

# Sermon for A Year with the Catechism Confession: What sins should we confess?

**Date:** May 29, 2022

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

**Old Testament:** Lamentations 3:21-36

**Epistle Reading:** Hebrews 12:1-8

**Gospel Reading:** John 1:19-29



**Sermon Text:** Hebrews 12:1-8

**Sermon Title:** Confession: What sins should we confess?

**Introit:** Psalm 51:11-15; Antiphon: Psalm 51:10

## Hymns:

LSB 610 – Lord Jesus, Think on Me

LSB 621 – Let All Mortal Flesh Keep

Silence

LSB 611 – Chief of Sinners Though I Be

## Songs:

Where I Belong

After All - Crowder

Another in the Fire

Image of God

Only Jesus

## Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912  
Office: (507) 433-2642  
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net  
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org  
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



## **Text: Hebrews 12:1-8**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
nor be weary when reproved by him.  
For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,  
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

**NOTE: Copyright** information.

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2021 Pastor James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace to you and peace from God. Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

It takes longer, but you see more.

When the people heard this, they were deeply upset.  
They asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

Peter answered them, “All of you must turn to God and change the way you think and act, and each of you must be Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. This promise belongs to you and to your children and to everyone who is far away. It belongs to everyone who worships the Lord our God.”

Peter said much more to warn them. He urged, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”<sup>1</sup>

Repent. Confess your sins and repent. Confess your sins and be forgiven. Confess your sins and receive the Holy Spirit. A lack of repentance is to reject the Holy Spirit; that is to grieve the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Should we not pray like David:

Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Our Lord Christ has said:

He who has an ear,  
let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.<sup>4</sup>

1 Acts 2:37-40  
2 Ephesians 4:30  
3 Psalm 51:9-12  
4 Revelation 2:29

It is about a 40 mile drive from Lansing to Rochester. Since moving out there it has become better to leave Lansing to the North and drive picking up highway 56 to 30 and heading into Rochester. I drive that stretch a lot. It is a 45 minutes trip.

Minnesota is a very beautiful place. There are rolling hills, (once you get out of Mower county) as you drive. There are rivers, woods and fields at varying places of planting and harvest. The beauty is so clear you can see it 70 miles an hour on Interstate 35. If you get off the freeway and drive through county roads you see more of it. The truth is if you walk, as I do often heading North out of Lansing there are streams and beautiful countryside. Now I haven't walked to Rochester, but I've headed out for an hour or more to take in the sun and the fresh air to walk a few miles. When you slow down it takes longer, but you see more.

What has stuck out for me was of what I saw more. You see more beauty, but mostly what I see isn't beauty. Now Minnesota, as I said, is a beautiful place. They put effort into keeping the place picked up and clean. There are times throughout the year when people will volunteer to pick up the trash, or people who have violated some law of society get volunteered to pick it up, but it keeps the place looking nice.

At 50, 60, 70 or faster it almost always look really nice, but when you take a little longer, when you move a little slower, you see more. The roads over which you usually drive at 55 or more, when you walk seem dirtier, more worn and gray. There are quaint farms that foster thoughts back to a slower time. They sit so picturesque on the landscape, but as you walk by, it doesn't always look picturesque. You see it is run down and sometimes abandoned and wearing because of the weather.

Speed is a mixed blessing? Our American culture is fast. Fast is good. Fast can be a virtue, and sometimes it is. However the fastest way is not always the best way. It's not that great for relationships. It keeps them superficial. Fast is often a bad way to make major decisions. Fast is bad in worship, or in confession dealing with sin. Fast is not better in our devotion as we move in the presence of God.

We are taking this walk through the Catechism at a fairly slow pace. Some have said they'd like it to be done. They'd like to kick up the pace. They'd like to move on. Luther, in writing his Catechism, actually takes quite a bit longer than he could have.

Although when it comes to confession and absolution he has actually sped things up. He took that old tradition of confession, absolution and penance and he cut that down to just two steps confession and absolution. So he does speed things

up a little bit, which is good. It's kind of simple. It's very clean. It's quick. Confession has two parts. First: we confess our sins and second: we receive absolution;

forgiveness from the pastor as from God himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven<sup>5</sup>

I can remember, even in grade school, thinking that was quick. Thank you, Martin. ...but then he does slow us down. He asks: What sins should we confess? Well, I guess, before God, we should plead guilty of all sins. Even those of which we are not aware. "Not aware." Don't over think it. There probably are some so pop off a quick, "Sorry God." and your good to go. That's quick. That's easy. ...but Luther ask us to take a little longer, to slow down. Luther says:

...but before the pastor we should confess those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.<sup>6</sup>

"Feel in our hearts" We men-folk aren't always as in tune to our hearts as you women. For guys a whole day can go by when we don't tune in or ponder what feel in our heart. We generally tend to focus on what is going on our mind, keeping our feet moving and hands busy with the stuff of the day and on the calendar, which is always full. That's usually how we do things. ...but we could, and we should, all slow down and ponder our sin. Pause, think about it. Admit it.

