

# The Purposes of Confession

by Steve Mays

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*The purpose of confession is to take responsibility for our sins, humble ourselves before God, and restore fellowship with Him, leading to forgiveness, cleansing, and healing.*

**Duration:** 24:48

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:6-24, Joshua 7:20-26, 2 Kings 5:27, 2 Chronicles 26:19-21, 1 John 1:7-9

**Topics:** "Confession"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays discusses the story of Moses and the consequences of his disobedience. He emphasizes the importance of confession and taking responsibility for our sins. Pastor Steve highlights that confession is not about blaming others, but about acknowledging our own wrongdoing and turning back to God. He also emphasizes the power of confession, stating that when we confess our sins, God can restore and use us for His purposes. The sermon concludes with a poem and the reminder that both God touching us and us touching God are equally wonderful experiences.

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## Transcript

It's the 2012 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. Today, on Light of the Word, Pastor Steve Mays talks about the problem we have with confession. The reason why we do not confess our sins is because we're not wrong.

We've done nothing, it's everybody else, it's my kids, it's my wife, it's the pressure, it won't fly. I sinned because that's what I wanted to do. I did not take responsibility to turn my life back to God.

God, you change me, you help me. Light of the Word, Light of the Word. Hope shines in darkness, so follow the Light of the Word.

In recent years, the act of confession has been gaining in popularity. The internet alone now has dozens of websites that you can visit in order to admit your guilt and find absolution for your sins. And as Pastor Steve points out today, the act of confession is real and beneficial, but only when we take it directly to God.

He shares the purpose, the power, and the promise of confession. Here's Pastor Steve to get us started. I want to talk to you about 1 John 1, verses 7 through 9. And if you are lost, go all the way to the book of Revelation, go backwards a couple books.

He says in 1 John, in chapter 1, verse 7, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sins. If we say that 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 of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In verse 9, underline the word if. Then in verse 9, underline the word he is faithful, just he.

And then underline towards the very end us, to cleanse us. That is the key. And I'll share with you in just a few moments.

There is a great story in Greek mythology. It is concerning the importance of just Hercules and what he was called or commissioned to do. He was commissioned to cleanse this barn.

So the story goes on that he picked up these two massive rivers and redirected them towards the barn. Of course, it just cleansed the barn and washed it thoroughly. Then he placed once again the rivers back on their course.

Now we know that's not true. But that is exactly what God has done when he died for you and I 2,000 years ago with the blood of Jesus Christ. He is able to come after sin with the power and the anointing of the blood of God.

And when you take the blood out of Christianity or you dismiss the word and you begin to deal with programs or society, you're never going to solve the problem. And John says in 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins. Here's another translation.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful. He will keep his promise and do what is right. He will forgive us of our sins and purify us of all wrongdoing.

And one other translation that's really neat. But if we confess our sins to him, he can be dependent on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this because Christ died and washed away our sin.

And when you talk about the sin, it's something the church doesn't want to talk about. So what happens in the world is let's get rid of the sin. Let's don't deal with it.

So today we have churches that don't deal with the blood or don't talk about sin. And they rather talk about social issues, not spiritual issues. But the reality of the truth of God's word is that God dealt with sin.

You remember Adam, he sinned and paradise was taken from him. You also remember that Achan, there in the days of Joshua, he sinned and God took his life and his family because he lied and cheated and hid something that God told him not to do. Gehazi was smitten with leprosy because he had sinned against God.

And you remember Uzziah, the great king, was smitten with leprosy because he became angry and violated the word of God. And then I think once again of Moses. Here was a faithful man for 40 years in the wilderness, learning.

Then he led Israel for 40 years, putting up with the people. They're murmuring, they're complaining. And one moment, God told him to speak to the rock.

He beat the rock and God told him to come here. And Moses walked up and God said, why did you beat the rock? God said to Moses, I didn't want you to beat the rock. And because of your disobedience, you cannot go into the promised land.

Now here is the truth of God's word. There are consequences for our sin. If we sin, we might think we're getting away with it.

But there's a consequence in our own guilt. And it can divide a family. It can destroy a nation.

It can destroy a home. It can destroy a life every single time. And what I want to share are three things this morning.

