

The 7 Hardest Things You Will Ever Do
Confess Sin Without Making Excuse ~ Psalm 51

August 29, 2010

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Text Introduction: This is the third installment of a topical series concerning the hardest spiritual advancements you will ever make. We have explored the difficulty of controlling our tongue and replacing worry with trust. Today we will seek to understand the importance of confessing our sin without making excuse.

Text: ¹ Be gracious to me, God,
according to Your faithful love;
according to Your abundant compassion,
blot out my rebellion.

² Wash away my guilt,
and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I am conscious of my rebellion,
and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against You—You alone—I have sinned
and done this evil in Your sight.
So You are right when You pass sentence;
You are blameless when You judge.

⁵ Indeed, I was guilty [when I] was born;
I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

⁶ Surely You desire integrity in the inner self,
and You teach me wisdom deep within.

⁷ Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones You have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Turn Your face away from my sins
and blot out all my guilt.

¹⁰ God, create a clean heart for me
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not banish me from Your presence
or take Your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore the joy of Your salvation to me,
and give me a willing spirit.

¹³ Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways,
and sinners will return to You.

¹⁴ Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God,
the God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing of Your righteousness.

¹⁵ Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.

¹⁶ You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it;
You are not pleased with a burnt offering.

¹⁷ The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit.
God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.

¹⁸ In Your good pleasure, cause Zion to prosper;
build the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Introduction to Sermon: You will not get the name out of me, but I read a few weeks ago about one of the members of Congress facing some ethics violations. He had developed a 3 way defense for the charges that were being brought against him. First, he said, "I didn't do it." Next, he said, "I did it, but I did it unintentionally." Then, he said, "Anything I did was the same thing that other lawmakers have done, but without penalty."

In other words, I did it, but I have an excuse. You would love to know the name, wouldn't you? The truth is, though we are often quick to point the finger, we probably at some time or other struggle with the same issue. We confess our sin, but we attach an excuse to the confession. Why? I want to impress upon you the idea that real confession does not include our excuses.

Comparing Two Confessions:

- The Confession of Saul (1 Samuel 15:24)

²⁴ *Saul answered Samuel, "I have sinned. I have transgressed the LORD's command and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed them.*

Here's the background to Saul's confession. The LORD gave Saul a specific command to attack the Amalekites and destroy everything. Saul attacked but some of his soldiers kept back some sheep and cattle. The Lord sends the prophet Samuel to confront him. At first, Saul said that he had fully obeyed Lord. In one of those pieces of Scripture that has kind of a humorous twist to it, Samuel says, "Then what is this sound of sheep and cattle that I hear?"

The first two sentences of Saul's confession (in verse 24) sound pretty good, but the last sentence destroys the first two.

- The Confession of David (2 Samuel 12:13)

David responded to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Then Nathan replied to David, "The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die."

David's confession is much stronger—"I have sinned against the LORD." It is nobody else's fault. This is my fault.

Confession is agreeing with God that you have sinned.

Confession + excuse does not equal total confession.

Examples of Excuses:

(1) *Blaming Someone or Something*—This is what Saul did. This excuse is as old as the human race. When God confronted Adam and Eve, He confronted Adam first. God said, "Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? Adam said, "The woman You gave to be with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate." Not only did Adam blame the woman—he blamed God! The Eve said, "It was the serpent. He deceived me, and I ate."

(2) *Comparative Behavior*—This is the excuse that says, "I'm not as bad as that guy."

(3) *Personal Rationalization*—This was Saul's excuse.

Consequences of Confession With Excuse:

1. Confession is not authentic. If confession is agreeing with God, we must agree with God—period!
2. Forgiveness cannot take place.
3. Guilt remains.
4. Sin continues. If we do not deal with the root cause of the sin—us—we will continue in the sin.

Coming Clean: Psalm 51 as a model

Admit the severity of our sin. Perhaps one of the reasons that we make excuse is that we don't want to believe that we are that bad or that our sin was that bad.

Believe that God will forgive. Perhaps one of the reasons that we make excuse is that we don't want to be punished. God promises to forgive.

Commit to Him willingly.