It takes longer, but you see more. Luther helps. He asks, "Which are these sins?" His answer:

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments.

That could take some time.

Are you a father or mother? Are you a son? Or a daughter? Are you a husband? A wife. A worker. Have you been disobedient? Have you been unfaithful? Have you been lazy?

It takes longer, but you see more.

Have you been hot-tempered? Have you been rude? What about quarrels?

5 Luther's Small Catechism

6 Luther's Small Catechism

Have there been times when I have hurt someone else by my words? Stay with me now.

Have you stolen? Have you been negligent? Have you wasted anything. Have you done to anyone any harm?

This all takes longer, but you see more.

This is not some exercise and self-demeaning or in self-insulting, nor is it spiritual one-up-manship, or one-down-manship. This is important. Luther teaches us we should, on a regular basis, turn off the speed, gear down, slow down and take longer. See things as they really are. Take some time to really pause and ponder those real sins by which you have hurt people. Real Sins, that have beaten and bruised your relationship with your heavenly Father. “Our Father who art in heaven...” The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Slow down. Admit it. Face it. When you do you see more? What you see may not be so picturesque, but you know what? I have some really, really good news for you. You see more but there is no sin you will see that Jesus Christ has not already seen. He sees far better than you do what is in you. That’s why you confess to Him, even the sins of which you are not aware. He sees. He knows, and He still loves you. He lived. He died. He rose to life forever. It is because of these things you know He forgives.

Scripture proclaims:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.<sup>7</sup>

It takes a while just to get ready, and it takes the Holy Spirit a while to get us ready, to truly acknowledge and confess our sins. It just takes us a while to get ready. That’s because we’re not sure we want to face them. Part of us doesn’t want to face them. Part of us doesn’t want to give them up.

You know you all too well. You know you like those sins. They’re comfortable. They’ve become old friends. They are that warm blanket. We don’t want to give them up, even when we know they are evil. If you are truly honest, you know it is true. You might feel guilty, but giving them up... that’s harder. I have some really really good news for you. Before you are ready to acknowledge them, Jesus Christ

<sup>7</sup> Hebrews 4:15-16

is already ready to forgive them, because it's morning and His mercies are new.<sup>8</sup> This morning you may call on Him, because He is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. He is so ready to forgive.

When you finally slow down, it can be hard. It's easier in some ways to live the pace set by the world, but when you do slow down, there are blessings. They sometimes don't come in the best packages. Sometimes opening the gift includes some pain, some uncomfortable feelings, some admission of guilt, but I have some really really good news for you.

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God and He takes away the sin of the world.<sup>9</sup>

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God and He takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, and He grants you His peace.<sup>10</sup>

So we're here, and we've slowed down, perhaps you have paused. Perhaps you have pondered. If you have, there are sins you have seen that are troubling you, sins you feel in your heart. I know that is a fact. I know it because:

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.<sup>11</sup>

If you have truly slowed it all down, and really done some self searching, some soul searching, you will see those sins, in you. If you don't please look again. Go slower. They are there. Just like they are in me. I know you don't want to look. 'Cuz they're not pretty. They are there and they will tell you things about yourself you don't like.

You don't like them because they are not the part of you that reflects the image and likeness of God.<sup>12</sup> When you see them they will pain you. Know this. I won't leave you there. I won't because Jesus won't. I have some really really good news for you. Forgiveness is available in far richer supply than all of that sick seditious sin.

From a human point of view I should not be here. There were things that clued me in, right away, that I should not come here. I saw sin before I ever visited here. Sin that made it clear there were very real problems. From a human point of view I should not be here. God could have, and sometimes I wish He would have, picked someone else, and so do some of you. ...but He didn't.

It was Jesus Christ who picked me to come to you. The events that brought me here were not an accident. God has given me a Divine Call to tell it to you. What I

8 Lamentations 3:22-23

9 John 1:29

10 LSB: Divine Service I, Agnus Dei p. 163

11 Romans 3:23

12 Genesis 1:26

am compelled to tell you is this. For those who sit here, come here, pause here and see and admit your sin, I have some really really good news for you.

As you look into your heart and see all that filth, failure and fault, don't look away. Stare it down. Look it, and Satan, in the eye. It is ugly but God has turned ashes to beauty.<sup>13</sup> As you look at it, see it where it belongs. On the cross. Then let me speak to your heart. As you ponder those sins, as you ponder your guilt, know this. I have some really really good news for you.

Upon this your confession I by virtue of my office is a Called and ordained servant of Christ, announced the grace of God to you. And in the stead, and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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



13 Isaiah 61:3