Number one, the purpose of confession. The purpose of confession is here, we. If we confess, that's me, that's not you.

And secondly, the power of confession. The power of confession in verse 9. He is faithful. It's not my wife.

It's not reading a book. He, God himself, is faithful. And then number three, the promise of confession.

Verse 9, to cleanse us. Now here's what I want to teach you. One thing.

It says in verse 9, we. Then in verse 9, he. Then in verse 9, us.

It has nothing to do with the congregation, my wife, my friends. This has to deal with Steve Mays and God. And when you come to take the responsibility that in your life, you have not lived up, or you have sinned, or your attitude is not pleasing, or you're whining and complaining, or whatever it might be, and you go to God, and God convicts you, God wants you to repent.

And if someone comes after you, and you react in a wrong way, you've sinned. If you judge, and you do things, or you criticize or gossip, you've sinned. The key is, am I going to be responsible? And when a person, now listen very carefully, when a person takes responsibility, at that moment, God will make greatness in your life.

The people that are great, have come to a point of responsibility. It's not my wife, it's not the church, I stand before you, I take total responsibility. At that moment, God begins to grow me up.

And I begin to understand the danger of me blaming everybody. So, number 1, so important. The purpose of confession.

Notice in verse 9. If we confess our sins. Let's stop right there. If.

So the question is, am I going to? Now, some justify their sin. You remember Adam. He looked right in God's eyes, and he said, I never asked you for this wife.

Did I ever ask you? Did I ever complain? Did I ever even tell you that I wanted this woman? Now, I'll give you this God. When you made her, she was outstanding. In the Hebrew, it's like, she is like, wow.

This is your finest work. But now, I've sinned because of this woman. So, what did Eve feel? First of all, her husband was a ding-a-ling.

So, gals, it hasn't changed in a lot of years. Secondly, God looked at Adam. And God said in his own heart, I am telling you to do not eat of this tree.

He was the leader. He was the man. He was to take responsibility.

But it was easier for him to blame his wife than to take responsibility. So, we see it today. If you would be this wife, or if you would do this, I could be so much better.

You're not doing better because you don't want to do better. You can have a wife that's terrible. Martin Luther's wife beat him over the head with a frying pan.

But he was still faithful to God. Eventually, they separated. Also, I find very simply in this whole relationship, Eve was not innocent.

She came before God and she said, I'm not responsible. You made this serpent. He beguiled me.

So, Eve is as guilty as Adam. Did I tell you? Eve, yes, but the serpent beguiled me. The serpent said, time out.

You made me and you could have stopped me from stumbling, but you didn't. Guess what? We blame everybody, even God, but we will not take responsibility. So, the number one problem I see today, the reason why we do not confess our sins is because we're not wrong.

We've done nothing. It's everybody else. It's my kids.

It's my wife. It's the pressure. If I go out and commit adultery and I say to the congregation, I was just kind of stressed out because of five services, it won't fly.

I went out because it was in my heart. I sinned because that's what I wanted to do. I did not take responsibility to turn my life back to God.

If I go after drugs, it's because I want the drugs. And so, when I take responsibility, it means I'm able to humble myself, acknowledge, work through the process. I'm the problem.

Maybe my wife has sinned. Maybe my kids have sinned, but I'm not acting like Christ. So, if I'm not acting like Christ, everybody's guilty.

God, you change me. You help me. Also, I find that some cover their sin.

It's easier just to bury your sin. But I want to tell you, you think you've hid it. Everyone else knows you haven't.

Because it changes your attitude. It makes you mean. It makes you bitter.

It makes you isolated. And that's what happened with David. He sinned.

He covered it. He thought he got away with committing adultery, but Nathan came back, the prophet, and he said to David, In other words, God knew. And with Moses, he buried the Egyptian.

Because he looked this way, and he looked this way. He thought he got away with it, but he didn't look up. So, sometimes we just bury things, thinking that we'll just deal with it later on.

But there's a consequence. Let me give you an example. If you have children, and you have to discipline your son, and you send that kid to the room, have you broken relationship? He will be your child, your rebellious two-year-old child, or your teenager, whatever it might be.

But if that teenager or that child comes back and says, Dad or Mom, I'm sorry. Instantly, fellowship is restored. If that child goes out and murders, you are still his parent.

