

Date : 11 May 2025

Theme : Prayer A.C.T.S.

Topic : Confession and Thanksgiving in our prayers

Passage : Psalm 32

Key Verse : ***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9***

Introduction

Sin separates, but confession restores: Sin creates a barrier between us and God (*Isaiah 59:2*). However, through confession, we bridge that gap and experience His boundless forgiveness and love. Though sin separates us from God, the good news is that He stands ready to forgive. Through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ - who paid the ultimate price as the penalty for our sins - we are invited into redemption and grace.

The love of God the Father is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son. When he returned with a repentant heart, his father, filled with compassion, ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him (*Luke 15:20*). This powerful imagery reflects God's immense mercy and readiness to welcome us back.

Although our past sins had been confessed and forgiven, we still fall into temptations.

Temptations themselves are not sin. Only when we yield to them.

Sin breaks our fellowship with the Lord. So, our confession with repentance is God's way to cleanse us.

Gratitude is a recurring theme throughout Scripture, reminding us to acknowledge God's blessings and cultivate a thankful heart. Let the redeemed of the Lord give Him thanks (*Psalms 107:1-2*). However, many among us fall short in gratitude. Ingratitude is one common sin we need to deal with. Ingratitude manifests itself in complaining habits. It blinds us to God's goodness and fosters a spirit of discontent.

1. Why must confession be part of our prayer life?

- Confession is necessary because we need forgiveness
 - Redemption comes through God's grace, and confession is a crucial step in receiving forgiveness: *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23)*
 - By confessing our sins, we acknowledge our need for forgiveness.
- Confession is ongoing because we sinned after we have believed
 - As Christians, we still sin and need to confess our sins to maintain our relationship with God:
“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9)
 - In Confession, we:
 - Acknowledge we have sinned against the Lord.
- There are consequences for unconfessed sin
 - Unconfessed sin ultimately leads one to (eternal) death.
 - Living with unconfessed sins weighs down heavily on one's heart and could lead to severe consequences, such as health issues. David in *Psalms 32:3-4* describes his condition when he tried to cover up his sins: *“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” (Psalm 32:3-4).*
 - So, confess immediately, as did King David when God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him (*2 Samuel 12:1,13*).
 - His confession brings relief and restoration.

- Confession is a biblical solution for unintentional sin:
"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)
 - This promise assures us of God's love and willingness to restore us.
 - He knows we will stumble, yet He stands ready to pick us up when we fall.
 - So, we confess when examining our lives daily.
- But if we intentionally sin and continue in it habitually, will God forgive?
 - Such behaviour would imply that the confession is not sincere (as there is no repentance) and there can be no forgiveness; God knows the heart!
- Confession restores our relationship with God
 Principle: The Evil one stands by to accuse us and put us on a guilt trip.
 But confession cancels out accusations.

2. How do we confess our sins?

As we examine our lives, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin.
 Confession and repentance must go hand in hand.

- Repentance must be motivated by godly sorrow
 Godly sorrow is deep regret and pain for actions that hurt God, leading to genuine repentance and a desire to change and seek forgiveness.
 - *"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."* (2 Corinthians 7:10)
 - Confession is about seeking forgiveness from the Lord whom we have offended
"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." (Acts 3:19)
 - Confession must be specific, not general
 - Is a simple "I have Sinned" good enough in confession?
- (a) Without a change of heart, confession is meaningless.
 Examples of insincere confession:
- Pharaoh said: "I have sinned" and yet remained the hardened sinner. (*Exodus 9:27*)
 - Balaam said to the angel of the Lord "I have sinned", and yet he went on with his sin afterwards. (*Numbers 22:34*)
 - King Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned", but yet remained insincere for he did not mean what he said. (*1 Samuel 15:24-31*)
 - Judas said "I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood." (*Matthew 27:4*) and yet went to hang himself.
- (b) True confession involves accountability, as seen in:
- King David who said "I have sinned against the LORD." (*2 Samuel 12:13*) and was forgiven. Why? David's act of repentance in *Psalms 32* was recorded in *Psalms 51* – *"Have mercy upon me, O God according to your unfailing love... Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."* (vs 1,12)
 - The Prodigal son (*Luke 15:11-32*)
 When the prodigal son realized his sin, he said, "I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him *'father I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants'* (*Luke 15:18-19*)
 The Prodigal son recognized his sin and was sorrowful... he was repentant and felt his unworthiness but humbled himself and returned to the father.

- Confession must be proven by change
"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5)
- There is intention to turn from that sin and forsake it.

3. Why expressing gratitude to God is vital

a) Reasons to thank God

We have received much, much is expected.

Every good gift has come from the Father. Nothing good drops from the sky. Thanksgiving is about the gifts received.

- Our salvation is a gift of God's grace (*Romans 6:23*).
 - Having Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is the greatest reason of all to give thanks, to show that we are eternally grateful.
- Recognizing God's goodness and love
 - It acknowledges God's nature: His goodness, mercy, and love: *"For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."* (*Psalms 100:5*).
 - Thanksgiving acknowledges God's love and care in every aspect of our lives.
"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." (*Psalms 107:1*)
 - In *Psalms 107*, the psalmist burst out 4 times: *"Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind."* (*Psalms 107:8,15,21,31*)
- We respond with gratitude by making sacrifices and offerings
 Our expression of gratitude to God in worship honours Him
"Those who sacrifice thank offerings honour me, and to the blameless I will show my salvation." *Psalms 50:23*
- Rendering praise and thanks glorifies the Lord
"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hooves." (*Psalms 69:30*)
- These offerings of praise and thanksgiving must always be rendered when we enter the sanctuary (our church).
"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." (*Psalms 100:4*)

b) When should we give thanks?

- Give thanks in all circumstances
"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (*1 Thessalonians 5:18*).
- All circumstances include the good times and the difficult times.

c) Examples of thanksgiving in all circumstances

- Paul and Silas: Despite being beaten and imprisoned, they chose to sing hymns and praise God, leading to their miraculous release. (*Acts 16:25-26*)
 - It brought the jailer to faith in Christ.

d) Why is ingratitude offensive to the Lord?

- Ingratitude shows a disregard for God's blessings
 - God's blessings and provisions are taken for granted or unappreciated.
 - Paul warned... the Israelites grumbled *"and were killed by the destroying angel."* (*1 Corinthians 10:10*). The Israelites complained and *"fire from the Lord burned among them"*. (*Numbers 11:1*)

- After God led the Israelites out of Egypt toward the Promised Land, they spent their time in the desert grumbling. And God said: *“I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites...”* (Exodus 16:12). As a result, they forfeited their inheritance.

- Ingratitude denies God’s sovereignty
- God is not acknowledged as the source of all good things
 - In *Luke 17*, ten lepers were healed but only one came back to thank Jesus. And Jesus asked: “Where are the other nine?”.

Application

1. I will set time for confession and thanksgiving daily.

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2. Render thanks –

“Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.” (Ps 103:1-4)

I thank God for:

- Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour.
- For deliverance from the power of the law of sin and death. (*Romans 7:24-25*)
- For the air we breathe, recognizing the very breath in our lungs is a gift from God.
- For healing of our diseases. (*see Ps 103:3 and Luke 17:15-16*)
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