

INTRODUCTION

I get to speak to you today about something that is a precious, treasured part of our Christian lives, both individually and as a congregation. The precious thing I am talking about is a Christian's profession of faith.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the object of our faith, the One in whom we trust. When a sinner repents of his sins, he turns from following the world to following Jesus Christ as His disciple.

We as Christians love to profess faith in Jesus Christ. Sure, it makes us nervous, but still we love to tell other people that we believe in Jesus Christ, and what we believe He has done for us. And we love to hear someone else profess the same kind of profession. It is a highlight of our worship of the Lord Jesus to hear a new Christian, recently converted, making his profession to the congregation for the first time.

So I am delighted to have this subject, profession of faith, come up in our study through 1 Timothy.

We have just finished working to understand faithfulness to Jesus Christ in terms of fleeing from temptation and pursuing His graces. Now we are starting to work on understanding faithfulness to our Lord Jesus in terms of fighting a fight. That is figurative language, which helps us understand the nature of the Christian life as a struggle. Some of the plain language the apostle uses to expound what he means by fighting such a good fight is about remembering our profession of faith.

I see this as a great opportunity for us as a congregation, and for me as a pastor. The individual person's profession of faith in Christ, and the congregation's 1689 Confession of Faith, are very important aspects of our life as a congregation. Some of the most important things we do as a congregation, such as baptizing new converts, receiving new members, ordaining new officers, are based on what we can learn here and other places in the Bible on this subject. You can be greatly helped in some of the most important things you may do as a family or an individual, such as deciding whom to marry, or what to teach your children in their education, from what we can learn here about this subject.

So, consider with me the delightful and beneficial doctrine of professing a good profession.

TEXT

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

BODY

I. Consider This Concept In Its Original Greek Words

A. The words: verb G3670 *homologeō* noun G3671 *homologia*

1. homou
2. logos

B. Lexicon definition

1. Strong: to assent, to acknowledge
2. Thayer: to agree with, assent; to declare openly

C. Summary

1. etymology: to speak together
2. lexicon: to assent, to acknowledge, to declare openly

II. Consider This Concept In Our Various English Translations

A. Knoulechid

1. WYC knoulechid a good knouleching

B. Professed

1. TYN professed a good profession
2. GEN professed a good profession
3. BB professed a good profession
4. KJV professed a good profession

C. Confessed

1. Vulgate confessus bonam confessionem
2. RV/ASV didst confess the good confession
3. NKJV confessed the good confession

D. Made

1. RSV made the good confession
2. NASB made the good confession
3. ESV made the good confession
4. CSB made a good confession

III. Consider the Established Use of the Terms “Profession” and “Confession”

- A. As I just mentioned, Bible translations made since about 1900 do not have the words “profess” and “profession” here in this verse. They do not use the word “profession” anywhere in the Bible.
 - 1. NKJV “confessed the good confession”
 - 2. others “made the good confession”
- B. Bible translations made early 1500s to early 1600s say “professed a good profession.” In other verses, they also use the word “confession.”
- C. In our English language, “profession” and “confession” are very close to synonymous, so it seems that either word would do equally well here.
- D. But terms used in the congregations were developed back before all the new translations were made. Most of the theological writing, and most of the development of church terms, in the English speaking countries, was back in the days when everyone’s Bible used the word “profession” here and in a few other verses, and used the word “confession” in other verses. So we have two terms that we use to mean different things:
 - 1. “profession of faith” or simply “profession”
 - 2. “confession of faith” or simply “confession”
- E. Whatever our particular Bibles say in this place, in order to use the terms we already have, “profession of faith” and “confession of faith,” we need to consider 1 Timothy 6:12 with the term “profession”

IV. Consider This Beloved Thing As a Profession

- A. Timothy had professed a good profession before many witnesses
- B. Now, as Timothy is tempted by many things, he must fight the good fight of faith
- C. To help Timothy remain faithful, the old apostle reminds him that he had professed a good profession before many witnesses
 - 1. there would be reference there to Timothy’s speech to the congregation, as he was a candidate for baptism
 - 2. there would be reference also to the many times that Paul and Silas and Timothy and Luke spoke the gospel of Jesus Christ in the presence of hostile, unbelieving Jews, and to persecuting pagan government officials
- D. Although the Greek word here means to acknowledge together, and the Latin traditional translation was to acknowledge with, William Tyndale and the other old translators chose to translate it here not as “pro-fess,” but as “con-fess”
- E. So, this thing that we do, when we tell other people, is not always telling what we believe to others who believe the same thing;
 - 1. sometimes it is to people who do not yet believe, or even to those who refuse to believe
 - 2. so it is not always truly a “con-fession”
 - 3. but it always is our “pro-fession”

