

Sermon for A Year with the Catechism Confession: What is it?

Date: May 22, 2022

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: 2 Samuel 12:1-15 [11:1-12:23]

Epistle Reading: 1 John 1:5-10

Gospel Reading: Mark 2:1-12

Sermon Text: 1 John 1:5-10

Sermon Title: What is Confession?



Introit: Psalm 51:2-11; Antiphon: Psalm 51:1

Hymns:

LSB 607 – From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

LSB 606 – I Lay My Sins on Jesus

LSB 616 – Baptismal Waters Cover Me

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

(With excerpts from Compline)

Songs:

Forgiveness - Matthew West

Broken Things

From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

Amazing Grace - Grace Like Rain

Liturgy:

Creative Worship

(With excerpts from Compline)



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Text: 1 John 1:5–10

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 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.

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Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

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Grace to you and God's every present, and overpowering peace. Amen.

Movie Clip from: "Doubt" © 2008

[There is a movie called "Doubt." In that movie a Roman Catholic woman burdened by her sin of gossiping. She goes to her pastor to confess her sins and seek absolution, which she does, but he instructs her to do one thing as penance, or payment for her sin. He tells her to go home and take one of her loved feather pillows, go up on your roof, slice open the pillow and let the feathers go. Then return to talk again.

It was a windy day she chose to fulfill her assignment. The feathers of course flew all over the neighborhood. Upon completing the task she returns to the priest. "I did my penances as you instructed," she said.

"Now there is one more thing you must do," said the priest. "You must collect all the feather and put them back into the pillow."

"But pastor, the feathers have been scattered all over the neighborhood!" She exclaimed. "It would be impossible to get them all back."

The priest replied, "so it is with gossip. Once released it can never be pulled back."]

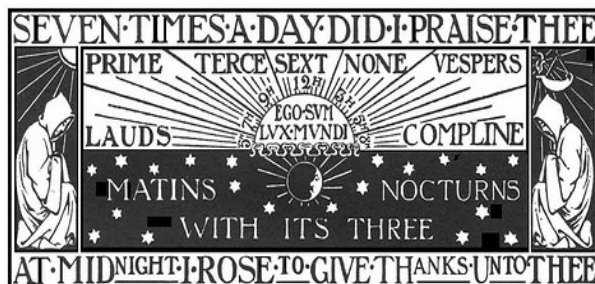
"That is gossip!" he said.

It is true for most sin. Most sin rarely affects only the individual sinner and God. It almost always affects the community. Sin certainly grieves the heart of God but it nearly always grieves the heart of the community as well. The Christian faith is not an individual thing, a personal thing. The true Christian faith is always a corporate or communal thing. When one hurts all hurt. When one inflicts hurt, all are hurt. We really are all together in this.

Gossip poisons the community. Selfish ambition and self-focus decisions made without concern for others damages the community. Abuse of power or position hurts the community. Speaking in demeaning ways, with sarcastic tones, whispers in corners and behind people's backs violates the community. It tears at the security and safety that should always be found in the community of the Church.

All sins are not simply a matter of issues between me and God. They are issues that damage the Church, the Body of Christ. Be it your family, your congregation, or your denomination. Sin is never isolated. Sin is never alone. Sin always affects others, even when you don't think so.

It is for this reason, in those churches that practice very high church, in the practice of the "Hours of the Church" there is the final service of the day, generally held at about 10pm, is called Compline. It is



in that service the congregation not only confesses their sins corporately before God, but they would hold the practice of facing each other and confessing to each other.

You see if sin is a community affliction then the community cannot thrive, or even survive, unless the sinners look each other in the eye and confess their sins and receive forgiveness. One of the most major threats to the community, if not the most major threat, is pain unattended, sin unconfessed, those living a life that breaks from the community affects the entire community. Those ancient traditions of the Church often come from great and rich wisdom.

The ancient Church understood the greatest healing force, the most powerful binding of wounds, is found in forgiveness spoken out loud on purpose, in defiance of the nearly insatiable temptation to harbor and hoard evil. It is a wonder that we poor sinful beings can have such a lust for such poison and pestilence so purposefully. It is against such a weapon, as forgiveness, that our enemy cannot stand.

The hymn proclaims, “One little word can fell him.”¹ That word is ‘forgiveness.’ It is that salt in the wound which makes that vile worm writhe in pain. It is Jesus who tells us to be “the salt of the earth.” Not the salt for ourselves, but for the whole world. They understood the calming cure comes through confession in Christ.

We all know too well that sin will come to get us, it has come to get us, it is a poison running through our veins. There is an antidote, an antivenom. We hold it in our very grasp and today we will administer it to each other and bask in the balm of healing.

Taking your hymnals on p. 254, or in your bulletins, we will, as they did in ancient times stand against that ancient enemy, turning toward the center isle. Then we will confess our sins to each other in that old liturgy. One side will confess, then other will respond. Then the confession and forgiveness are reversed.

Individual sin always affect the community. So in silence we will name those sins, our own sins, in our hearts. . We will then confess to the community and then hear from the community the plea to God for the full pardon, release and remission of each and every sin.

You perhaps noted we did not confess our sins at the beginning of this service. That was on purpose. That act was saved until now. We will now wield the weapon

1 LSB 656 – A Mighty Fortress is our God v3

that wrought woe on the wicked one, and then stand in the wonder of Christ Jesus our Lord, in victory!

CONFESSON OF SINS...

Just as sin is communal, so is forgiveness. Just as faith is communal, so is our victory over sin, death and the power of the devil.

I know it without being told. At this very moment that fell beast is whispering in the ears of too many among us right now. He says, "What about that sin? What about this sin? They didn't really mean that confession. They won't change. You know what they're like. They're always like that and always will be. They deserve it." I know he's whispering those things, and some of you are listening right now.

In the name of Jesus the Holy Christ of God tell that rotting filthy worm to leave you alone. In the name of Jesus the Holy Christ of God we pray for the Holy Spirit's guiding power to keep us free and forgiven. May we remember we are here this day, sitting before the throne of God our Heavenly Father basking in His blessings and love. How can sin stand here?

It must be brought down! It must be brought under control and into submission! It must be cast out! Out of our minds, out of our hearts, and out of our community!

We should stand united in Christ. Do we? In Jesus' name we ask for it. In Jesus' name we pray it. In Jesus' name we proclaim it.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**

