

Getting to Know Jesus- Adult Bible Discovery Guide- May 17, 2020

Welcome to Adult Bible Study for this week. Today we will begin looking at confession and absolution. Let's begin where worship does. (If you are doing this study at home choose someone to be the "leader" in your context.)

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28: 19b)

People: Amen.

Leader: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. (Hebrews 10:22)

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

People: who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 124:8)

Leader: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

People: and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)

Leader: Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Leader: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all. (Mark 16:16; John 1:12)

People: Amen.

Key Scriptures to read as we begin:

Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalm 14:3; Isaiah 64:6; 1 John 1:8-10; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:6-8; Romans 10:10

Questions to wrestle with:

- *Is there anything a person "must" do in order to be forgiven?*
- *Can a sinful human being confess their sins to a holy God?*
- *What abilities do humans have regarding their salvation?*

Word Study

A discussion on the topic of confession and the role of humans needs to start in Scripture. Key to this discussion is 1 John 1:8-9, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (ESV)

The Greek word translated as "confess" is *homologeō* (ὁμολογέω) is the key to this discussion.

Strong's lexicon defines it this way:

1 to say the same thing as another, i.e. to agree with, assent. **2** to concede. **2A** not to refuse, to promise. **2B** not to deny. **2B1** to confess. **2B2** declare. **2B3** to confess, i.e. to admit or declare one's self guilty of what one is accused of. **3** to profess. **3A** to declare openly, speak out freely. **3B** to profess one's self the worshipper of one. **4** to praise, celebrate. (Entry G3670)

Gerhard Kittle in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* gives us some more insight when he says, "The literal meaning of *homologeín* is "to say the same thing." We thus get the senses a. "to agree to something" (an affirmation, a charge, etc.), b. "to confirm receipt," c. "to agree or submit to a proposal," and d. "to agree, to a wish," "to promise." In a transferred sense it may denote the agreement of words and deeds, or of customs" (p. 687)

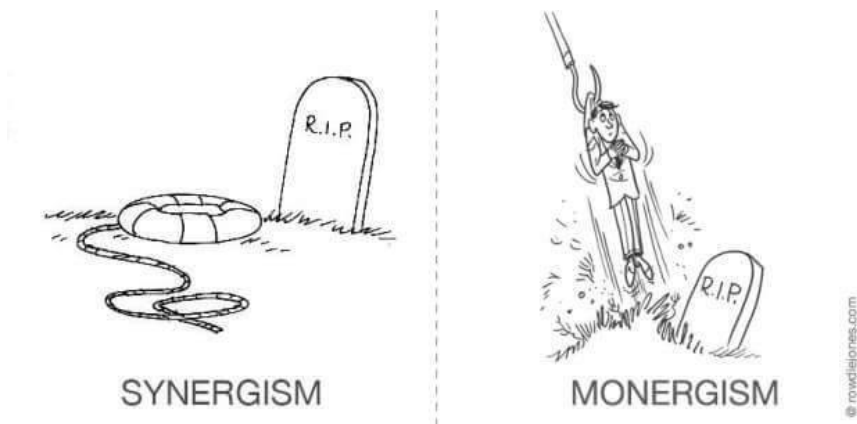
Read: John 6:44; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2: 1-10; Titus 3:5; 1 John 4:10

Some other good quotes:

Sometimes misguided Christians will point to the famous picture of Jesus standing at a door and knocking. They say that this depicts Jesus standing at the door of your heart, waiting for you to open the door and let him in...Look again at Ephesians 2:1-2. "You were dead in your trespasses and sins..." Can a dead person open a door? Can a spiritually dead person open up their heart? Conversion has already occurred for the person who says, "I accepted Jesus." or "I decided to let Jesus into my life." Before they did anything, God in his grace and mercy changed them—that was their conversion (instant, miraculous, and gracious). (*Called to Believe, Teach, and Confess* p.273)

The question as to the efficient cause of conversion conceivably may be answered in three different ways:

- (a) Man himself effects conversion (Pelagianism).
- (b) Man and God co-operate toward conversion, man beginning and God completing the work (SemiPelagianism) or God beginning and man completing it (Synergism).
- (c) God alone effects it (monergism), man being merely the [object of conversion] man does not accomplish, but undergoes the conversion. (*Christian Dogmatics* Vol I p. 455-456)



Furthermore, it is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith. (*Augsburg Confession* IV: 1,2)

Some big questions:

- *If to confess is to "say the same thing" then who initiates the saying, or better yet, who initiates confession, do we, or does it begin outside of us?*
- *What role do we play in confession?*
- *Is confession a work or is it grace?*