Though you disagree he's going to jail, you have a relationship with that boy forever. Fellowship is broken. When you sin, your fellowship is destroyed.

The relationship is not. You need to understand that. Because Christ died for your sins.

And the pain and the agony begins to convict you. And you feel a distance between you and God. There's a silence.

But the moment you say, I can't handle this. I need to make it right with God. And you humble yourself.

Then at that moment, it brings you to the next thing. Notice, purpose of confession, humble me. The second is the power of confession.

The power of confession, it brings forgiveness. So if I confess my sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins. Now that's it.

You say, well Steve, I read all these books. Doesn't make a difference. And you know, I've gone to all your teaching.

Doesn't really count. Well, what do you mean? God is the only one that can forgive you. Well, help me understand this, okay? You've sinned.

People know it. They will not forgive you. They don't like you.

Your wife doesn't like you. Your kids don't like you. Business partners don't like you because you've made a mistake.

You acknowledge that mistake. You ask God to forgive you. God instantly forgives you.

They don't. There's consequences because you've let people down. But God instantly, the moment you confess, begins to build your life.

He pours into you forgiveness. He redeems you. Restores you.

He begins to revive you. He begins to make you understand God's goodness. Now here's the problem.

If God's doing this, why can't people see it? Because something hasn't happened in your life. Yes, God has forgiven you. Yes, God has redeemed you.

And oftentimes, God restored David, but his wings were clipped. And God restored, you remember, Jonah, but he was still a rebellious man. And God restored so many people in the Old Testament.

When all of a sudden Naomi was here, she went out to Moab, where she should not have gone. She buried her husband, her two boys. When she turned around to God and she acknowledged that she was

in the wrong place, the moment she took a step, there was forgiveness.

And guess what? There was a harvest. And she took another step, she's in the house, or the yard, or the field of Boaz. So the moment you turn, God begins to build your life.

Humans will not do that. You hurt your wife, you're going to pay the price for a while. You hurt those kids, they're going to remember it.

But the Bible says, God will not remember your sins. And let me tell you right now, the thing that I need to get through my heart and your heart is that I need to go to God. If God is with me, who can be against me? If those are hurt, God will make them believe.

But God wants to do a work in my heart. And I come to realize that Jesus on that cross said, Father, forgive. And God brought restoration.

So in forgiveness there's power, there's an anointing, there's a tremendous work. The third thing I want to end up the most important, because I believe that we've been confessing. And I believe that we've been forgiven.

But this is where I believe the church is at today. We have not been cleansed. Notice the third point.

Purpose of confession, and then the power of confession, and lastly the promise of confession. It brings cleansing. To cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now here's what he's saying, and very carefully let me lay it out. When you sin against God, you break fellowship. You have separated yourself because of sin.

Not relationship, fellowship. When you confess, you've humbled yourself, God will exalt you and all of heaven goes crazy. Because to humble yourself is contrary to your nature.

When you ask obedience of God, heaven goes crazy, because that's not practical today. But when God sees a man or a woman say, I take total responsibility, like David, against you, and you only have I sinned. In other words, I have sinned.

Or like the prodigal son, Father, against you have I sinned. No blame whatsoever. When that really happens, and you say, it's just time for me to grow up.

Then God instantly, at that moment, begins to work and build your life. Nothing else is like it. He begins to give you confidence.

He begins to restore the years the canker worm has eaten up. He begins to show you brand new things. He opens your eyes to the realm of the Spirit.

Oh, people are criticizing. People are judging you. People are talking about you.

But listen, you have to hang out with God. And this third thing is the most important. He wants to cleanse your life.

And what that means, very simply, is so cool. When they had a leper, and when Jesus healed that leper, that leper had to go present himself to the priest. The priest then would place him inside of this room for seven days.

At the end of seven days, if there would be no reoccurrence of leprosy, the priest would bring him out, and the priest would touch him. The moment that priest would touch him, he was touched by God. Now this is where, I think, the big problem is.

Many of us have been forgiven. Most of us have not been touched. So we live in guilt.

Oh, I could have done it better at home. Well, sure you could have. Well, I could have been more loving to my wife.

You should have. Well, I could have been more faithful at work. Yes, you could have.

