

Confession Unto Salvation

(by Bob Pulliam)

The most prominent trait of a disciple is his willingness to follow his master in an open and forthright manner. The disciple not only learns from the master; but exists by the master as well. After all, the student is only a student when he has a teacher. So we must follow our Master in an open and forthright manner. Is it any wonder, then, that the beginning of our service to the Master involves confessing Him?

We find the Ethiopian eunuch beginning his service to the Master by confessing Him in Acts 8:37. Notice here that Philip had evidently done some teaching in this regard, for Philip didn't tell the eunuch what to say. All he did was ask him if he believed. The eunuch's reply was, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Notice that the eunuch simply confessed Jesus. This is all that God has demanded of man's confession to become a Christian (Rom 10:9). Many in the religious world have expanded or twisted this confession to teach their peculiar doctrines on salvation.

One of the most prominent confessions illustrates this quite well. It says, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins..." Note that this is nothing like the confession made by the eunuch. It also isn't anything like the witness given to the "good confession" by Jesus (Lk 22:70 - 23:3, which was confessed by Timothy (I Tim 6:12 & 13)). This popular confession is actually a statement of belief regarding a doctrine, and not of Jesus. It tells what one believes about the forgiveness of sins, rather than what one believes about the Lord! I would certainly think that if one would want to follow the word of God in being saved, he would use the word of God, and it *alone*!

The confession God demands reveals the conviction of the heart concerning Jesus, and is "made unto salvation" (Rom 10:10). By this we find that confession is just as necessary for salvation as belief. This initial confession is the beginning of a life that will confess Jesus in every phase of it's existence. You will remember that Jesus said, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." (Mt 10:32f). The context here is one of persecution. The follower will always profess his master, even in the face of death. How sad it is that so many deny the master by word and example without the presence of persecution, or even undue pressure! How would they have made it in the first century?

Confession of Jesus is one of the necessary elements of salvation (Rom 10:10). Confessing Jesus is the beginning of open service to Christ; but by no means is it the end! The remainder of our life is spent in learning of, and following the master. Have you confessed Jesus (rather than doctrines)? If so, do you continue to confess Him with the life you live?

Another Confession...

The New Testament not only tells us to confess Jesus, but also tells us to confess our sins one to another (Jms 5:16). If I sin against one of my brethren, I should be able to admit my error. Notice that this is not a confession to the clergy. We acknowledge our sins before those whom we have committed them (Lk 17:3f). Coupled together with confession is repentance. To admit that one has sinned is not enough. One must change his mind and strive to serve the Master properly in every way.

Conclusion...

We have seen two kinds of confession in this study. The first is our confession of Jesus when we become His disciples. We confess the truth about who He is. The second is our confession of sin to others when we repent of those sins. Both are essential to our eternal salvation.