you know proof text is only a proof text if it proves what it's attempting, and if you look at what that's upon which and forsaking and the forsaking of them, he that is the man whom God has brought to repentance and confession of his sins.

To God shall find mercy.

Is absolutely certain, isn't it?

As you lay hold of Jesus, the righteous one who died for sinners like you.

And you realize that God is the one who has brought you to this repentance.

Though God has given this righteous one for you personally, individually, God has invested the glory of his faithfulness in forgiving you and cleansing you.

God has invested the glory of his.

Justice in forgiving you and in cleansing you.

There can be nothing more certain.

Than that you shall find mercy.

When you come to God with spirit, given confession of your sin.

Praise God.

I think it's yeah we're way too far along to introduce the the next section.

But any more questions or thoughts from that section.

We did have a question from Psalm 51 last week, but the person who had it isn't here, so we're going to save.

Answering and dealing with it for when they're back.

All right, let's pray.

Our father in heaven.

We confess that even among our sins is the sin of lacking confidence in things that you have promised.

Like forgiveness in Christ and cleansing by him.

And how much quicker we would be?

To confess our sins to you.

If we were more confident in your forgiveness and in your cleansing.

And so we thank you and praise you for these.

Two passages that you have given us to consider this morning, and we pray that your spirit would stir up our confidence in your forgiveness and our confidence in your cleansing.

We praise you.

That you both have invested the glory of your faithfulness and your justice in forgiving us and cleansing us, and that you have here told us about it in this context.

So help us when we tremble at the greatness of our guilt or the greatness of our remaining sin.

To remember that you are glorifying yourself as faithful and just.

And to be quick and free and coming to you to confess.

And knowing that you are being glorified, faithful and just for giving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness, who pray that even now as we come into the public worship, it would be with this confidence that we who in ourselves.

Are unimaginatively unworthy to draw near to you are in Christ unimaginatively worthy because he is our worthiness and so be glorified for your faithfulness for your justice.

For all of who you are as we come now, as a redeemed people to offer public worship, we ask in his name, Amen.