CONCLUSION

Stephen - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Philippians 2:5-11

Roel - Scripture Reading - Acts 8:26-39

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Revelation 22:20-21

Allison - Prelude

Allison - Trinity 705 "Grace Greater Than Our Sin" - Alex lead

Rita - Trinity 506 "Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me?" - Andrew lead

Rita - Trinity 713 "I Am Thine, O Lord"

We talk about a person's "profession of faith." We baptize someone upon "credible profession of faith." Such an important matter we would do only as our Lord Jesus has directed in the Bible.

We use the two words "profession" and "confession." These are established by long usage. We need to understand them as distinct from each other. So understand this verse, what is meant, and why the old bibles call it "profession." Then we can use intelligently our term "profession of faith."

- I. How Worded
 - A. English

RWP:

the public confession in baptism which many witnessed.

Carroll:

It is in Paul's thought when he calls Timothy's attention to the relation of his Christian experience: "Lay hold of life eternal whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess a good confession in the sight of many witnesses." In other words, "Go back to your conversation; what did you do when you came before the church? There were many witnesses present, and you came out openly with the statement that you were a lost sinner, saved by the grace of God by simple faith in Jesus Christ, and that your sins were remitted through the shedding of his blood on the cross. That was your confession. Stand up to it now. Don't go back on it."

Dagg:

[on baptism] A public profession of Christ was, in the view of Paul, the design of this ceremony, involving an acknowledged obligation to be his, and to walk in newness of life.

[Section IV - Design of Baptism] Baptism was designed to be the ceremony of Christian profession.

The profession of renouncing the world, and devoting ourselves to Christ, might have been required to be made in mere words addressed to the ears of those who hear; but infinite wisdom has judged it better that it should be made in a formal and significant act, appointed for the specific purpose. That act is baptism. The immersion of the body, as Paul has explained, signifies our burial with Christ; and in emerging from the water, we enter, according to the import of the figure, on a new life.

Profession is the substance, and baptism is the form; but Christ's command requires the form as well as the substance.

The members who admit him are required to demand a credible profession made in obedience to Christ's command.

...Baptists admit nothing to be valid baptism but immersion on profession of faith...

The primitive practice required each candidate for baptism to profess his faith personally. But a custom arose, of permitting the profession to be made by proxy: the candidate being present, and signifying his assent. This custom made it easy for very young persons to be admitted to the rite...

...we account nothing Christian baptism, but immersion on profession of faith...

p. 268 In order that the church may judge whether a candidate is duly qualified for membership, they should hear his profession of faith. He is bound to let his light shine before all men, to the glory of God; and it is specially needful that they should see it, with whom he is to be associated in fellowship as a child of light.

p. 269 The churches are not infallible judges, being unable to search the heart; but they owe it to the cause of Christ, and to the candidate himself, to exercise the best judgment of which they are capable. To receive any one on a mere profession of words, without any effort to ascertain whether he understands and feels what he professes, is unfaithfulness to his interests, and the interests of religion.

p. 269 To preserve unity in the church, the admission of a member should be by unanimous vote.

p. 269 Admission to membership belongs to churches ; but admission to baptism belongs properly to the ministry. A single minister has the right to receive to baptism, on his own individual responsibility ; as is clear from the baptism of the eunuch by Philip, when alone. But when a minister is officiating as pastor of a church, it is expedient that they should unite their counsels in judging of a candidate's qualifications ; but the pastor ought to remember, that the responsibility of receiving to baptism is properly his. The superior knowledge which he is supposed to possess, and his office as the shepherd of the flock, and the priority of baptism to church-membership, all combine to render it necessary that he first and chiefly should meet this responsibility, and act upon it in the fear of the Lord.

p. 282 Section IV - Rebaptism

In deciding the question, the first responsibility devolves on the candidate. He is bound to make a baptismal profession of faith...

p. 310-311 about immersion in the churches of England in the past

1 John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.