Okay, so what? Now, what are you going to do? Well, I'm so overwhelmed and so insecure and so beat up and so hurtful, I'm just going to be nothing in my life. And so millions are stopping what God wants to do. Yes, I was molested.

But I'm not going to let that hold me back from turning that thing around and telling you that, listen, if I can make it, you can make it. I'm not going to be a victim. I'm going to be victorious in these things in my life.

Yes, I was shot. And then I remember smoking a pencil and filling the house up with water and being on LSD. And my mom walked in and I was all naked.

I was messed up and I flooded the whole house. And then I remember going in and painting my mom's kitchen black. Windows and everything.

And I thought she'd be really happy. She was really mad. And I thought, God, You have made me whole.

You, by Your grace, have made me whole. When God touches your life and God sanctifies your life, then you will never be ashamed of who you are. So no matter where you've been, what you've done, maybe a divorce or maybe something that you've done and people are just hurting you and you are being judged, listen to me very carefully.

The reason why people are not respecting you is because you have been forgiven, but that's where you are. And because you've been forgiven and God loves you, you're walking through life like, woe is me. I'm just nobody.

I'm never going to be what God wants me to be. I don't believe that. I believe you come back to God and He touches you.

Do you remember the one leper that came back? He said, Where are the nine? And then He said to the leper, Go and be whole. The moment God touches you, He anoints you. And when God anoints you, then something happens.

You begin to rise. You begin to turn that depression into rejoicing. You begin to take God's word and you begin to build your life on it.

And I remember the day that God touched me. He took away the shame. He took away the guilt.

He took away the embarrassment. And now I can share it, laugh about it, and you just say, Oh my goodness, you're kidding me. No.

But I can stand before you with no shame and say to you, Blessed be the name of God. Because I, 35 years ago, said, God, I take responsibility. I'm a sinner.

Stephen, I'm going to build your life. I'm going to teach you forgiveness. It's going to take some time.

Others are not going to trust you, but you're going to grow. And then one day, God touched me, made me whole. And at that day, I became a leader.

God wants you to be a leader. God wants you to be the head, not the tail. God wants you to take your children, your family, your business, and everything in your life to the very top.

You start with confession. I take full responsibility that my family, my business, my life is not where it should be. I take responsibility.

Really, Stephen? Yeah. Well then, I'd like to step in and God's going to say, Man, let me help you. God before you, who can be against you? Oh man, all the years.

Stephen, don't do that. Let me touch you. Restore your mind.

Restore your heart. Now I'm going to use you. And you become a vessel and an instrument in the hand of God.

There's a poem I'll leave you with. Holy Spirit, love divine, grow within this heart of mine. Kindle every high desire, perish self in thy purifier.

If I could just touch the hem of his garment, the woman said, if I could just touch him, I'd be healed. Lord, let me touch you. Then Daniel tells me, and then God touched him.

It's wonderful when God touches me, but it's equally wonderful when I touch him. That's Pastor Steve Mays, sharing the purpose, the power, and the promise of confession. One of our most requested messages from last year.

You know, every now and then we hear Pastor Steve share bits and pieces from his testimony, contrasting his hoodlum past with the man we know now here at Light of the Word. But if you've ever been curious to hear that whole story, let us invite you to request the autobiographical book by Steve called A Heartbeat from Hell. It's a great book.

Desperate, hopeless, and literally sleeping in the gutters is where Steve was at one point in his life. He'd been shot, and he was wanted by the authorities. Well, then one day something happened.

His whole life changed. The Lord took Steve from the gutter to grace, literally. A Heartbeat from Hell is an inspiring example of how God can use us to the fullest, even when we're weak and disabled.

It's a reminder that God has a wonderful plan and purpose for all who choose life in Jesus. This incredible account is one you won't be able to put down. The book's also been published in Spanish, so if Spanish would be more enjoyable for you or maybe a better translation to give to a friend or family, ask for Un latido del infierno.

Get your copy today at [lightoftheword.org](http://lightoftheword.org). That's [lightoftheword.org](http://lightoftheword.org). Or give us a call at 1-800-339-WISE. That's 1-800-339-WISE. When we continue, Steve shows that God wants to hear from you in good times

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