

Coming Clean

Lesson for Sunday, September 15, 2024

NOTE: This lesson continues in the pattern of the two previous lessons. Be sure to pace yourself through the Bible study portion so you leave enough time to allow the class to develop this section of their prayer time in class.

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Confession is hard. Ask your class: Agree or disagree? Why?
- ⇒ When it comes to our prayer lives, confession is often dealt with quickly or skipped over completely.
 - First, sometimes it is difficult to admit that we were wrong.
 - Second, we often don't have the same view of sin that God does.
 - Third, it is easy to forget that we have sinned because we are so good at it!
- ⇒ The problem is explained in God's Word: Isaiah 59:2, Psalm 66:18.
 - If we want our prayers answered, we must be clean.
- ⇒ The Bible has much to say about confession. It also contains actual prayers of confession that we can learn from and incorporate into our own prayers. One of the most thorough passages in all the Bible is David's prayer of confession in Psalm 51.

BIBLE STUDY: Four Steps to Getting Right with God – Text: Psalm 51

1. CONFIDENCE – Verse 1
 - a. David knew that for a multitude of sins, there were a multitude of mercies.
 - b. We can have confidence that no matter what we have done, God loves us. How do we know that God loves us?
 - i. Romans 5:8; John 3:16
 - ii. Point out that God's love is not based on how we feel or what we think. We know God loves us because of the Cross.
 - c. Have you ever felt that God didn't love you? When we feel like God doesn't love us, what is the problem?
 - i. The problem is always us, and it is usually rooted in our sin!
 - ii. Remember that God never steps away from us. So, if we find a distance between us and our Savior, it is because we have put that distance there in our sin.
2. CONFESSION – Verses 2-3
 - a. Point out the phrase, "I acknowledge my transgressions."
 - b. Notice that David refers to it as, "my sin." What is the one thing that God will never accept for our sin? An alibi.
 - c. What does it mean to confess your sin? Refer to 1 John 1:9.
 - i. Confess means "to say the same thing."
 - ii. We agree with God about our sin.
 - d. What does the Bible say about those who cover their sin? See Proverbs 28:13.
 - e. IDEA: Give an example of proper confession and point out the need to evaluate our sin biblically and thoroughly.
 - i. Ex: "Forgive me for getting angry with my wife."
 - ii. Have you thought about what you said? How you said it? Your actions? Did you reenact the scene in your mind for the next few hours?
3. CLEANSING – Verses 2, 7
 - a. Is there a sin stain that God cannot clean? See 1 John 1:9.
 - b. We know that God forgives. Why do we have a hard time believing it?

- c. Discuss how important it is that separate what the Bible says is actual truth versus how we often feel.
 - d. When we sincerely confess our sins to God, the Bible says He will forgive us.
 - i. This is a reality based on the truth of God's Word.
 - ii. This is a reality based on the character of God.
4. CONSECRATION – Verses 12-15
- a. Why does God cleanse us?
 - i. It's more than forgiveness so we can feel better about what we have done.
 - ii. God forgives us and puts us back on the path toward service and Christlikeness.
 - b. Why is this an important point to remember?
 - i. Go back to how you decided to sin in the first place.
 - ii. We sin when we get off the path toward service and Christlikeness!
 - c. If you are doing what you ought to be doing, you will not have time to do what you shouldn't be doing!
 - d. True confession includes a sincere desire not to return again to the sin. While this doesn't always happen, if we are truly sorry, we will do the necessary work to have victory in that area within our lives.

APPLICATION: Encourage your class to get their prayer journals/cards, etc. and spend time looking for passages of Scripture that we can incorporate into the confession category of our daily prayer time. Here are some good places to start. See page 3 of this lesson...

CONCLUSION:

Like the other areas of our prayer lives that we have been working on, as you continue to read your Bible, you will come across other texts that you can include or exchange in your prayer time.

You don't have to read every text every day – you can rotate through the texts – they serve as a template that turns our attention to the Lord and the topic at hand and ensures that we are dealing with them Biblically.

Francis Schaeffer outlined the time of confession like this:

1. Drag your specific sins to the foot of the cross.
2. Once you confess, be cleansed by the blood of Jesus – our propitiation and atonement.
3. Don't forget to say, "Thank you."

Example of Prayer Time Confession

Begin...

- ⇒ Psalm 26:2 – “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.”
- ⇒ Psalm 139:23 – “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”
- ⇒ Psalm 25:11 – “For Thy name’s sake, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.”

Self-Evaluation...

- ⇒ Begin by confessing sins that you are aware of...
- ⇒ Then spend time allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind things you did not think of...
- ⇒ Matthew 22:37-40
 - Where have I failed to love God with all my heart? Has my will been directed to God alone? Is there an area I am holding back from His Lordship?
 - Where have I failed to love God with all my soul? Evaluate your desires, motives and emotions. Are you Spirit-controlled?
 - Where have I failed to love God with all my mind? Have I brought every thought captive (2 Cor. 10:5)? Have I thought on the right things (Phil. 4:8)? Have I worried (Phil. 4:6)?
 - Where have I failed to love God with all my strength? Have I channeled my energy toward God for His purposes and for His glory (Col. 3:23)?
 - Where have I failed to love my neighbor (others)?
- ⇒ Name each sin and agree with God about it. Express your desire not to sin again in that area.

Humble Yourself before the Lord...

- ⇒ Psalm 19:12 – “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from my secret faults. Keep Thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.

Ask for God’s Forgiveness...

- ⇒ Psalm 25:7 – “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness’ sake, O Lord.”
- ⇒ Turn to Psalm 51 and turn it into a prayer. “Lord, according to Your compassion...”
 - Blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from my sin; cleanse me; purify me; wash me and I will be whiter than snow; hide Your face from my sins...
 - Create in me a clean heart and renew a steadfast/stable spirit.
 - Restore unto me the joy of my salvation and give me a broken and a contrite spirit.

Claim God’s Forgiveness...

- ⇒ Psalm 130:3-4, 7 – “If thou, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou may be feared...with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.”
- ⇒ 1 John 1:9 – “I have confessed my sins and I accept your forgiveness from all my sins.”
- ⇒ Psalm 19:4 – “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer.”
- ⇒ Matthew 6:13 – “Today, lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil.”