

Confessing Christ Matthew 10:32-33

Last year, we began devoting the first Sunday morning to first principle lessons. This ongoing timing has been interrupted with the changes 2020 has brought to us and the world. While this morning, we were blessed to assemble again for the first time (with restrictions), we want to continue our online studies in the evenings. And it is with that in mind that I want to present these lessons in this time slot as long we remain in our present pattern.

So in this lesson, I would like to address some things the Bible has to say about confessing Christ. This is a fundamental lesson designed to remind us of what we did before we obeyed the gospel and what we continue to do as Christians. It is also fundamental in that it is something that must be properly understood as we try and lead others to Christ.

I. Confession in becoming a Child of God

- a. What is a confession? The word as used in scripture means an acknowledgment of something. In particular, it is an acknowledgement of something that convicts you for who you are. Consider that in this lesson, we are talking about one who confesses belief in Jesus Christ – it convicts him before others that he will follow Christ and reject other saviors. That is what we will see in the following verses.
- b. Romans 10:9-10 notes that it is a part of becoming a child of God. Belief and confession mentioned in this text.
- c. The “Good confession” – 1 Timothy 6:12-13 – Paul mentions in this text that Timothy had confessed the good confession before many witnesses. What exactly is this good confession?
 - i. Consider contextually, we are given an example - it was the confession of Christ before Pilate. So what did Jesus confess to Pilate? Matthew 27:11 – that is King of the Jews (or Lord)
John 18:33-37 gives us a little more detail where Jesus notes that it is a spiritual kingdom. But the point is, Jesus declares who He is.
 - ii. Thus Timothy was confessing who Jesus Christ is.
 - iii. Consider again Romans 10:9 – you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus or you might say that “Jesus is Lord”
 - iv. Consider also Matthew 16:15-18 – Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
 - v. Consider John 11:20-27 – as Jesus interacts with Martha after the death of Lazarus (whom He was about to raise), He declares that He is the resurrection and that Lazarus would live again. Martha responds in vs. 27, “*Yes Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.*”)
 - vi. Acts 8:35-37 – On another occasion, we find Philip preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, who seeing water asked to be baptized. Most versions include vs. 37 which notes that Philip states that if he believes with all his heart he could be baptized. The Eunuch says, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” and is baptized immediately. This confession is consistent with the other examples we have noted.
 - vii. So we find that this confession is an acknowledgment that you believe in Jesus as the Christ (the promised Savior), the Son of God (He is deity) and as Lord (He is your King and ruler).
- d. Some thoughts about this confession:
 - i. It is a public confession – 1 Timothy 6:12 – whether made before many witnesses, or just a few – consider the Eunuch (Acts 8:37), we need to openly confess Him. Consider Matthew 10:32-33 – more on this in a few moments.

- ii. It precedes baptism – Acts 8:37, Romans 10:9-10 – note that Paul says, “confession is made UNTO salvation” Before one can be baptized, it MUST be confessed that they believe in Christ and they are willing to submit to His will.
Consider Acts 2:38 where Peter, on the day of Pentecost told them what they needed to do – repent and be baptized “in the name of Jesus” for the remission of their sins. Understand that their baptism HAD TO be with an acknowledgment of who Jesus is – that is what our confession is about.
Consider also 1 Peter 3:21 which notes that we are saved by baptism, “(not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” There HAS to be an acknowledgement and understanding of what you are doing and WHY you are being baptized (which puts us into Christ – Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:3-4 – and into His death, where He shed His blood). That is why confessing Christ is important.
- e. One other thought on this: Matthew 7:21-23 – It is not enough to simply say, “Lord, Lord...” We need to obey Him (cf. Luke 6:46 – “Why do you call Me ‘Lord’, ‘Lord’ and do not do the things which I say?”). EVERYTHING in scripture points to this.
NOTE also John 12:42-43 – even among the rulers many believed, but...
The confession leading unto salvation is NOT just about saying the words, it is a declaration that you WILL follow Him and do what He tells you to do. **Nowhere** do you find this confession with words like, “God through Christ has pardoned my sins” and that’s it. That is confession AFTER the fact. We have seen that this confession leads UNTO salvation.

II. Confession AS a child of God

- a. In this lesson, we are not addressing confessing our sins as part of our forgiveness, though that certainly is an important Biblical topic (cf. 1 John 1:9)
- b. I want to remind us that as Christians we must CONTINUE to confess our Lord. It is emphasized in scripture that this is not just a one time thing. It is now who we are.
- c. AND that is part of the declaration one makes WHEN they make the good confession. Consider the context of 1 Timothy 6:11-14 – The following things are said for Timothy to do because of that good confession:
 - i. “Flee these things” – a reference to the love of money and other ungodly behaviors previously mentioned. So Paul is telling Timothy to not be caught up in sinful behaviors (cf. 2 Timothy 2:22)
 - ii. Pursue godly qualities – live your life following the godly pattern Jesus set for us
 - iii. Fight the good fight of faith – keep on fighting the battle to win others and to overcome Satan
 - iv. AND keep the commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord’s appearing – again, a call to obey.
 - v. ALL OF THESE show ongoing action BASED upon Timothy’s ‘good confession’
- d. Matthew 10:32-33. WE sometimes quote this as we deal with the “good confession” above, and it can certainly apply. It is context where Jesus is sending out the twelve and instructing them to trust God to help them as they teach. Among those they teach, some would respond positively and confess Christ, while others would deny Him. Jesus would respond toward them accordingly. BUT the text also shows this is dealing with those who are willing to pay a price to follow Him - This text shows this confession can be done in a hostile environment (much like Christ did) – and as such sit could include occasions other than one BECOMING a Christian. The point, Jesus is saying this is something we will need to do on and on throughout our lives.
- e. 1 John 4:15 – contextually, John is addressing professed followers who denied various things about Jesus as He came to this earth (e.g. His humanity, etc. – cf. 1 John 4:2-3 – every spirit that confesses

that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God...). John's point is that God abides in the one willing to confess Jesus.

- f. Galatians 2:20, Paul boldly declares, "I am crucified with Christ..." It isn't about a one time thing, but continual.
- g. Friends, as a child of God, you are called upon to keep on confessing Jesus throughout your life. You cannot quit after you obey the gospel. You now belong to Him. As Jesus Himself said in Luke 9:62, "No one having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Conclusion – And thus we have examined what the Bible says about confessing Christ. Philippians 2:9-11, tells us that ALL will confess Him. The question is, WHEN? Will it be on this side of eternity, where you can have a hope of heaven, or will it be as we stand before Him in judgment when it will be too late? Let us resolve that we are going to confess His name right now. Are you confessing Christ? Think about it!