

Confessions

“Therefore, confess your sins one to another...” James 5:16

In one of his lectures on the subject of anxiety, Dr. Macklyn W. Hubbell told the class of students studying the subject of abnormal psychology in the Parchman Faith-Based-Initiative that confessing our sins is a proven way to relieve anxiety. This advice bears-out what I have found to be true in my study of Scripture: the commandments in the Bible provide us with practical wisdom for living our day-to-day lives!

Many people are offended by the idea of confessing their sins to a priest. “I do not need another man to tell me by sins are forgiven,” they say.

This is true! However, sometimes a person feels a need to divulge his secrets to another human being. Jesus forgave the sins of a paralytic man, and when he did, he was challenged by the religious leaders of His time. These leaders scoffed, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7)

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples in order to send them out into the world. At that time He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.” (John 20:22-23).

In imparting the Holy Spirit to His disciples, Jesus gave them the authority to forgive other people’s sins. He also promised them that “whatever you bind on earth

shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, shall have been loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19)

At the time of Jesus’ death, the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was torn in two, from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). Therefore, we are now provided with direct-access to God. We can go directly to God, in the Name of Jesus, in order to have our sins forgiven! (John 16:26-27).

However, when we feel a need to confess out sins to another human being, Jesus provided us with a way to receive the assurance of forgiveness from the Church leadership as well. Some people think their sins are so heinous that these sins cannot or will not be forgiven by God. A comforting word imparting assurance in situations like this is often needed from someone with authority in the Church.

Therefore, if we confess our sins to a priests, we do well; and if we confess our sins directly to God we do well also.

Regardless of to whom we confess our sins, the important thing is to confess them; because, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9).

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.