

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

The New Testament word translated "confession" or "profession" in the King James Version is *homologeō*

which means "to speak the same thing." [Robert Young,

Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible

(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), s.v. "Confess, to"]. In the Christian context, it literally means "to speak the same thing that God does."

Michel sees three meanings in the New Testament: (1) the general Hellenistic sense of "to assure," "to promise," "to admit," and "to concede"; (2) "judicially 'to make a statement,' in the legal sense 'to bear witness.'" It is ". . .an act of proclamation in which the concrete relation of man to Jesus is expressed in binding and valid form. . ." and (3) "'to make solemn statements of faith,' 'to confess something in faith.'" (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1967 ed., s.v. "Homologeō," by Otto Michel).

Old Testament Confession of Sin

Old Testament writers required openness, confession and repentance as represented by the following Proverb:

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Proverbs 28:13, NIV

Openness, confession of sin and repentance were also part of John the Baptist's ministry:

People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance."

Matthew 3:5-8

Confession and Justification

According to Jesus and Paul, one must confess Jesus as Lord and Savior in order to be saved:

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven"
Matthew 10:32-33, NIV

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved* [italics mine]."

Romans 10:8-10, NIV

Notice that this is a *positive* confession—a confession of a new relationship with God through Christ! This is a confession of life! It is the most critical confession and yet many religious leaders do not emphasize it.

This is not to underemphasize that all human beings are sinners and that each one must admit that he is a sinner in order to make the positive confession. Paul teaches, "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God. . ." (Romans 3:23).

Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit would convict individuals of the sin of unbelief:

"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

John 16:7-11, NIV

The sin of unbelief will keep people from God. The idea that one must give up sins by his own human strength before accepting Christ is not biblical. After confessing Christ as Lord and Savior, God empowers the believer to overcome sin.

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

Since everyone will eventually confess that Jesus is Lord, it makes sense to do that now:

It is written: "'As surely I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'"

Romans 14:11, NIV

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11, NIV).

It is morally insane to reject Christ as Lord and Savior.

Confession and Glorification

Is it biblical to confess that we are saved after accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior?

When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Father justifies us. So it is biblical to say that we have been justified.

Then, the Holy Spirit gives us the new birth and takes up his abode in us. So, it is biblical to say that we have been born again.

Next, we enter both a crisis and progressive life of sanctification. This process will not end until we are glorified.

Sometime in the future, the Lord will come and we will be resurrected and glorified.

There are four aspects of our salvation:

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

1. Justification;
2. The New Birth
3. Sanctification and
4. Glorification.

Justification is objective, that is, it happens in the mind of God. God declares the believer to be right with himself legally. [Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), p. 273. Cf. Schrenk, "Dikaiosune in Paul" and Earle, *Romans*, pp. 74-77; Earle, *Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians*, 188-190].

Earle, after discussing positions by Cremer, Abbot-Smith, Burton (*ICC*), Thayer, Sanday and Headlam, Schrenk, and Vincent, warns of the error of holding to a mere doctrine of imputed righteousness without imparted righteousness. In other words, if one has not experienced *the new birth* with a changed life, he has not been justified either.

Sanctification is subjective, that is, it happens within the believer. Sanctification consists of both crisis and progressive experiences by which God conforms the believer more and more into the image of Christ, *while in this life*.

Glorification will also be a subjective experience. Glorification of the believer will occur at the resurrection. At this time the Lord will recreate both the believer's soul and body, making them perfect and immortal.

Paul teaches that we shall have a new mind:

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known
1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

In Corinth, the mirrors were polished metal, unlike our high fidelity silvered glass mirrors. Reason will be restored to our minds and our minds will be sin-free. Our understanding will be greatly improved and we will grasp things that are mysteries to us now. We will be given the same type of knowledge that Christ has.

Paul does not try to explain what our glorified bodies will be like except to say that they will be real and superior to what we now have. He explains the necessity of this body passing away in order to receive a perfect one. He presents several analogies and then says,

So will it be with the resurrection the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.
Corinthians 15:42-44, NIV

So, we can say that

- 1 God has saved us—he Justified us;
- 2 God is in the process of saving us—he Gave us the New Birth and is Sanctifying us;
- 3 God will save us—he will Glorify us.

However, when Paul speaks of Glorification, he speaks as though it has already happened—it has in the mind of God:

One of the boldest statements Paul makes is the ultimate confession of faith. He speaks as though Christians were already glorified!

And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, *h e also glorified*
[Italics Mine].
Romans 8:30, NIV

Ralph Earle comments on *edoxase* (translated "glorified") in this passage. (*Edoxase* is here in the aorist, active, indicative form.) First, he quotes Denney and then concludes in a single sentence:

. . . Denney declares: "The tense in the last word is amazing. It is the most daring anticipation of faith that even the N.T. contains" (*EGT*, 2:652) [*Expositor's Greek Testament* (5 Vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.)] In the divine foreknowledge our glorification is already seen as an event accomplished. [Ralph Earle, ThD,

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

Word Meanings In The New Testament: Romans Vol. 3
 . (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1974), pp. 167-168].

Christians are usually taught that they have been (1) Justified (have been saved); (2) Sanctified (are being saved) and (3) Glorified (will be saved). Paul exceeded this teaching by proclaiming that Christians *were already glorified!*

Paul's confession reached way into the future, where Christians would be glorified. He so believed God's Word that he spoke as though we were already glorified, that is, that his salvation were already completed. To God, it was. To Paul, it was. *Therefore, it is biblical to say that Christians are "saved."*

Confession of Sin by the Believer

The believer's fellowship with the Father is broken by sin. Confession is the way to restoration:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:8-9, NIV

Unconfessed sin produces guilt, which sometimes produces sickness. Confession of sin is a key to healing in this case:

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
James 5:14-16, NIV

After one has confessed his sins, he should forgive himself. Continuous confession of sins that have been forgiven are acts of unbelief. By continually confessing forgiven sins, one builds weakness, doubt and sin-consciousness into his soul. Satan will take advantage of a believer this way. God has promised to forgive:

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Isaiah 43:25, NIV

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, Psalm 103:1-3, NIV

God forgets our sin and expects the believer to forget his past sin also. God's Word is our assurance.

Confession as A Christian Lifestyle

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Mark 11:22-24, NIV

Not only does the Lord want us to be right with him, but also he yearns to bless us in every way, personally. Also, each one of us has a ministry to which God has called us and equipped us to accomplish. In order for us to fulfill our calling, we must exercise faith. *One aspect of faith is to line up our mouths with what God says*

—in every

part

of our lives. It is his will that we speak

His

way, as a

lifestyle

. Speaking anything less of ourselves than God does will rob us of what He has for us. Also, it will rob those to whom God has called us to minister. And it will certainly rob us of self-esteem.

Assignment: Make it a habit to confess sin to God as soon as it happens. Then, listen to everything else that you say. Does it line up with what God says? If not, begin speaking in line with what the Bible says.

Chapter 5 of my eBook, *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*. This

Confession

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Sunday, 20 November 2016 13:49

book is being processed for printing and should be on the market before January 2017.

Copyright © 1981 Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Published with Permission from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth TX.

© (Popular version) John E. Russell 1993, 2004, 2016

In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity

—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

You have permission to copy, email or print *unedited* Power Articles.