

Confession of Sin and Forgiveness

MEMORY VERSE

*“I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid,
I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and thou
forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah” (Psalm 32:5).*

TEXT: Psalm 31:1-24; 32:1-11; 51:1-19

God created man in His image. He was spotless — free from sin. However, man lost this nature after he yielded to the temptation to disobey God. Since that time, everyone born of a woman has become a sinner. However, Jesus Christ came as the Lamb of God to redeem and save man from sin. This salvation and redemption can only be obtained when a sinner confesses his sins and receives forgiveness from the Lord.

From our texts, the Psalmist (king David) first recounted the distress he went through as a result of unconfessed sins. Secondly, he highlighted the consequences of living in sins. Thirdly, he rehearsed the blessedness of confessing one's sins and receiving forgiveness (Psalm 32), and lastly, he prayed earnestly for forgiveness of his sins of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband (Psalm 51).

Question 1: What do you understand by confession of sin?

Confession of sins is to verbally open up to God about any kind of sin that one has committed whether the sins are known or a secret one. Confession of sins comes at the time a person is repenting, and it precedes forgiveness.

THE DISTRESS OF LIVING IN UNCONFESSED SINS

(Psalm 3 1:1-13; Proverbs 28: 13; Romans 11;22; Psalm 34: 16)

“Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea my soul and my belly” (Psalm 31:9). The life of the ungodly is filled with many problems and troubles. Distress and anguish are common features in the life of a person who is living in sin and trespasses. The Psalmist proclaimed his trouble. He went ahead to state that his life is spent with grief (sorrows), and his years with sighing.

Question 2: Mention the consequences of living in sins.

A close look at our text reveals the consequences of living in unconfessed sins. These include shame (Psalm 31:1), becoming an easy prey for the enemy (Psalm 31 :4), adversities.(Psalm 31: 7), troubles (Psalm 31:9), sickness (Psalm 31: 10), reproach (Psalm 31: 1 1), and fear of sudden death (Psalm 31:13). Furthermore, other parts of the Scriptures have revealed to us that: (1) poverty and lack of success will be the portion of those who live in unconfessed sins. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”. (Proverbs 28:13). (2) God is angry with the wicked (sinners) every day (Psalm 7:11). (3) lack of peace. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21). Four, it shall not be well with the sinners (Isaiah 3:10, 11). Finally, eternal doom in hell fire awaits all those who refuse to repent and confess their sins. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9: 17).

Question 3: Mention some people in the Bible who refused to confess their sins and what happened to them.

Adam and Eve traded blame with each other without confessing and apologizing their misdeeds to God and consequently were cast out of the garden of Eden. Cain instead of confessing his sin of murder to God decided to excuse himself and was banished by God. Pharaoh confessed that he had sinned but did not forsake his sins. Judas Iscariot had remorse and regret for betraying Christ but did not confess and ask for forgiveness. He committed suicide and went to hell. Hophni and Phinehas, Absalom, Amnon, Ananias and Sapphira hid their sins and received instant judgment from God. Do not harden yourself in sin, confess it and receive forgiveness “for why will ye die O house of Israel” (Ezekiel 18:31).

THE BLESSEDNESS OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENES OF SIN

(Psalm 32:1-11; 1 John 1:9,10 Isaiah 55:6,7; 1:18-20; 3; 10; Deuteronomy 28:1-14)

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psalm 32: 1 ,2). Forgiveness of sins comes to those who confess their sins to God. It is a blessed (happy and joyful) experience to have one's sins forgiven by God.

Question 4: State the benefits a sinner will derive if he confesses his sins to God.

When a sinner confesses his sin to God, he will receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9). No matter how grievous your sins may be, God will forgive you if you confess to Him (Isaiah 1:18, 19; 57:6,7). Aside forgiveness of sins, many other benefits are available for those whose sins are forgiven. Among them are the privilege to pray and receive answers (Psalm 32:6a); protection from evil (Psalm 32:6b); preservation from trouble (Psalm 32:7a);

deliverance from enemies (Psalm 32:7b); divine guidance (Psalm 32:8); God's abiding presence (Psalm 32:8), mercy from God (Psalm 32:10); gladness, joy and happiness (Psalm 32:11), health and wellness (Isaiah 3:10), promotion (Deuteronomy 28:13), peace, prosperity, power and success (Joshua 1:8), peace, prosperity, power and provision. In the Bible, we have those who confessed their sins and receive mercy from the Lord. Examples were Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8), Isaiah received double cleansing after confessing his sinfulness, King David (1 Chronicles 21:8) obtained mercy from God after confessing his sinfulness. The publican (a sinner) prayed to God to be merciful to him a sinner, and he went home justified (Luke

GENUINE PRAYER OF CONFESSION THAT RECEIVES FORGIVENESS

(Psalm 51 : 1-19)

Having known the blessedness of having one's sins forgiven and also proclaiming it in his Psalm, King David now came to the Lord in sincere prayer, confessing his sins and asking for forgiveness. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitudes of thy tender mercies blot out my transgression” (Psalm 51 : 1).

Question 5: What are the lessons we learn from David's prayer for forgiveness?

Some of the lessons we learn in this prayer of David is that: (i) It was specific — He asked for forgiveness of the adultery he committed with another man's wife. Sinners seeking forgiveness must confess their specific sins to the Lord. (ii) The prayer was made to God — Only God through Jesus Christ can forgive our sins. Hence, the practice of daily or weekly confession to a religious leader is not accepted by God. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”. (Acts 4:12). (iii) Though David

was a king, yet he humbled himself to confess. No matter what your position or status is, you must humble yourself, confess your sin to receive forgiveness. (iv) It was not with the intention to continue in sin — sinners must be ready to forsake their sins after confessing it to the Lord.

Question 6: State some components of the prayer in Psalm 51:1-19.

A careful study of psalm 51:1-19 reveals to us the following: (1) It was prayer based on the mercies of God. Our prayer of confession must be based on what Christ has accomplished for us on the cross (Psalm 51 : 1). (2) He asked for thorough washing and cleansing. Our prayer of confession must expose all known sins. (3) He acknowledged his sins. Realizing our sinful state is a requirement for receiving forgiveness. (4) He asked for restoration of the joy of salvation. (5) He did not engage in any animal sacrifice. Jesus Christ has been made a perfect and final sacrifice for all sins; hence we do not need to observe any religious sacrifice to receive forgiveness. (6) He asked for a clean heart and a right spirit. (7) He asked to be restored to the faith before he could teach sinners the way of the Lord. We must not put service before genuine salvation from sin.

Question 7: How can sinners and backsliders be restored to God?

Sinners must repent and ask God for forgiveness while backsliders should seek restoration through a prayer of confession and forgiveness. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 56:6,7)