

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

What Makes the Good Confession Good?

Matthew 16:13-16

1 The verbal expression of your faith is called “The Good Confession” in the New Testament. What makes the Good Confession good? 2

Matthew, chapter 16, verses 13 through 16, give us a context for answering this question. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Before I baptize people I ask them to recite this Good Confession, “I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”. This practice follows the example of a conversion event in the Bible. 3

In Acts, chapter 8, verses 36 and 37, records, As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I

be baptized?” Philip said, “if you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”¹

It’s important to outline the historic context of our main scripture today in Matthew 16.⁴

In verses 1 and 4² the Jewish leaders demand a sign. The Lord tells them they will see the sign of Jonah. He, then, walks out on them.⁵

In verses 6 and 12³ Jesus teaches His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Jewish leaders (their teachings). But doubt begins to arise because of the disappointment of not seeing a sign.

¹ It needs to be stated that verse 37 is not found in some of the English translations of the Bible because scholars say it doesn’t appear in some of the earliest New Testament manuscripts. I believe it was added in later manuscripts because it fit the practice of the early church.

² Matthew 16:1 & 4 - The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven . . . A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.

³ Matthew 16:6 & 12 - “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” . . . Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

So, the Lord takes His disciples to Caesarea Philippi to show them the Transfiguration. ⁴ Along the way He gives them the opportunity to express their doubts and convictions. Although they don't understand the implications, the Good Confession becomes the turning point in their spiritual development.

So, what makes the Good Confession good? ⁶

First . . .

I. It is a Definite Confession

It is a definite confession. ⁷

First Timothy, chapter 6, verse 12, **Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.** ⁸

⁴ The Transfiguration can be found in Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:1-8, Luke 9:28-36 and II Peter 1:16-18.

In the original language, the definite article is used. ⁵ A more accurate translation would be “when you made the good confession of yours”. ⁹

This definite Good Confession is **to be made before many witnesses**. So, it becomes appropriate at a public baptism ceremony. ¹⁰

In the next couple of verses, First Timothy, chapter 6, verses 13 and 14, the phrase appears again, **In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .** ¹¹

Again, we have the definite article “the good confession”.

This refers to when Pontius Pilate asked the Lord if He were the king of the Jews. ¹² The Lord’s answer was,

⁵ τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν.

Yes, it is as you say. ⁶ ¹³ This definite confession **is a command you are to keep!** ⁷ ¹⁴

This definite confession is to be held firmly, **without wavering!** ¹⁵ In Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 4, we read, **Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.** ¹⁶ The phrase “we profess” is our phrase “the confession”. ⁸ ¹⁷ It is the confession we must grasp firmly! ¹⁸

This is confirmed again in Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 23, **Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.** Again, “we profess” is our phrase “the confession”; same phrase as before. ¹⁹ Since the Lord has been so faithful to you, you need to be faithful to Him with this confession! ²⁰

It’s also important to be reminded that this confession will eventually be made by everyone! Philippians,

⁶ Mark 15:2.

⁷ I Timothy 6:14 - I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

⁸ τῆς ὁμολογίας.

chapter 2, verses 9 through 11, **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.** ²¹

The second thing that makes the Good Confession good is ...

II. It Has Special Content

It has special content. The content is different depending on who is confessing it! ²²

The Good Confession for the Jew is “**Jesus is the Christ**”! ²³

The phrase “the Christ” ⁹ is a specifically Jewish term historically. The Christ, or Messiah (in Hebrew), was the one anointed by the Heavenly Father to set up His kingdom. ²⁴

⁹ ὁ Χριστὸς.

The Good Confession was confirmed by the Lord when He was questioned by the high priest. ¹⁰ This was a completely Jewish context. ²⁵

In our scripture today from Matthew, chapter 16, the Good Confession was proclaimed by Peter. ¹¹ Peter was a Jew!

In John, chapter 9, Jesus healed a man who had been born blind. This man's parents were questioned by the Jewish religious leaders about their son's healing event. ²⁶ Here was their reply in verse 22, **His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.** The Good Confession was not proclaimed by the parents of the man who was born blind because they feared being excommunicated

¹⁰ Matthew 26:63-64 - The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

¹¹ Matthew 16:15-16 - "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

from the synagogue. Again, this was a Jewish context.

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The Good Confession for the Gentile (those from a non Jewish background and faith), is “**Jesus is the Son of God**”. 28

This is an expression of the Lord’s deity; His divine nature! Colossians, chapter 2, verse 9, **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.** 29

When Philip asked Jesus in John, chapter 14, verse 9, to show the disciples the Father, the Lord replied, **Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.** 30

In First John, chapter 4, verses 2 and 3, restates this a different way, **This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.** 31

This confession was attributed to the Lord when He was hanging on the cross, **He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God’.** ¹² ₃₂

Commitment to this confession is a condition for overcoming the world! First John, chapter 5, verse 5, **Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.** ₃₃

The Good Confession for everyone, both Jew and Gentile is this, **“Jesus is Lord!”** ¹³ If Jesus is Lord, He has the authority to rule your life! ₃₄

The third thing that makes the Good Confession good is . . .

¹² Matthew 27:43.

¹³ Romans 10:9 - 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.**

III. It is Necessary for Salvation

It is necessary for salvation. ³⁵

The Bible states confession with the mouth **brings salvation**. Romans, chapter 10, verses 9 and 10 state, **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.** ³⁶

When you do confess the Lord, **He promises to confess you before the Father** in heaven. ¹⁴ ³⁷

The Good Confession appears to be **a condition for the Holy Spirit to dwell in your life**. First John, chapter 4, verse 15 says, **If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.** ³⁸
And First Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 3, continues, .

¹⁴ Matthew 10:32 - Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

. . No one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. ³⁹

What does the Good Confession imply? ⁴⁰ **Obedience!**
Lord Jesus stated, Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ⁴¹

Beware, however, of that which might hinder you from making the Good Confession. Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. ¹⁵ I hope that would never be you! ⁴²

The Good Confession becomes not only a condition for baptism and fellowship in the church, it is also the main content of your witness to others.

¹⁵ John 12:42-43.

It needs to be the concept you would rather die for than forsake!

Are you ready to make the Good Confession?

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